

Satan's Diabolical Plan For The Church!

Repentance: The Missing Note in Present-Day Preaching

Christ's First and Last Texts

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Satan's complete spiritual program is to make the world religious without Christ, according to Isa. 14:14, 'I will be like the most High. "Satan's chief program today is religion without regeneration, reformation without heartfelt repentance, and civilization without Christ as a Substitute for the new birth. Satan puts over his religious, Christless program through unsaved preachers who pose as angels of light, according to II Cor. 11:13-15. God does not win souls on the production line, but He makes every individual personally responsible. Salvation in Christ is an individual, personal matter expressed in these words, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20).

Preachers who believe, preach, and practice decision for Christ and think in terms of numbers have to substitute man-made methods for Holy Spirit conviction and old-time Bible repentance in order to be able to reach their goal of additions to the churches. This results in:

- ✓ religion without life
- ✓ profession without possession
- ✓ church membership without the new birth
- ✓ and, has loaded our churches with both:
 - unsaved preachers
 - and, unsaved church members

Satan, according to John 8:44, is the father-in-law of every saved person who is married to a Christ rejecter. That is the reason so many churches are in a constant stew and their members are hard-boiled. They live in hot water all the time while hen-pecked pastors and deacons are afraid to speak out against sin, over their bossy wives. Such preachers draw their breath, draw their salaries, and play the crowds while Satan pulls their playboys into Hell. There are five kinds of preachers:

- ✓ first, self-called
- ✓ second, parent-called
- ✓ third, pastor-called
- ✓ fourth, evangelist-called
- ✓ fifth, God-called.

If you want a picture of organized religion in these days in which we are living, read II Tim. 3:1-7, and then weep. This condition is largely due to the fact that the average preacher is covetous and self-willed, and hates the truth of God's Word, especially Bible repentance. A preacher came to my office one day and said, "Brother Shelton, you are a disgrace to the Baptist ministry, because you preach on the Doctrine of Repentance!" I know my preaching on the Doctrine of Repentance is "unwholesome, embarrassing and disturbing" to every unsaved religionist, whether in the pulpit or the pew, because under the power of God's Holy Spirit it exposes his wicked heart, his hellish practices and his unsaved condition. For him to acknowledge that I am right is to acknowledge that he is wrong, and he would

rather hold to his unbelief and save his reputation and go to Hell.

My subject today is, "Christ's First and Last Texts." In Matt. 1:17 we find these words, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. " This was Christ's first text. He opened His campaign of preaching by saying, "Repent." Then Christ closed His ministry here on earth after His resurrection by giving His disciples the message of repentance to preach while He was gone. It is found in Luke 24:47, "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. " We note from God's Word that these two texts on repentance represent the main subject on which Christ preached during His earthly ministry. Christ began His ministry crying, "Repent." He closed His earthly ministry by saying to the apostles, "Call the world to repentance." If my preaching on repentance has disgraced the ministry, I am in company with my blessed Lord, because, when I repented and took my place as a doomed, damned, lost, Hell-deserving sinner at the feet of my risen Lord, realizing that He could save me or damn me, I had but one plea, that Christ died and He died for me and God saved me! Let me say again, the sinner meets Christ at the Mercy Seat; God meets the sinner in repentance. The emphasis the Lord Jesus Christ put on repentance clearly sets forth the importance of the subject. No sinner can enter into the blessings of the atonement without repentance. No sinner can build a firm, religious superstructure that will stand the storms of God's eternal wrath without repentance. It is repent or perish, turn or bum! There can be no saving faith apart from heartfelt repentance.

Let us look at the origin of repentance. I know men everywhere call me foolish because I preach repentance, because I call men to repentance. Repentance unto salvation is found only, and is given only in and through the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Man, apart from Holy Spirit conviction under the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, will never repent. The Law never offers pardon to those who repent. The Law pronounces only a deadly curse, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die " (Ezek. 18:4, 20). Repentance is a Gospel grace. Christ preached it; Moses never did. Christ's whole ministry was calling men to repentance. He said, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"

(Matt. 9:13). The Lord Jesus Christ gives pardon to those who seek it with mourning and with tears. Repentance, if ever obtained by a poor, trembling sinner, must be found at the cross where mercy sits enthroned over the shattered pieces of the Law. God met the Jew at the Mercy Seat; underneath the Mercy Seat was the broken Law.

Sinner, come to the Mercy Seat, taking your place as a condemned sinner.

Sinner, come to the Mercy Seat, taking your place as a lost sinner.

Sinner, come to the Mercy Seat-come empty handed.

Come to the Mercy Seat realizing your only hope is the shed blood of the Son of God.

Come to the Crucified One, who died in your place, but come empty-handed.

Come as a condemned sinner, and God will meet you there.

I know repentance is not, and never was produced in any man's heart apart from the grace of God, but I believe I am speaking to a large number in radio land whose hearts have been opened by the grace of God, and who have been brought to see that you cannot save yourselves. Throw up your hands, give up, recognize yourself as lost, undone, helpless, condemned, deserving to go to Hell, and cry for mercy on one basis-that Christ died for such a lost sinner as you are. Nature can imitate repentance; it can produce remorse and lead to a partial reform, but it can never create a new being. Nature can make the eyes weep, but it cannot make the heart bleed. May the Spirit of the Living God lead you to the Mercy Seat, helpless, hopeless, doomed, and damned, and God will meet you there, pardon you, and forgive you because Christ died for just such a sinner as you.

Someone has said that repentance is a precious medicine compounded of certain essential ingredients.

Then this precious box of ointment must be broken over the head of the Saviour by faith before the sweet perfume of peace can ever be smelled in the soul. I want to call your attention to four most costly things that go to make up this precious box of ointment mixed by the Saviour's gracious hand. True repentance is compounded:

first, of illumination

second, humiliation

third, detestation

fourth, transformation

Now, let us look at true repentance, which consists, first, of illumination. Man by nature is impenitent and does not know that he is guilty. God knows it, and has known it all the time-nothing is hid from the eye of God. God has already judged man guilty and sentenced him to die: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4, 20)"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Man in his natural state, unawakened by the Holy Spirit, untouched by the Gospel of grace, is a criminal, a fugitive from justice, condemned to die, and under a reprieve waiting the day of execution. But he does not know it! Repentance is one of the first medicines God uses on the soul. He commands the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ to shine into that heart (II Cor. 4:3-6), thereby touching the eyes of the understanding, and enlightening the darkened heart. And man becomes guilty in his own sight. Man begins to see that he has been guilty, and that Christ did not come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved (John 3:17). Man has been condemned all the while in God's sight, but he was ignorant of his condemnation. May I say again, the only thing that God has to do for a soul to go to Hell is to let him alone in his spiritual darkness, in his spiritual graveyard, and he will go to Hell without warning. But when God begins to illuminate a heart by turning the spotlight upon guilty man, then crimes long forgotten start up like ghosts at midnight. Sins that were long forgotten now parade themselves like soldiers in battle array. He begins to realize that sin does not die with old age! He not only sees his transgressions, his trespasses, his acts of sin, but all his old sin-nature of covetousness, pride, envy, jealousy, etc., all come to the surface. He sees that his entire nature is corrupt and vile, that all his natural goodness he thought he had has vanished with the wind, and he stands naked before a sovereign God

(Heb. 4:12, 13). As God turns the searchlight of the Gospel, through the power of the Holy Spirit, on his innermost being, he finds himself shut up with his sins and his sin-nature, and for the first time he sees them in their true light. When God throws back the skylight of his soul and says to him, "Look, sinner, look!" he sees for the first time the cobwebs, the bats and the owls, the filth and the dirt, the darkness, the wickedness, and the corruption of his own nature. For the first time in his life, there goes up from his lips a cry for mercy. There must come the illumination of his heart before he will ever see his need of Christ. If my preaching Bible repentance is a disgrace, I thank God for it, if only you get saved. It is a disgrace only in the eyes of unsaved preachers and unsaved religionists.

The next ingredient of true repentance, following illumination, is humiliation. Pride must go, and pride will go when once the heart is illuminated by the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ under the power of God's Holy Spirit. When God turns the searchlight in upon the sinner's heart and reveals to that soul its true condition, he bows before God stripped of all his boastings-he is destrutted, deflated and crying for mercy. Once you talked proudly of your merit and boasted of your good life, but now under the illuminating power of God's Holy Spirit you dare not name it. Once you could boast before God that you were better than other men, but now you stand at a guilty distance. All smiles are gone, and you are left crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" There was a day when you fondly imagined that all things were possible to you, but now you find yourself unable to repent. With all boastings gone, the sinner sees himself as the chief of sinners. He forgets everyone else; he takes all the blame for his own condition and justifies God in everything. He continually cries, "God be merciful to me the sinner!" Others may be lost; others may be condemned, but he cries, "It is I, Lord, that stand in the need of salvation!" The soul weeps day and night, for he is vexed with himself as he sees the way he has treated God. He begins to feel that

Hell is his just desert, and that if God should leave him there he would get only what he deserves, he would reap only the harvest his sins have sown. Such a sinner says, "Amen," to his own condemnation.

As the Holy Spirit continues to illuminate the heart of the sinner, he comes to acknowledge not only his guilt, but the justice of the penalty as well as the guilt of sin. If a sinner never comes to acknowledge the justice of the penalty of his sin and say, "Amen," to his condemnation, his repentance is only a mockery. May I say to every awakened sinner:

Down on your face!

Down on your knees.

Put away all your planning, and take your place at the feet of the Lord God of Heaven as a guilty sinner.

Acknowledge God is just; acknowledge that you ought to go to Hell.

Anoint not thine head, but fast, and bow thy head, and mourn.

You have made Heaven mourn; you have digged Hell for yourself.

Confess your iniquity with shame.

Bow down before the God of mercy and acknowledge that if He spare thee it will be His sovereign free mercy; and if He chooses to destroy thee, not one word could you utter against the justice of His sentence.

Every sinner out of Christ deserves to go to Hell, ought to go to Hell, and is unfit to be saved; and if he is ever saved, it is because of the mercy of God through Christ Jesus, who died on the tree as your substitute and paid your sin-debt in full.

When the Holy Spirit so strips the sinner and works repentance in his heart, sometimes he sinks so low even to long for death that he might escape the burden which soul humiliation has cast upon him. Seeing himself so wicked and so unfit to be saved, I have heard the sinner cry, "Lord, send me on to Hell, where I belong." Let me cry unto you with all the pathos of my heart: Stop your mouth, awakened sinner and become guilty before God, that you may feel the keen sword of God's justice as it lays bare your totally-depraved heart and brings you to the place of a lost sinner before God.

Now, let us look at the third ingredient in this compound of precious ointment, and we find that it is detestation. The sinner must go beyond feeling sorry for his sins; he must come to the place where he hates sin. Every sinner who really and truly repents comes to the place where he abhors and detests his old sin nature, and cries out against it. If there is true repentance in your heart, it will rise and slay sin. True repentance will pull every idol from your heart; true repentance will break them in pieces and grind them to powder. True repentance ceases to blame any one else, but takes all the blame and comes to loathe sin in the soul and hate the very name of it. The sinner who is always accusing others in his heart or by his lips, and says that the world has mistreated him, or mistreated his or her loved ones, has never repented and knows nothing about true, heartfelt repentance. A penitent sinner cannot bear himself in the house of the profane, nor in the assembly of the wicked. He knows that he is an outcast and does not deserve to be in the company of the saints or in the house of God. "But, where can I go?" cries the sinner. "I cannot go back to the world; it is under condemnation, it is going down to the pit. I have to flee from it!" He will slip into the house of the Lord; he will take his place among the saints of God with one thought in mind: "Maybe God will have mercy upon me." My sinner-friend, if you have not come to the place that you so hate sin as to be ready to give it up, then you have not truly repented. My awakened sinner, if you cannot forsake sin, if you have not come to the place that you loathe it and cry out against it, then you do not know the grace of God in truth. If you love sin, you love neither God nor yourself. May God deliver you this moment from such a wretched state of heart and bring you to hate sin, to detest it, and cry out against it. May the cry of your heart be, "Lord, break me at Thy feet until I come to loathe

and to hate and to despise and detest the sin that has made Thee mourn and has nailed Thee to the cross.”

The awakened sinner sees that he is an enemy of the ever blessed Jehovah Jesus. He cries out, “My chains are the chains of sin. I lie at the mercy of Jehovah God. As I pray, I see more and more this plague of my own heart. I feel more and more my own weakness.” He ceases to blame anyone else and says, “If I am ever saved, it must be by the energy of the Almighty.” He cries out, “I am unholy; I am a child of the devil. I am a partaker with devils. I must be born again, or I perish. I must believe on the Son of God, or remain condemned. My condemnation is just. I have no excuse for not relying upon His offered mercy. Here I lie athirst by the fresh fountain of the water of life, and still I cannot stoop and drink. This reveals my sin, my sin of rejecting Christ and His salvation.” Then he cries, “Where shall I look for help? Is there no power to remedy my disease?” Then he cries, “O God, break this stubborn will of mine! Let Thy sword of justice lay bare this stubborn, depraved heart. O God, save me or I perish! If I am ever saved, it will be by Thy grace, and Thy grace alone. I am helpless and hopeless, and doomed, and damned.” When the sinner gets there, he is getting to the place of repentance where God will take notice of him and come to his rescue and deliver him for Jesus’ sake.

Now let us look at the fourth element in true repentance, and that is, a thorough transformation. The truly penitent sinner not only hates sin, abhors sin, but he is ready to leave his own way, to forsake his own thoughts, and follow The Way, for Christ said, “I am the way” (John 14:6). God does not save a sinner in his sins; He saves the sinner from his sins. Satan’s theology is, “Bring a sinner to a decision for Christ, get him into the church, baptize him, and then lead him away from his sins later on.” God’s theology is, “A sinner must first be broken and brought to the place where he will abandon every false way and tear down every idol from his heart, pull every viper from his bosom and slay it at the feet of Christ. If he is too helpless to do it, he cries out unto God to do it. He is not satisfied until it is done. His hatred for sin leads him to cry out against it, for strength to desert it, for power to destroy it, for God to deliver him and bring him to Christ for salvation.”

Let us notice briefly, in conclusion, some companions of true repentance:

The first companion of true, heartfelt, Bible repentance is faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. True repentance always leads to Christ, leads to the believing and to the saving of the soul. As Paul expresses it, “From faith to faith” (Rom. 1:17). Repentance that does not lead to faith in Christ for salvation is not Bible repentance.

The second companion of true Bible repentance is confession. The awakened sinner comes to know something of himself, and he tells all he knows before the throne of God’s grace. His heart is poured out in confession before God. True repentance keeps back no secrets; he knows that God knows all about his heart. Repentance sighs over sin; confession tells it out. Repentance feels the heavy load of sin within; confession delivers it. Repentance produces a fire in the soul; it is confession that gives vent, and the soul flames upward toward God. Repentance groans with groanings that cannot be uttered; confession is the voice which expresses the groans.

True repentance is a broken and a contrite heart at the feet of Christ. Sinner, take your place there; ask God to bring you there. Down before Him!

It is turn or burn, repent or perish!

The remorse of the evangelical penitent is a sorrowful remorse, a deep contrition of heart, not so much for the punishment to which he has exposed himself, as for the indignity he has done to a holy, a gracious, and

a merciful God ... Trusting that the spotless Lamb of God was pierced for his iniquities, the true penitent mourns, not so much for himself as for Him. And so real, so deep is his penitential sorrow that though there were no conscience to accuse, no judge to condemn, no devil to affright, no hell to torment, yet he would mourn and be in bitterness for having offended that God who has loved him, pierced that Saviour who died for him, and grieved that Spirit who sanctifies and comforts him.

By: John Colquhoun

May “I am”, The Father - The Son Christ Jesus, bless you through The Holy Spirit!

In Christ's name... Bill Fields
