

THE PREACHING OF REPENTANCE.

Rev. Walter E. Isenhour

"And they went out, and preached that men should repent." Mark 6:12.

This text is written of the disciples. When Jesus called and commissioned them to go out and preach the Gospel they went, and a great part of their messages was that men should repent. They were not afraid to tell sinful men that they must repent or they would lose their souls. They preached it without fear or favor. There was no other way unto salvation and eternal life, and the disciples knew it, and they held out no other way. If men did not accept this way, then they had no other to offer them. If they had offered any other it would have been a false way, therefore would have availed nothing.

The preaching of repentance has never been pleasing unto the majority of sinful, wicked people, neither has it been very popular. Men would rather hear something else, because it disturbs them in mind and soul. However, it was the only way unto life in the days of the apostles and disciples, and even back in the days of the old patriarchs and prophets; and it is the only way yet. Regardless of all its unpleasantness and unpopularity, and regardless of the fact that men would rather hear something else preached, still it stands out as man's one and only way of entrance unto life eternal. Any sinful man who climbs up some other way, "the same is a thief and a robber." He shall not get through the pearly gates into the celestial city of our God.

When Jesus Himself preached unto men, and taught them, He preached that they should repent. In fact He began His ministry preaching repentance. "Except ye repent," He said, "ye shall all likewise perish." And does not this mean the same to men today, about nineteen hundred years since spoken by our Lord and Master? If evil, sinful men then needed to repent of all their sins and wickedness, unrighteousness and ungodliness, don't they need to do the same thing today? Indeed they do. The plan of salvation has not changed. The way from under the yoke and burden and curse of sin stands as it then stood. Men may change some in their ways and habits and modes of living; men may advance along some lines as the centuries come and go; men may make some discoveries that are wonderful and startling; they may find out some of the hidden secrets of nature, which they call science; but there is one thing absolutely sure and certain—men never find some other way into the kingdom of God other than that made by Jesus. Neither have men ever been able to improve the plan made by our Saviour and finished by His suffering and death and resurrection.

Perhaps one of the greatest needs of practically all ages of the world since man sinned and came short of the glory of God has been that of repentance. And preceding repentance has been, and must be, the preaching of repentance. As little as it seems to us sometimes that the Gospel has affected men and nations at certain times, yet it has been their only source of salvation. Before every great and mighty awakening has been the

preaching of the Word. Holy men of God have faithfully sounded the note of warning, and have thundered out the fact of impending doom, preaching that the way of escape is repentance. While it has seemed to accomplish little at times, and with multitudes of people, yet it has saved unnumbered multitudes. Amen. No man of God, called to preach the Gospel, should be discouraged to the extent that he gives up when he cannot see the effects and results that he would like to see. We doubt if Jesus Himself saw the results of His teaching and preaching He wanted to see, and sincerely desired to see, yet He never gave up. Yet He saw wonderful things come to pass. And, after all, do we not as ministers of the Gospel, see some very great and marvelous things come to pass under our ministry? Have we not preached our Lord's blessed Gospel and seen men turn from their evil ways, repent with a godly sorrow and accept and embrace salvation? Can't we recall to mind now instances wherein we led men to Jesus through the preaching of His Word, and by our efforts, who have gone on to heaven, where they are waiting for us to come? They died in the triumphs of faith, and we were the instruments of helping them to our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore let us take fresh courage and go out and preach that men should repent, preach a full and complete Gospel.

O, how we need repentance preached from every pulpit everywhere today! It is one of the few hopes of our land, our nation and of the world. We are living in perilous times; crime is on the increase; the respect for the law is largely lost, along with the fear of it; things are in a dreadful condition; lukewarmness and laxity is gaining ground, and formality is gaining great headway, hence the need of the preaching of repentance. It should be sounded out from every pulpit in no uncertain way. The "upper tens" as well as the lower classes must repent of all their ungodliness and evil if they are to be saved. Society is largely corrupted through the detestable and adulterous dance, through the card game and gambling corruption. The picture show has become one of the greatest evils of the day, patronized by men and women from the lowest to the highest in their social standing; patronized by vast multitudes of church members whose influence is cursing the cause of God rather than blessing it. The tendency of the modern picture show, the styles and the dress; the tendency of vast numbers of our papers, magazines and publications, is towards adultery. This is a dreadful sin. God condemns it, and why should not we? Therefore the ministry should condemn it, and then preach the way of escape—REPENTANCE. May God help us. We need a tremendous awakening to sin and against sin. We need a nationwide revival of the "old-time religion" of our Lord Jesus Christ, yea, a world-wide revival. There should be a great and mighty returning unto the Lord, and it is going to happen only when our ministers preach in thunder tones the Gospel of real and true repentance. "And they went out, and preached that men should repent."

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A HARP WITH MANY MELODIOUS STRAINS

A number of years ago a preacher whom I highly esteem, said he did not "see why some men harp so much on the second coming of Christ." Perhaps they did it less than he thought, or possibly he was not particularly interested in the subject, nor very familiar with it. When one sees the great significance, and how often it is mentioned in the Word of God, he will certainly preach on it more or less frequently, or on one of its numerous aspects. Very many persons do not know that there are more than three hundred references on the subject in the New Testament alone.

Many stupendous occurrences or events are connected with the return of Jesus Christ. Among these are the manner, object and prophetic signs of His coming; also its relations to the church, the Jews as a separate people, and to the nations. The anti-Christ and Satan will figure conspicuously for a time. The rapturous ascent of God's real children to meet and greet Jesus "in the air" will be a wonderful and brilliant event. The blissful millennium and the "great tribulation" will follow Christ's coming. All have a bearing on the same. Surely here these and various other startling things is ample and diversified material for profound study and almost endless Scriptural Proclamation with voice and pen.

Verily the Word of God constitutes a "harp" of many melodious strains to those who listen in to catch them. O Lord, adapt our spiritual ears more fully to the music of the Holy Spirit's harp! A very few of the strains are: "I will come again," "Hold fast till I come," "Occupy till I come," "At His coming," "Love His appearing," "Looking for His appearing," "Waiting for Christ." Angels declared that He would come as He went, boldly and visibly. "Behold, I come quickly." "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

Christ will come first "in the air" for His saints (I. Thess. 4:15-17) and some time afterwards with them to end the tribulation (Jude 14; Rev. 1:7; Zech. 14:4, 5, 6) and introduce the glorious millennium on the earth of one thousand years (Rev. 20:4, 6). Then will follow the great "white throne" judgment (Rev. 20:11-14), which facts prove what is usually termed the second coming of Christ will be pre-millennial.

Omitting various intervening facts, permitting me to urge that we do not minimize the majestic doctrine of the Lord's return. And when some one preaches or writes on the subject, or on related events, even less frequently and ardently than some inspired writers did, let us not characterize it lightly or unworthily. Instead let us pray that we may see its vastness and glory as never heretofore, and praise God that when Jesus "shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Hallelujah!

—Rev. A. W. Orwig.

Again the enemy will try to get at the springs of the heart and get the child of God to cease praise.—*Heart and Life.*