

# A FEW WORDS ON REPENTANCE.

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*Visitor.*—John, do you know that you are a sinner ?

*J. R.*—Why—yes, Sir,—no doubt I am a sinner—but I hope I aint worse than other people. I never did nobody any harm, that I know of—nobody but myself.

*Visitor.*—Then you don't think you are very bad John ; you don't think you have many sins against you ?

*J. R.*—Why—I hope not, Sir, I have sworn sometimes no doubt—and such like.

*Visitor.*—You have ? and don't you think swearing and such like, very wicked ?

*J. R.*—Yes—Sir, 'tis wrong no doubt—but then I always repented of it after I did it.

*Visitor.*—Repented of it did you, John ? And what do you think your repenting of your swearing did ?

*J. R.*—God Almighty forgives it then—Sir.

*Visitor.*—Why does God forgive sin when people repent John ?

*J. R.*—Why—Sir ?—I am sure I hardly know. I am no scholar. But I suppose it must be because they repent of it—and don't go on with it—isn't that it—Sir ?

*Visitor.*—I was afraid you thought so John. You think, then, that your repentance and better conduct obtains for you the forgiveness of your sins—don't you ?

*J. R.*—I do—Sir. That's what I have always been taught—and I hope I have repented of all my sins.

*Visitor.*—It grieves me much to hear you say so—John First,—because it shows me how ignorant you are of your sinfulness—and of your danger ; and Secondly, because I see you do not know the way, the only way too, by which your sins can be put away. And it seems your very teachers have led you wrong.

*J. R.*—Why—Sir—I used to go—

*Visitor.*—Never mind were you went, John. If you were taught that your repentance could put away your sins, or that God would forgive you and save you, because you repented, and tried to do better, you were taught what is false—go where you may.

*J. R.*—But, Sir, must men go on and sin, and not repent, but care nothing about it.

*Visitor.*—Most surely not, John. Remember I have not said that repentance is wrong—or that to leave off sinning is wrong;—what I have said is that it is wrong to expect that your repentance and better conduct will get you the forgiveness of your sins from God.

*J. R.*—What, will, then, Sir, if repenting of our sins wont ?

*Visitor.*—THE BLOOD OF JESUS—John ! What has so troubled me when I have talked with you on these matters, is, that I never hear you say a word about what *Jesus has done* in order that we might be forgiven and saved. You always speak of your own doings;—your prayers—or your repentance—or your having lived better of late years—or your having gone to a place of worship on Sundays;—but you never have any thing to say about what *Jesus has done*. It is to what the blessed Jesus has done that God points us, as the means of salvation. You have surely heard that Jesus, the Lamb of God, shed his blood on the cross to save sinners ?

*J. R.*—Yes, Sir, I've heard that.

*Visitor.*—Well, it is because of what Jesus then did that God forgives sinners. All who put their trust in Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, are justified from all things; and by and by they will reign with Christ in his glorious and blessed kingdom. God so loved sinners that He gave His only blessed Son to die for them; and Jesus so loved sinners, that He willingly died to save them; and now God makes known what His blessed Son has done; and He says that it is quite sufficient to enable Him to forgive the very chief of sinners. God does not say to the sinner, You must do this thing, or that thing, in order to obtain my forgiveness—but God says—See what my

Son has done—He has laid down His life in order to save sinners; He has poured out His precious blood as the price of their salvation;—and now every sinner who puts his trust in that blood, shall be freely justified and fully saved.

Now, John, don't you see the difference between trusting in your own repentance, or prayers, or the like, and trusting in what Jesus has done?

*J. R.*—Why yes, Sir—I think I see what you mean; and it all sounds very good. But then repentance must come in *too* I think.

*Visitor.*—No John, repentance must *not* come in *too* in the way in which you bring it in. Repentance is very right—God looks for it from us—He always produces it in those who truly believe;—repentance, therefore, has its place but repentance must not be put in the wrong place in which you put it.

*J. R.*—What wrong place do I put it in, Sir?

*Visitor.* You make it the ground of your hope of forgiveness—John—and this is a very terrible mistake. Your faith is in your repentance, whereas God tells you to put faith only in Jesus and His blood. You take your repentance and prayers to God and offer them to Him as the price of salvation—but God tells you that the only price which can purchase salvation is “the precious blood of Christ.” God tells you of the true foundation—even Jesus—but you are trusting a foundation of your own. And depend on it your building will not stand—John. You will find out one day or other that God is true who has said—“Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid—which is Christ Jesus.”

*J. R.*—What I always thought was, that when we did any thing bad we must repent of it, and do better, and then Almighty God and our saviour would forgive us, if we asked them. That's what I think—Sir.

*Visitor.*—I have no doubt of it—John. And sorry I am to see it so with you. I am not so much surprised you should think this, it is the common thought of man's heart;—but I am greatly shocked that you should have been taught it by any who profess to make known the way

of man's salvation. The fact is—the work of Christ on the cross, as the one who died the just for the unjust, is not your trust or your ground of hope. Instead of that you are trusting to your own conduct, repentance, and prayers. And to this ground you seem disposed to cling. But I warn you that this is false and rotten foundation. It will give way at last, and let all who trust to it down into hell!

*J. R.*—I hope it won't be so with me—Sir.

*Visitor.*—It will—John;—unless you put your trust entirely in the precious blood of Jesus. I dare not say otherwise—for God says, He that believeth in Him shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned!

You may have thought John, that God required repentance from you as the price of forgiveness—or that your sins were so few and light, that a little repentance, and a few good thoughts, and so on, would put all right,—but all this is false. This is what Satan would like you to think, until it is too late;—for, when once you are dead, the hour of salvation is past for ever. But the blessed and kind God wishes you to know the real state of the case. He is your friend, though you have so sinned against Him, and he sends word to you about what Jesus His Son has suffered and done, and God exhorts you to put your whole trust in that. Now, which is it best to believe—Satan, or God?

*J. R.*—God, Sir, of course.

*Visitor.*—You are right in that—John. Why then do you not believe God? Why do you not put your trust wholly in Jesus and his work—and especially when God so tenderly and solemnly exhorts you to do so?

But I must go now—John. Another day we may speak more of the matter. But, remember, what I have tried to shew you, is—that you are a guilty, lost, helpless sinner, and that Jesus is the only Saviour;—and my parting word to you is “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

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