Repentant Souls Hate Sin and Love Righteousness

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:37, 38, NKJV.

How shall a person be just with God? How shall the sinner be made righteous? It is only through Christ that we can be brought into harmony with God, with holiness; but how are we to come to Christ? Many are asking the same question as did the multitude on the day of Pentecost, when, convicted of sin, they cried out, "What shall we do?" The first word of Peter's answer was "Repent" (Acts 2:37, 38). At another time, shortly after, he said, "Repent ..., and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19).

Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart there will be no real change in the life.

There are many who fail to understand the true nature of repentance. Multitudes sorrow that they have sinned and even make an outward reformation because they fear that their wrongdoing will bring suffering upon themselves. But this is not repentance in the Bible sense. They lament the suffering rather than the sin. Such was the grief of Esau when he saw that the birthright was lost to him forever. Balaam, terrified by the angel standing in his pathway with drawn sword, acknowledged his guilt lest he should lose his life; but there was no genuine repentance for sin, no conversion of purpose, no abhorrence of evil.

Judas Iscariot, after betraying his Lord, exclaimed, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood" (Matthew 27:4). The confession was forced from his guilty soul by an awful sense of condemnation and a fearful looking for of judgment. The consequences that were to result to him filled him with terror, but there was no deep, heartbreaking grief in his soul that he had betrayed the spotless Son of God and denied the Holy One of Israel.... These all lamented the results of sin, but did not sorrow for the sin itself.

But when the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God's holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth.... [The sinner] sees the love of God, the beauty of
holiness, the joy of purity; [and] longs to be cleansed and to be restored to communion with Heaven.--Steps to Christ, 23, 24.