

The Doctrine of Repentance—*Thomas Watson*

Chapter Four — *The Nature of True Repentance*

- I. *Repentance is a grace of God's Spirit whereby a sinner is inwardly humbled and visibly reformed.* It is a spiritual medicine made up of six special ingredients. If any one is left out it loses its virtue.
- A. **Hatred for Sin**—Ezk 36.31.
1. A true penitent is a sin-hater. To hate sin is to cast it overboard in the sunshine.
 2. Christ is never loved till sin be hated. Heaven is never longed for till sin be hated.
 3. We are never more precious in God's eyes than when we are lepers in our own.
 4. How may true hatred of sin be known?
 - a) When a man's spirit is set against sin. We must abhor sin, no matter the pretty dress it is in.
 - b) True hatred of sin is universal, being not just in the thoughts but also in the affections and in the will. Also, all sin must be hated, not just some (Ps 119.104).
 - c) True hatred against sin is against sin in all its forms. We must hate not just the serpent's poison, but the serpent itself.
 - d) True hatred is implacable, never to be reconciled to it (cp. 1Kgs 14.30).
 - e) Where there is a real hatred, we not only oppose sin in ourselves but in others too, Rev 2.2; Neh 5.7; 13.17; Ps 101.7.
- B. **Uses:**
1. How far are they from repentance who, instead of hating sin, love sin! Loving sin is worse than committing it, for to love sin shows that the will is in sin, and the more will in sin, the greater the sin.
 2. This persuades us to show our repentance by a bitter hatred of sin. What is there in sin that makes the penitent hate it?
 - a) Look upon the origin of sin, 1Jn 3.8
 - b) Look upon sin in its nature, 1Sam 2.30; Rom 2.23; Heb 6.6
 - c) Look upon sin compared to affliction. Sin is worse than affliction.
 - (1) There is more malignity in one drop of sin than in an ocean of affliction, for sin is the cause of affliction.
 - (2) Moreover, affliction is in many ways for our good, but there is no good in sin.
 - (3) Affliction is corrective, but sin is destructive. Affliction can but take away the life, but sin can take away the soul (Lk 12.20). An afflicted man may still have a quiet conscience, whereas a sinning man will have a troubling conscience though his body is in no affliction.
 - (4) Sin is so much worse than affliction that the greatest judgment God lays upon a man in this life is to let him sin without control.
 - d) Look upon sin compared to hell. Sin is worse than hell.
 - (1) Hell is of God's making, but sin is the devil's child.
 - (2) The torments of hell are but a burden to the sinner, but sin is a burden to God.
 - (3) In the torments of hell have this good, that they satisfy divine justice, but sin produces no good.
 - e) Look upon sin in the issue and consequence.
 - (1) We come into the world with a cry and go out with a groan, because of sin. Sin is the Trojan Horse out of which comes a whole army of troubles. Sin digs our grave, Rom 5.12; 6.23.
 - (2) By sin we lost the beauty of the image of God. By sin we lost our coat of innocence.
 3. As Amnon's hatred of Tamar was greater than the love with which he loved her (2Sam 13.15), so we should hate sin infinitely more than ever we loved it.

***Next Study — May 3: The Nature of True Repentance: Turning from Sin**