

A WORD TO THE UNREPENTANT

by John Colquhoun (1748-1827)

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

—Act 17:30-31

THE following directions how to attain evangelical repentance I would now offer to the unrepentant sinner.

1. *Look upon it as the gift of Christ*, and trust that your iniquities were laid on Him, and that He was pierced for them (Zec 12:10). Trust also in Him for true repentance, and in God through Him for pardoning mercy and renewing grace. You should attempt believing in order to the exercise of evangelical repentance, and should rely on the grace of God in Christ for the renovating influences of His Holy Spirit.

2. *Choose God in Christ for your covenant-God and portion*, and then you will be both disposed and encouraged to return to Him. To return to God as the Lord your God is the essence of evangelical repentance (Isa 55:7).

3. *Be frequent and persistent in prayer to Him for the gift of true repentance*, saying with Ephraim, “Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God” (Jer 31:18). Pray in faith for the performance of this absolute promise to you: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Eze 36:26).

4. *Endeavor to see sin in its own hateful colors*, to see what an evil and bitter thing it is (Jer 2:19). To see the sin of your heart and life in its exceeding sinfulness and odiousness would be a means of making you flee from it with deep abhorrence. And if you would discern spiritually the hateful deformity of sin, consider the infinite majesty and holiness of God that are insulted by sin, the good things that impenitent continuance in sin deprives you of, the dreadful evils to which it exposes you, the infinite wrath of God that awaits you if you live and die impenitent, and the infinite obligation under which you lie to keep all His commandments.

5. *Study to see and to be suitably affected with the deep depravity or sin of your nature*, as well as with the innumerable transgressions of your life; and call yourself every day to a strict account for your sins of omission and commission on that day—[all] in order to see what great reason you have to repent of them.

6. *Meditate frequently and attentively on the awful anguish and astonishing death of the Lord Jesus*, [so] that you may see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the everlasting punishment which the sinner deserves.

7. *Dwell much on the thoughts of death and of judgment to come*. Consider seriously how uncertain is the continuance of your life in this world. Be assured that if death surprise you in

unbelief and impenitence, you are forever undone. Think also of the awful tribunal of that righteous, uncompromising Judge—Whose eyes are as a flame of fire, before Whom you must appear—where every finally impenitent sinner shall, according to the demerits of his deeds done in the body, be sentenced to everlasting punishment. Oh! How tremendous, how overwhelming will be the sentence pronounced on the impenitent: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mat 25:41)! Oh, consider this, and by faith and repentance flee speedily from the wrath to come.

If you say, “I am not able to repent,” this will be no excuse; for true repentance is a part of salvation, offered and promised in the gospel—and the offer and promise are directed to you (1Jo 5:11; Pro 1:23; Act 2:38-39). If you say, “I cannot believe those offers and promises with application to myself,” neither will this be accepted as an excuse, for the offer and promise of faith to believe them are also addressed to you (Rev 22:17; Mat 12:21; Heb 4:1). Upon the ground of the offer, then, trust in Christ Jesus for the grace of true repentance; and [based on] the promise, attempt frequently the exercise of faith.

Oh, be persuaded, while it is called today, to repent and turn from all your transgressions so [that] iniquity shall not be your ruin. “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die” (Eze 33:11)! “Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil” (Joel 2:12-13).

Oh, comply with these compassionate and tender invitations! And if you would return to the Lord by true repentance, believe in order to repent. Believe, with application to yourself, the commands and curses of the Law as a violated covenant of works, in order to obtain true conviction of your sin and misery. And then believe with particular application the declarations, offers, and promises of the blessed gospel; in order to obtain such a faith-view of the mercy of God in Christ, as will dispose and encourage you to exercise that evangelical repentance which will be acceptable to Him. Trust in the Redeemer, that exalted Prince and Saviour, for repentance unto life; and pray in His name to the God of all grace for “the spirit of grace and of supplications,” to enable you to look upon Him Whom you have pierced, and to mourn for Him (Zec 12:10). ❧

“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.” (Act 3:19)

“Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.” (Jer 2:19)

“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.” (Isa 55:7)

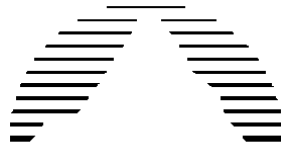
“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” (Act 5:31)

“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” (Luk 13:3, 5)

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