

## THE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE (Continued)

### (3) A volitional element.

There is no repentance where there is not a willingness to turn from sin and self to God. Where there is real conviction of sin and contrition on account of sin, there will be a renunciation of sin. Repentance is never genuine or complete until there is a repudiation of sin as an act of the will. If a person still loves sin, of course there has not been any repentance. When the mental and emotional attitudes are right, there will be proper action also. When one truly repents he has a different attitude toward sin. Instead of sin appearing desirable and fascinating, it is actually odious and detestable to the one who has repented. No one ever repents while trying to justify his sinful habits, or while continuing in the wrong course of behavior. When Christ saves it is from sin. When one repents he abandons his sinful ways. God's Word says: "Thus saith the Lord God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations" (Ezekiel 14:6). "Repent, and turn away yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin" (Ezekiel 18:30). It is not enough to repent of one sin, or even a dozen sins, or still more; one must repent of his sinful disposition. When asked what was the difference between remorse and repentance a boy said: "Remorse is when you say you are sorry, and do it again. Repentance is when you are sorry enough to quit."

### III. The Instruments Of Repentance.

#### 1. God's Word.

At Pentecost Peter preached the Word of God. When the people heard it they were pricked in their hearts. Upon hearing their inquiry, "What shall we do?", and seeing the conviction wrought through the Word, Peter said: "Repent." It was not the personality of Peter that caused the people to repent, but the clear setting forth of God's Word in the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit. The same was true of all apostolic preaching. To hear and to believe the Word of God precedes all true repentance. Every minister's first obligation to his hearers is to proclaim faithfully what God has said, for only the Word will produce the conviction and contrition which will lead to repentance.

Through the preaching of the gospel of Christ, the Holy Spirit leads a man to see his guilt and his distance from God. Perceiving his sin and guilt, man realizes that he stands justly condemned as the transgressor of the laws of a holy God. There comes into his soul a regret and a sorrow that he has sinned against God. This sorrow causes him to change his mind about his sinful course and causes him to turn to God in penitence.

#### 2. The Holy Spirit.

"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin" (John 16:8). Not only does the Holy Spirit convict of sin, but He also brings godly sorrow which worketh repentance.

#### 3. God's goodness.

"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Romans 2:4). The goodness of God is a mighty stimulus toward repentance. If we remember, reflect upon, and heartily believe in the goodness of God toward us, we shall be led to change our thinking, our feeling, and our acting with reference to God. If a man despises the mercy and goodness of God, which are intended to lead him to repent, he is storing up wrath to be poured out upon him in the day of judgment. But so many have abused

and misused the goodness of the Lord. Some have even used the goodness of God as an excuse for neglecting and rejecting Christ.

#### IV. The Results Of Repentance.

##### 1. Remission of sins and their being blotted out.

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

##### 2. Joy in heaven.

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).

##### 3. The gift of the Holy Spirit.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

##### 4. Times of refreshing.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

#### V. The Evidences Of Repentance.

##### 1. A change of thinking.

##### 2. A change of feeling.

Repentance causes one to hate the sins he formerly cherished. It turns a love for sin into a hatred of sin.

##### 3. A change of acting.

Repentance causes one to turn from his wicked ways. Isaiah 55:7 says: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

What a change repentance made in Saul of Tarsus! It changed him from a persecutor of Christians into a noble preacher of the gospel of Christ.

Repentance and faith are mutually inclusive, like the two sides of a coin. They are inseparable graces, so that you cannot really have the one without the other. The New Testament sometimes uses both terms to express a saving experience, while at other times only one or the other term is employed. When we read that repentance is unto life, saving faith is implied; and when we read that the individual believes, repentance is implied. While repentance and faith are inseparable, they are also distinct exercises of the human soul. Paul testified: "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).