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Tears Of Repentance ~ Thomas Watson - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/12/19 15:20

There is no rowing to paradise except upon the stream of repenting tears. Till sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet. Why are the wells of repentance stopped? Do not the sinners of the land know that they should repent? Have they no warning? Have not God's faithful messengers lifted up their voice as a trumpet and cried to them to repent? But many of these tools in the ministry have been spent and worn out upon rocky hearts. Do we think that God will always put up with our affronts?

Some bless themselves that they have a stock of knowledge, but what is knowledge good for without repentance? Learning and a bad heart is like a fair face with a cancer in the breast. Knowledge without repentance will be but a torch to light the way to hell. Repentant tears may be compared to myrrh, which though it is bitter in taste, has a sweet smell and refreshes the spirit. So repentance, though it is bitter in itself, yet it is sweet in the effects. It brings inward peace.

We are to find as much bitterness in weeping for sin as ever we found sweetness in committing it. Surely David found more bitterness in repentance than ever he found comfort in Bathsheba. Tears have four qualities: they are moist, salt, hot, and bitter. It is true of repenting tears, they are hot to warm a frozen conscience; moist, to soften a hard heart; salt, to season a soul decaying in sin; bitter, to wean us from the love of the world. And I will add a fifth, they are sweet, in that they make the heart inwardly rejoice.

David, who was the great weeper in Israel, was the sweet singer of Israel. The sorrows of the repentant are like the sorrows of a travelling woman: "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world" (John 16:21).

Be as speedy in your repentance as you would have God be speedy in His mercies. Many are now in hell that purposed to repent. Satan does what he can to keep men from repentance. When he sees that one begins to take up serious thoughts of reformation, he bids them wait a little longer. It is dangerous to procrastinate repentance. The longer any go on sinning, the harder they will find the work of repentance. Delay strengthens sin and hardens the heart and gives the devil fuller possession.

A plant at first may be easily plucked up, but when it has spread its roots deep in the earth, a whole team cannot remove it. It is hard to remove sin when it comes to be rooted. The longer the ice freezes the harder it is to be broken. The longer a man freezes in security, the harder it will be to have his heart broken.

Presuming upon God's mercy can be eternally fatal. Many suck poison from this sweet flower. Oh, one says, "Christ has died; He has done all for me; therefore I may sit still and do nothing." Thus they suck death from the tree of life and perish by a savior. So I may say of God's mercy, it accidentally causes the ruin of many. Because of mercy, some men presume and think they may go on sinning. But should a king's clemency make his subjects rebel? The psalmist says, "there is mercy with God, that he may be feared," (Psalms 130:4) but not that we may sin. Can men expect mercy by provoking justice? God will hardly show those mercy who sin because mercy abounds. Many would rather go sleeping to hell than weeping to heaven.

— By Thomas Watson