

Christ's perfect work as a fulfillment of the covenant conditions, and would thus destroy the grace character of the covenant); rather, faith is an exercise of one of the benefits of the covenant (which still permits faith to be spoken of as a condition which must be fulfilled before other benefits of the covenant can be applied).

Now it may be seen that various aspects of the conditions of the covenant may also be "conditioned" upon other aspects. Christ's incarnation is a condition which must be fulfilled before He can live a life of perfect obedience. And Christ's death is a condition of His resurrection. To put it another way, Christ must die before He can rise from the dead; He must live before He can die; and He must become incarnate before He can live on this earth as a man.

Just as various aspects of the conditions are conditioned upon other aspects, so various aspects of the benefits of the covenant are conditioned upon other aspects. The effects of depravity upon the intellect and will must be countered before there can be true faith; and there must be true faith before there can be justification; and there must be justification before there can be progressive sanctification. The first item in each of these pairs is a condition of the second.

This brings us (finally) to some definitions which can help to distinguish the difference between these two uses of the word "condition".

In one sense, "condition" means whatever must be done in order to fulfill the requirements of the covenant agreement, so that the covenant benefits will go into effect.

In another sense, "condition" means that which must occur before something else can occur, in terms either of the conditions or of the benefits of the covenant.

And now we can also see that the application of the benefits of the covenant is conditioned upon the fulfillment of its conditions.

3. Definitions of the doctrine

According to the *American College Dictionary* a contract is "an agreement between two or more parties for the doing or not doing of some definite thing," and a covenant is "an agreement between two or more persons to do or refrain from doing some act; a compact; a contract." in this usage, the terms appear to be interchangeable.

By definition, a covenant is a contractual agreement among two or more parties in which the contracting parties agree upon the conditions to be fulfilled, the benefits promised upon fulfillment, and the penalties promised upon nonfulfillment.

We have previously discussed the covenant of works, in which the leading feature was the condition of obedience to God's will by Adam in the Garden of Eden. We have also noted Adam's failure to comply with this condition, and the exacting of the penalty upon him and all of his posterity. Now we are asking the question: Does Scripture also reveal a covenant in which the leading feature is not an abandonment of all conditions, but rather a gracious fulfillment of the condition of