

“UNDER THE SUN”

This sermon is considered to be one of the best that Billy Sunday ever preached.



“What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?” (Eccl. 1:3)

THIS question is asked and answered by King Solomon, and in our language it means about this: *“What good does a man get out of life if he lives only for what this world can give?”*

If any man has ever been able to give the right answer to this great question, out of his own wisdom and experience, that man was Solomon. If any man ever came into this world with a gold spoon in his mouth, he certainly did. The devil has a mortgage on some people from the cradle, but Solomon had no such handicap, for he was well born. He was the

favorite son of one of the greatest and best men who ever lived, for his father, King David, was a man after God's own heart, which means that he just suited the Lord.

Solomon was made king of a great kingdom in his early manhood, while his father was still alive to counsel and help him. From this we see that he had every advantage that high station and boundless wealth and opportunity could give him. He had wisdom, riches, wealth and honor such as no king ever had before him or since.

An invincible army stood ready to do his bidding, and all the power of a great nation that was under the special protection and favor of God was behind him. He had only to

command, and it was done; to express a wish, and it was gratified. He had received the best education it was possible to give him, and was called the wisest of men. The fame of his wisdom covered the earth, and caused the Queen of Sheba, with a great retinue, to make a long pilgrimage of weary weeks and months, to sit at his feet in wonder. She looked upon the beauty of his wonderful palace and the magnificent temple he had built. She reviewed his matchless army; considered the numbers of men who served him and the elegance of their livery; then she looked in amazement upon the wealth of gold and precious things that surrounded him, and took her departure, declaring that the half had not been told her.

This is the kind of ability Solomon had with which to answer his own question. He wrote three thousand proverbs and a thousand and five songs, all full of wisdom. If he wasn't qualified to speak as an expert, where can we find one?

Let us see how well qualified he was to know what he was talking about from his own actual experience. Every great pleasure was at his fingertips. If he wanted anything he had only to reach out his soft-jeweled hand and take it. His kingdom had peace and rest from war during all of his reign, so that he had plenty of time to enjoy himself. And from what he says of himself he lost no time, for he took about all the degrees and invented a few of his

own. He was a thirty-third degree sport.

He lived in a palace, surrounded by courtiers who were not spring chickens, and all highbrows themselves. He was honored, admired and flattered as few men have been. No greater honor than his could be known, no greater wisdom found in any books, and no higher station attained. He was so rich that his wealth could not be



measured. He had forty-thousand horses and twenty-thousand horsemen. The high cost of living never troubled him, for his provisions for his household and attendants one day were two hundred and eighty-one bushels of fine flour; five hundred and sixty-six bushels of meal; ten fat oxen out of the stall; twenty oxen out of the pasture; one hundred sheep, besides hart, roebuck, fallow deer and fatted fowl.

Solomon had no ambition that had not been achieved; no curiosity that had not been satisfied. Like his princely father, he was a close observer, and nothing escaped him, so that he was able to say, *"I have seen all the works that are done under the sun,"* meaning that the world had nothing more to show him or to give him and that was certainly going some.

At some time in our lives we have all envied men of great scholarship and

intellectual attainments, and have thought of what a foretaste of heaven it would be to have the time and opportunity to learn all the things we would like to know. We have believed that one of the greatest joys this life could give is the joy of knowing things. Well, Solomon not only drank that well dry, but he pulled out the pump, for he exhausted all the schools and colleges of his day, and gave all his teachers nervous prostration in their vain endeavor to teach him something more than he already knew. And then when he had pumped that fountain dry, he sighed and said, *Go to, now; I will see what I can get out of mirth and pleasure,"* and then he cut loose on that line, and began to carry on in a way to make a baseball fan at the world's series look like a dummy in a clothing store window.

He got into his golden chariot with the diamond-set wheels and went round the track in a way to set the bleachers crazy. At breakneck speed he galloped over the rose-lined avenues of sensuous pleasures that opened for him in every direction, looking as if they led straight to paradise; but ere long his shining car of delight lost a wheel and he was down in the mud again, and crying out to any who might be following in his wake, *"Go back! Don't come this way, for here all is vanity and vexation of spirit!"*

Then he took to wine and the rosiest kind of dissipation. He hit up the booze. He tried a lot of things. He had a great natatorium built that was supported by great lions. Then he began to love many strange women, laying hold on folly with both hands. That's where he struck out. He had seven hundred wives

and three hundred concubines, but soon had to give the same verdict as before, and again cry out, *"Vanity, vanity; all is vanity!"*

Then he thinks he has discovered something really substantial, and so goes to building great works and houses, chief of which is the magnificent temple, still called by his name. It required seven years to build it, and took the combined efforts of one hundred and eighty-three thousand Jews and strangers to do the work. It took ten thousand men eleven years to cut the trees. There were eighty-thousand hewers of wood, and seventy-thousand burden bearers. There were eighty-thousand squared stones, all so perfectly shaped in the quarries that the sound of neither hammer nor mallet was heard in putting them together in the temple.

At the completion of the work there was a feast of seven days at its dedication, and Solomon sacrificed one hundred and twenty-thousand sheep and twenty-thousand oxen.

The temple was built of white marble, so artfully joined that it appeared like one stone. The roof was of olive wood, covered with pure gold. That is where the idea of covering the domes of many of our capitol buildings with gold leaf originated. When the sunshine fell on the temple its splendor was so dazzling that the eyes were almost blinded.

The temple courts and apartments could house three hundred thousand people. There were fourteen hundred and fifty-three columns of Parian (fine white) marble; twenty-nine hundred and six pilasters or columns. Over three billion dollars worth of gold was used. One billion

dollars worth of silver was used on the floors and walls, which were overlaid with gold and silver.



There were two hundred targets of beaten gold, with six hundred shekels of gold in each target. There were three hundred targets with three hundred shekels in each target. There were three hundred shields of beaten gold, with three pounds of gold in each shield, and the value of the gold that came to Solomon in one year was about twenty millions of dollars. When the temple was dedicated the glory of God filled it.

Then Solomon turned his great talent and wealth toward making a beautiful Jerusalem, by planting vineyards and laying out gardens that were like Fairyland, and then like a tale of magic he produced orchards, in which he had a great collection of the finest and rarest trees in all the world. Trees from every clime, and flowers of every kind and hue were there, and all these were kept green and beautiful by irrigation from artificial lakes. It is doubtful if the world had ever seen greater beauty than Solomon with his unlimited power produced in Jerusalem at that time, but even

all this pleased his fancy only for a little while, and soon he seems to have nothing but dust in his mouth, and again cries out, *"All is vanity!"*

But almost immediately he seems to have taken up another whim, and says, I got me servants and maidens, and also had great possessions of great and small cattle, above all that were in Jerusalem before me. I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings, and of the provinces. I got me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts, meaning, no doubt, that he became an art collector, and began to feed on the beautiful, the artistic and esthetic, somewhat as millionaires are doing now, securing for himself the very best to be had in painting, old china, bric-a-brac, sculpture, musical instruments, singers and performers, and then at voluptuous ease he would lie on a princely couch that seemed almost to float in the air, and drink to the full all he could get out of them in the way of enjoyment.

But presently he is again almost dying with disappointment, and crying out in the same old doleful tone, *"All is vanity and vexation of spirit!"*

Meaning that there was nothing in it all but an empty puff of air that could only fill a bubble for a moment. And then he goes on to say, So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; and whatever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor. Then I looked on all the works my hands had wrought, and on the

labor that I had labored to do, and, *"Behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun!"*

And so this wise and honored and wealthy man goes on drinking first from one golden cup and then another, only to dash them all away as soon as tasted in bitter disappointment, and then after he had tried them all, to say, *"Not one can satisfy!"* confirming what his father David had said in the statement, *"The young lions do lack and suffer hunger,"* and just what every millionaire on earth today knows from his own experience.

To find starvation of the most awful kind today, don't go down into the slums, but go to the people who are enormously wealthy. Andrew Carnegie says there are no happy millionaires, and Andy ought to know, for he's got the dough. John D. Rockefeller has about as good as confessed that he got more out of the first thousand dollars he made than out of any ten millions he has made since, and today he is perhaps the hungriest man in all the world.

Every man wants to be satisfied. I do. So do you. Everyone is reaching out for happiness and peace and rest. There are men before me who have tried many things in pursuit of happiness. You have climbed high and you have probed deep, and some of you have not found what you have sought. All who are here are on the verge of eternity. The past is simply a memory, the future an uncertainty. No matter how old you are; no matter if your hair is gray; no matter what your bank account may be; some of you must say, *"I have not found happiness. I am a*



failure. My life has been a failure. All is vanity and vexation of spirit!"

Why don't you be a man? Why don't you show a man's courage, and take up the cross of the Son of God? Why don't you rise to what you might be? We were all meant for better things. You were never meant for the slop and the swill barrels of the devil. Why do you let the devil control you? Why do you let him make you a pawn on the board on which he plays his game?

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread? Is there any bread in rum? Ask the poor fellows who have been spending their earnings for drink during all these years. Ask their wives and their children. No bread for them. Ask the saloonkeeper. There is bread in it for him, but none for those who drink what he sells.

But to go back to Solomon's doleful cry of "All is vanity!" What does it mean? Was Solomon a dyspeptic, as most millionaires are? Have you ever noticed that it takes more

"Was Solomon really starving while apparently feeding on the finest of the wheat?"

religion to make a dyspeptic smile than it does to make a healthy man shout? Was there something wrong with Solomon's liver, or what was the matter? Was the trouble all with Solomon, or is all creation out of joint? Is there no good to be found in any of the things with which he employed his time? Is going to school no better than wasting time in idleness?

Does a keen appreciation of the beautiful carry with it a curse and not a blessing? Is there no benefit in architecture, music or sculpture? Is there nothing but evil in wealth, wisdom and high station in life? Was Solomon really starving while apparently feeding on the finest of the wheat? He said so many things that appear to contradict all he said about vanity and vexation of spirit and so what does it mean?

But wait a moment. Here is something that seems to throw light on the matter. When Solomon says, "All is vanity," he also says, "under the sun," and that shows the standpoint from which he drew his conclusions. What we see as we go through life always depends upon where we stand to look. Many a man who tries to talk as if he were standing on a mountain, shows by what he says that he is up to his eyes in the mud.

When a man tells you that the whisky business is a good thing for the country, you know that he is looking at things through the eyes of a brewer or a saloonkeeper, and not through the eyes of a father who has a son that has become a drunkard.

When a man tells you that he don't believe in foreign missions, you know that he don't know any more about what pure and undefiled religion is than a jack rabbit knows about running for president. From what he says you know the viewpoint from which he has come to his conclusion. To know a man's viewpoint is to know why he sees the thing he claims to see, and now we know why Solomon said, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit!" It was because he was looking at things from the viewpoint of "under the sun." As if a man could tell what a

rainbow was like while standing on his head in a dark cellar.

In the little book of Ecclesiastes, from which the text is taken, the expression "under the sun " occurs thirty-one times, as if Solomon wanted everyone to understand that what he said therein was said from the standpoint of low ground. The great king was looking at things from a low, sensual, materialistic plane, and from that viewpoint every word he said was true. Take away God, take away the Bible, take away inspiration and revelation, take away all hope of a better life in the world to come, destroy all thought of resurrection, and put in its place nothing but hopeless and endless night, and you have nothing left that

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is worth living for. The life of the greatest and wisest man is then no better than that of a fool. The best fruits of the world would then turn to ashes on the lips, and it were better to die than to live.

Blot out everything except what we can know through our senses, and keep from us all light from a source higher than the sun, and the very best this life can give is worse than nothing at all. Destroy in every man the divine spark that tells him there is a God, and that there is a beyond, and every grave would hold a suicide. Let all hope die, and despair would reign.



We have only begun to know a little about the soul when we discover that nothing under the sun can satisfy it. It was this great truth

"All the gold mines in the world have not given up treasure enough to satisfy the man who has a greed for gain."

Solomon began to realize after he found nothing but disappointment in the very best the world could give him. Under the sun nothing lasts; nothing endures; nothing satisfies. No sooner do we begin to think we have a thing safe forever than it is gone. We love but to lose. Whatever we have is ours but for one brief moment, and the anguish of our loss is a wound that never heals. No happiness is possible without the hope of certainty, and the thing we feel we must have mocks us as it flies. No fountain under the sun can hold enough to satisfy an immortal spirit, and that very fact proves us to be spirits in prison while we are here.

All the gold mines in the world have not given up treasure enough to satisfy the man who has a greed for gain. The man with a hunger for honor and distinction has never been able to get enough of it, and the same can be said of everything else for which men strive and struggle and destroy each other and themselves.

Nothing this world can give is worthwhile, unless while living in it we can have more than is revealed by the light of the sun. Destroy the Bible and all faith in God, and we

might as well eat, drink and be merry and die. Nothing will do unless it can give us the wings of the morning and let us mount higher than the sun, for what can a mole know about the sunrise, or a man in a pit know about the beauty of the mountains? No heaven we can build for ourselves without God can be more than a little anteroom to hell. Without God and revelation and the Bible and hope of heaven, all is indeed vanity and vexation of spirit.

But at last Solomon spreads the wings of faith and gets higher than the sun, and when he does the change in his viewpoint changes the meaning of life, for now he can see with a clear eye.

I know a man who through some difficulty with his vision can see scarcely anything a little distance away, but one day he went up in a balloon, and when over a half-mile high he could see like a bird. In fact he could see better than he had ever believed anybody could see, and it was that way with Solomon when he reached the place where his faith could lay hold on God.

Listen to this, and note how his vision has expanded, and his sight cleared up, *"Surely I know (no uncertainty about that) that it shall be well with them that fear God."* There is no more talk about everything being vanity now, and the reason is because at last he has a viewpoint higher than the sun, as is always the case with even the humblest man who has faith in God. Solomon can now see that nothing good is ever lost, and that bread cast on the waters is sure to return after many days. He now sees that wisdom is better than weapons of war, the plain meaning of which in our day

is that good common sense is better protection than a slingshot. And then, to sum up, he closes the book by saying, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."* And there is no vanity about anything God does.

And now let us employ our time for a little while with some of the men who have looked at life from a viewpoint higher than the sun. It was this that kept Noah working away on the ark for a hundred and twenty years, without seeing a flash of lightning or hearing a clap of thunder. Had he been living only for what he could see, it would never have been said of him that *"he was a just man and perfect, and walked with God."* The man who walks with God will not spend much time in thinking about the bugs that may be creeping under his feet.

Abraham was another man who had a faith that lifted him higher than the sun, when looking for *"a city which had foundations, whose maker and builder was God."* You never hear a word from that grand old man about all being vanity and vexation of spirit.

And then there was Moses. He had a vision that pierced the clouds and went far beyond the sun, when he saw that *"the reproach of Christ"* would bring him greater and more lasting riches than the treasures of Egypt, that he might have had by simply folding his arms and doing nothing. But he endured as seeing Him who is invisible, and that made it easy for him to refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Neither was he



looking from the low plane of "under the sun," when in bidding farewell to the army he had brought out of Egypt, he said, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." A man must have a sweep of faith reaching higher than the sun before he can say things like that.

There is not a word about "under the sun" in the chapter where grand old General Joshua says, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," and no such words as "vanity and vexation of spirit" ever fell from the lips of that great captain of iron courage.

Samuel was looking at things from much higher than the sun when he said, "To obey is better than sacrifice," and so was Job when he said, "I will trust Him though He slay me," and "I know that my redeemer lives!"

Ezra was not standing on low ground when "he prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it," or when he said, "The hand of our God is upon all of them for good that seek Him, and His power and His wrath is against all them that forsake Him." The same was true of Nehemiah, when, in building up the wall that was broken down, he said, "I am doing a great work." From "under the sun" it would have looked very small.

David was looking from higher than the sun, or he could never have said, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them. O taste, and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him!" And Daniel had a vision that swept far higher than the sun when he went to the lions den with no more anxiety than you and I would go to dinner.

Stephen's viewpoint was from much higher than anywhere "under the sun,"

when he cried out, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing, on the right hand of God!" and then went to his cruel death with the light of heaven on his face.

And Paul was looking from higher than the stars, or he could never have said, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!"

And so it was also with John the beloved, when near the close of his long and busy life he took up the much worn pen with which he had written so much that will still be bright when the stars are dim, and wrote the precious words that have been shining down the centuries ever since, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is!"

And then still later, when a white-haired prisoner on the Isle of Patmos, and just before he left the world to be forever with the Lord, John again had a vision of things infinitely higher than the sun, and once more took up the stylus and wrote, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords!"

Jude also was looking from very much higher than the sun when he

declared with unhesitating confidence, "That He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

And O how much higher than the sun was Jesus looking from when He said, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

And then, when after the shame of the cross and the grave, He stood on resurrection ground, how infinitely far above the sun was His eye fixed when He said to the eleven faithful ones, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

And thank God the time will surely come, when in our vision we shall not be confined to the low plane described as "under the sun," but when with Him in whom we have believed we shall be lifted "far above all principality and power, and might and dominion," and be with Him forever in heavenly places, where we shall no more see as through a glass darkly, but face to face, and where we shall know as we are known.

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Results of True Repentance

By D.L. Moody

I want to call your attention to what true repentance leads to. I am not addressing the unconverted only, because I am one of those who believe that there is a good deal of repentance to be done by the Church before much good will be accomplished in the world.

I firmly believe that the low standard of Christian living is keeping a good many in the world and in their sins. When the ungodly see that Christian people do not repent, you cannot expect them to repent and turn away from their sins. I have repented ten thousand times more since I knew Christ than ever before; and I think most Christians have some things to repent of.

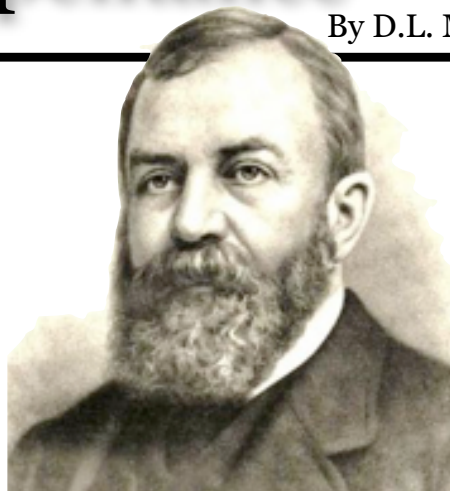
So now I want to preach to Christians as well as to the unconverted; to myself as well as to one who has never accepted Christ as his Savior.

There are five things that flow out of true repentance:

- Conviction.
- Contrition.
- Confession of sin.
- Conversion.
- Confession of Jesus Christ before the world.

1. Conviction

When a man is not deeply convicted of sin, it is a pretty sure sign that he has not truly repented. Experience has taught me that men who have very slight conviction of sin, sooner or later lapse back into their old life.



D.L. Moody

For the last few years I have been a good deal more anxious for a deep and true work in professing converts than I have for great numbers. If a man professes to be converted without realizing the heinousness of his sins, he is likely to be one of those stony ground hearers who don't amount to anything. The first breath of opposition, the first wave of persecution or ridicule, will suck them back into the world again.

I believe we are making a woeful mistake in taking so many people into the Church who have never been truly convicted of sin. Sin is just as black in a man's heart to-day as it ever was. I sometimes think it is blacker. For the more light a man has, the greater his responsibility, and therefore the greater need of deep conviction.

William Dawson once told this story to illustrate how humble the soul must be before it can find peace. He said that at a

revival meeting, a little lad who was used to Methodist ways, went home to his mother and said,

"Mother, John So-and-so is under conviction and seeking for peace, but he will not find it to-night, mother." "Why, William?" said she.

"Because he is only down on one knee, mother, and he will never get peace until he is down on both knees."

Until conviction of sin brings us down on both knees, until we are completely humbled, until we have no hope in ourselves left, we cannot find the Savior.

There are three things that lead to conviction: (1) Conscience; (2) the Word of God; (3) the Holy Spirit. All three are used by God.

Long before we had any Word, God dealt with men through the conscience. That is what made Adam and Eve hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the Garden of Eden.

That is what convicted Joseph's brethren when they said: "*We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.*" (Genesis 42:21) *Therefore...*" said they, (and remember, over twenty years had passed away since they had sold him into captivity). That is what we must use with our children before they are old enough to understand about the Word and the Spirit of God. This is what accuses or excuses the heathen.

Conscience is "a divinely implanted faculty in man, telling him that he ought to do right." Someone has said that it was born when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, when their eyes were opened and they "...*knew good and evil.*" It passes judgment, without being invited, upon our thoughts, words, and actions, approving or condemning according as it judges them to be right or wrong. A man cannot violate his conscience without being self-condemned.

But conscience is not a safe guide, because very often it will not tell you a thing is wrong until you have done it. It needs illuminating by God because it partakes of our fallen nature. Many a person does things that are wrong without being condemned by conscience. Paul said: "*I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.*" (Acts 26:9) Conscience itself needs to be educated.

Again, conscience is too often like an alarm clock, which awakens and arouses at first, but after a time the man becomes used to it, and it loses its effect. Conscience can be smothered. I think we make a mistake in not preaching more to the conscience. Hence, in due time, conscience was superseded by the law of God, which in time was fulfilled in Christ.

In this Christian land, where men have Bibles, these are the agency by which God produces conviction.

The old Book tells you what is right and wrong before you commit sin, and what you need is to learn and appropriate its

teachings, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Conscience compared with the Bible is as a rushlight compared with the sun in the heavens.

See how the truth convicted those Jews on the day of Pentecost. Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, preached that *"God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."* *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"*

Then, thirdly, the Holy Ghost convicts. *"And when He (the Comforter) is come, He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin because they believe not on Me,"*

2. Contrition.

The next thing is contrition, deep Godly sorrow and humiliation of heart because of sin. If there is not true contrition, a man will turn right back into the old sin. That is the trouble with many Christians.

A man may get angry, and if there is not much contrition, the next day he will get angry again. A daughter may say mean, cutting things to her mother, and then her conscience troubles her, and she says: "Mother, I am sorry: forgive me."

But soon there is another outburst of temper, because the contrition is not deep and real. A husband speaks sharp words to his wife, and then to ease his conscience, he goes and buys her a bouquet of flowers. He will not go like a man and say he has done wrong.

What God wants is contrition, and if there is not contrition, there is not full repentance. *"The Lord is nigh to the broken of heart, and saveth such as be contrite of spirit."* *"A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."* Many sinners are sorry for their sins, sorry that they cannot continue in sin; but they repent only with hearts that are not broken. I don't think we know how to repent now-a-days. We need some John the Baptist, wandering through the land, crying: "Repent! repent!"

3. Confession of Sin.

If we have true contrition, that will lead us to confess our sins. I believe that nine-tenths of the trouble in our Christian life comes from failing to do this. We try to hide and cover up our sins; there is very little confession of them. Someone has said: "Unconfessed sin in the soul is like a bullet in the body."

If you have no power, it may be there is some sin that needs to be confessed, something in your life that needs straightening out. There is no amount of psalm-singing, no amount of attending religious meetings, no amount of praying or reading your Bible that is going to cover up anything of that kind. It must be confessed, and if I am too proud to confess, I need expect no mercy from God and no answers to my prayers.

The Bible says: *"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper."* He may be a man in the pulpit, a priest behind the altar, a king on the throne; I don't care who he is. Man has been trying it for six thousand years. Adam tried it, and failed. Moses tried it when he buried the Egyptian whom he killed, but he failed.

"Be sure your sin will find you out." You cannot bury your sin so deep but it will have a resurrection by and by, if it has not been blotted out by the Son of God. What man has failed to do for six thousand years, you and I had better give up trying to do.

There are three ways of confessing sin. All sin is against God, and must be confessed to Him. There are some sins I need never confess to anyone on earth. If the sin has been between myself and God, I may confess it alone in my closet: I need not whisper it in the ear of any mortal. *"Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before Thee."* *"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight."*

But if I have done some man a wrong, and he knows that I have wronged him, I must confess that sin not only to God but also to that man. If I have too much pride to confess it to him, I need not come to God. I may pray, and I may weep, but it will do no good. First confess to that man, and then go to God and see how quickly He will hear you, and send peace. *"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy ways. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."* That is the Scripture way.

Then there is another class of sins that must be confessed publicly. Suppose I have been known as a blasphemer, a drunkard, or a reprobate. If I repent of my sins, I owe the public a

confession. The confession should be as public as the transgression. Many a person will say some mean thing about another in the presence of others, and then try to patch it up by going to that person alone. The confession should be made so that all who heard the transgression can hear it.

We are good at confessing other people's sins, but if it is true repentance, we shall have as much as we can do to look after our own. When a man or woman gets a good look into God's looking glass, he is not finding fault with other people: he has as much as he can do at home.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Thank God for the Gospel! Church member, if there is any sin in your life, make up your mind that you will confess it, and be forgiven. Do not have any cloud between you and God. Be able to read your title clear to the mansion Christ has gone to prepare for you.

4. Conversion.

Confession leads to true conversion, and there is no conversion at all until these three steps have been taken.

Now the word "conversion" means two things. We say a man is "converted" when he is born again. But it also has a different meaning in the Bible. Peter said: *"Repent, and be converted."* Paul said that he was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, but began to preach to Jews and Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God.

Some old divine has said: *"Every man is born with his back to God. Repentance is a change of one's course. It is right about face."*

Sin is a turning away from God. As someone has said, it is aversion from God and conversion to the world: and true repentance means conversion to God and aversion from the world. When there is true contrition, the heart is broken for sin; when there is true conversion, the heart is broken from sin. We leave the old life, we are translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Wonderful, isn't it?

Unless our repentance includes this conversion, it is not worth much. If a man continues in sin, it is proof of an idle profession. It is like pumping away continually at the ship's pumps, without stopping the leaks. Solomon said:--*"If they pray, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin . . ."*

Prayer and confession would be of no avail while they continued in sin. Let us heed God's call; let us forsake the old wicked way; let us return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon us; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

If you have never turned to God, turn now. I have no sympathy with the idea that it takes six months, or six weeks, or six hours to be converted. It doesn't take you very long to turn around, does it? If you know you are wrong, then turn right about.

5. Confession of Christ.

If you are converted, the next step is confess it openly. Listen: *"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

Confession of Christ is the culmination of the work of true repentance. We owe it to the world, to our fellow-Christians, to ourselves. He died to redeem us, and shall we be ashamed or afraid to confess Him? Religion as an abstraction, as a doctrine, has little interest for the world, but what people can say from personal experience always has weight.

I remember some meetings being held in a locality where the tide did not rise very quickly, and bitter and reproachful things were being said about the work. But one day, one of the most prominent men in the place rose and said: *"I want it to be known that I am a disciple of Jesus Christ; and if there is any odium to be cast on His cause, I am prepared to take my share of it."* It went through the meeting like an electric current, and a blessing came at once to his own soul and to the souls of others.

Men come to me and say: *"Do you mean to affirm, Mr. Moody, that I've got to make a public confession when I accept Christ; do you mean to say I've got to confess Him in my place of business, and in my family? Am I to let the whole world know that I am on His side?"*

That is precisely what I mean. A great many are willing to accept Christ, but they are not willing to publish it, to confess it. A great many are looking at the lions and the bears in the way. Now, my friends, the devil's mountains are only made of smoke. He can throw a straw into your path and make a mountain of it. He says to you: *"You cannot confess and pray to your family; why, you'll break down! You cannot tell it to your shop mate; he will laugh at you."* But when you accept Christ, you will have power to confess Him.

There was a young man in the West--it was the West in those days--who had been more or less interested about his soul's salvation. One afternoon, in his office, he said: *"I will accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior."*

He went home and told his wife (who was a nominal professor of religion) that he had made up his mind to serve Christ; and he added: *"After supper to-night I am going to take the company into the drawing-room, and erect the family altar."* "Well," said his wife, *"you know some of the gentlemen who are coming to tea are skeptics, and they are older than you are, and don't you think you had better wait until after they have gone, or else go out in the kitchen and have your first prayer with the servants?"* The young man thought for a few moments, and then he said: *"I have asked Jesus Christ into my house for the first time,*

and I shall take Him into the best room, not into the kitchen."

So he called his friends into the drawing room. There was a little sneering, but he read and prayed. That man afterwards became Chief Justice of the United States Court. Never be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: it is the power of God unto salvation.

A young man enlisted, and was sent to his regiment. The first night he was in the barracks with about fifteen other young men who passed the time playing cards and gambling. Before retiring, he fell on his knees and prayed, and they began to curse him and jeer at him and throw boots at him.

So it went on the next night and the next, and finally the young man went and told the chaplain what had taken place, and asked what he should do.

"Well," said the chaplain, "you are not at home now, and the other men have just as much right in the barracks as you have. It makes them mad to hear you pray, and the Lord will hear you just as well if you say your prayers in bed and don't provoke them."

For weeks after the chaplain did not see the young man again, but one day he met him, and asked--

"By the way, did you take my advice?"

"I did, for two or three nights."

"How did it work?"

"Well," said the young man, "I felt like a whipped hound, and the third night I got out of bed, knelt down and prayed."

"Well," asked the chaplain, "how did that work?"

The young soldier answered: *"We have a prayer-meeting there now every night, and three have been converted, and we are praying for the rest."*

Oh, friends, I am so tired of weak Christianity. Let us be out and out for Christ; let us give no uncertain sound. If the world wants to call us fools, let them do it. It is only a little while; the crowning day is coming. Thank God for the privilege we have of confessing Christ.

D.L. Moody

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Quotes By D.L. Moody

"I prayed for Faith, and thought that some day Faith would come down and strike me like lightning. But Faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, 'Now Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God'. I had closed my Bible, and prayed for Faith. I now opened my Bible, and began to study, and Faith has been growing ever since."

"The preaching that this world needs most is the sermons in shoes that are walking with Jesus Christ."

"Out of one hundred men, one will read the Bible, the other ninety-nine will read the Christian."

"In our prayers, we talk to God, in our Bible study, God talks to us, and we had better let God do most of the talking."

Thoughts On Preaching

"Help me to remember that I am a prophet; not a promoter; not a religious manager—but a prophet."
(A. W. Tozer)

"The sermon without the life is worthless, and the sermon without the Word is powerless."
(William Culbertson)

"My people's greatest need is my personal holiness."
(Robert Murray M'Cheyne)

"The Word must dwell in us with power before it can go forth from us with power."
(John Owen)

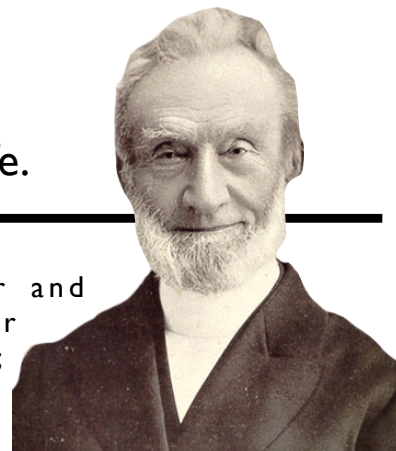
"Preaching that costs nothing accomplishes nothing."
(J. H. Jowett.)

Tozer prayed at his ordination to the gospel ministry: "Lord Jesus, I come to Thee for spiritual preparation. Lay Thy hand upon me. Anoint me with the oil of the New Testament prophet. Forbid that I should become a religious scribe and thus lose by prophetic calling. Save me from the curse that lies dark across the face of the modern clergy—the curse of compromise, of imitation, of professionalism. Save me from the error of judging a church by its size, its popularity, or the amount of its yearly offering. . . . Let me never become a slave to crowds. Heal my soul of carnal ambitions, and deliver me from the itch of publicity. . . . Teach me self-discipline, that I maybe a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

How

George Mueller

Determined The Will of God For His Life.



GEORGE MUELLER

George Mueller (also spelled Müller) was born less than a decade before Charles Dickens in 1805; so he was certainly aware of all the horrors of society that the famed novelist describes in his works: *workhouses, prisons, filth and disease, lack of concern for the poor and homeless* - all the things about which Ebenezer Scrooge in his unredeemed state could care less. But Mueller did care, deeply; and in 1834 he decided to do something about it. He and his best friend, Henry Craik, founded the Scriptural Knowledge Institution (SKI) in Bristol, England, with one of their prime objectives being to establish Orphan Homes for the many homeless children in Great Britain.

But Mueller and Craik had no money, nor did they intend to ask anyone for it: they believed that God would provide everything they needed - without patronage, without requests for contributions and without debts. All they had to do was pray, and God would provide.



ASHLEY DOWN ORPHAN HOUSES, BRISTOL, ENO.

For sixty-four years, that was how George Mueller operated. In that course of time, he built The Orphanage campus at Ashley Down, where

he cared for and educated over 18,000 children; educated over 100,000 more in other schools at the Orphanage's expense; distributed hundreds of thousands of Bibles and tens of millions of religious tracts; supported about 150 missionaries; travelled over 200,000 miles as a missionary himself; and shared the Gospel with over three million people around the world.

And in all that time, he never asked for one penny from anyone, his children never missed a meal, and he never had a debt. That is the remarkable record of George Mueller.

Here are some of the ways he prayed.

First, he never shared a need with anyone but God. **Second**, when he had a need, he opened his Bible, searched for a promise that fit that need, and then meditated on that Scripture. Mueller believed in the power of thinking through Scripture as much as he believed in the power of prayer. **Third**, he pleaded for that promise before God. And he didn't just pray for money: he prayed for individuals as well.

Sometimes Mueller prayed for someone for as long as fifty years.

He didn't stop praying for anyone or anything until he got his request. That's how convinced he was that God would answer his prayers. Through his prayers, Mueller obtained the modern-day equivalent of 150 million dollars for his charities; he led tens if not hundreds of thousands to the Lord; and he lived to be



THE NEW GEORGIA ORPHAN ASYLUM, DUBLIN, GEORGIA.

ninety-three years old. That was the power of his faith and life.

Once, when there was no food to give the children and it was almost lunch time, one of Mueller's assistants came to him, worried. Mueller said, *"It's not twelve o'clock yet."* Just then, a truck pulled up to the orphanage loaded with food from an unsolicited donor. Often, Mueller had no idea where their next meal was coming from: he just trusted God's promises. Another time, when Mueller was onboard a ship that was lost in fog, he comforted the anxious captain by saying, *"My eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God, who controls every circumstance of my life."* They came out of the fog, and that captain later gave his life to Christ.

For George Mueller, prayer wasn't just a "quiet time" with God in the morning, although that was important: it was a way of life. He said, *"I live in the spirit of prayer. I pray as I walk about, when I lie down and when I rise up. And the answers are always coming. Thousands and tens of thousands of times have my prayers been answered. When once I am persuaded that a thing is right and for the glory of God, I go on praying for it until the answer comes. George Mueller never gives up!"*

Part of Mueller's success was due to his attitude. Someone once asked him the secret of his service, and he said, *"There was a day when I died, utterly died: died to George Mueller, his opinions, preferences, tastes and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends."*

And since then, I have studied only to show myself 'approved unto God.'" Being dead to self, the world, approval, and blame, freed Mueller of the cares of life that hold so many of us back, freed him to be alive only to Christ, freed him to serve.

The promise George Mueller clung to most throughout his life, and I'm guessing the one he prayed most often, was *"Open wide your mouth and I will fill it"* (Psalm 81:10b). He had no "Plan B" for his life. If his prayers had failed, his orphanages would have failed. Mueller was totally dependent on God. That was how he wanted it. He wanted people to see that God was faithful and could be trusted. He once said, *"I have joyfully dedicated my whole life to the object of exemplifying how much may be accomplished by prayer and faith."* His life certainly exemplified that.



How George Mueller Described His Prayer Time

1. *"I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is."*
2. *"Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impressions. If so, I make myself liable to great delusions."*

3. *"I seek the will of the Spirit of God through or in connection with the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions also."*
4. *"Next I take into account providential circumstances. These plainly indicate God's will in connection with His Word and Spirit."*
5. *"I ask God in prayer to reveal His will to me aright."*
6. *"Thus through prayer to God, the study of the Word and reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability and knowledge, and if my mind is thus at peace, and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly. In trivial matters and transactions involving most important issues, I have found this method always effective."*



Mary Muller

It took a remarkable woman to be the wife of George Muller. He almost did not marry her because of his fear that marriage would slow him down in his ministry. When he found himself in love with her, he was surprised because she was eight years older than he, and because she had a very large nose and wasn't pretty like an earlier girlfriend George. But what Mary Groves did have was a sincere faith, a willingness to give up everything for the work they wanted to do, and a maturity and smart mind that became a huge comfort and support to George.

In the book *George Muller The Guardian of Bristol's Orphans*, a story is told which illustrates just what an incredible woman Mary was. When they were first wed, Mary and George loaded up her things on a stagecoach to their new home. George was surprised at how many things Mary had, four trunks full of household items. After Mary had taken a week to get everything settled and arranged beautifully into George's small home, he came

QUOTES BY GEORGE MULLER

"The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety."

"I hope in God, I pray on, and look yet for the answer. They are not converted yet, but they will be"

"To learn strong faith is to endure great trials. I have learned my faith by standing firm amid severe testings."



The Orphanage Today

home one evening disheartened by all the worldly possessions they had. He told her that every unnecessary thing had to go, all the silver, china, and tapestries. She was shocked and probably a little hurt because she had worked so hard to make their home lovely. But the next evening when George came home, all of the extra things were gone, and in their place there was a stack of pound notes, (money) which she told him to use as he thought best. *"And may God help us both,"* she said.

Her love for George and her faith in her heavenly Father allowed her to do what he requested. Mary sincerely surrendered to this and jumped in wholeheartedly with George's way of life.

Mary and George went through many trials together, including the death of their young son, the death of Mary's father, serious bouts of illness for George, and a very simple life bordering on poverty. They always took everything to God in prayer, and Mary worked tirelessly by George's side

to serve hundreds of unloved orphans, giving them a place to live, bread to eat, and a God to love.



George Muller dared to trust God for "...great and mighty things" (Jeremiah 33:3). He dared to take God at His word and ventured to establish the Orphan Houses to prove that *"...with God nothing shall be impossible"* (Luke 1:37). Over his lifetime, George Muller cared for countless of orphans - all without asking anyone for a penny but only by going to God.

How did George Muller cultivate this faith?

His faith was no different from my faith and your faith, as he once proclaimed. But his faith was stretched by the trials he went through which caused him to trust God for the "impossible." George Muller learned to depend on the Lord from his youth. He knew also the importance of spending quality time with the Lord first thing in the morning. George Muller *"delighted in God"* and He gave Muller the desires of his heart (Psalm 37:4). Over his lifetime, George Muller read the whole Bible over one hundred times which developed his faith for the Bible says that *"...faith*



cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).



*"Two little lines
I heard one day, Traveling
along life's busy way;
Bringing conviction to my
heart, And from my mind
would not depart;
Only one life, 'twill soon be
past, Only what's done for
Christ will last."*



"Our God and Father is the same faithful God as ever He was; as willing as ever to prove Himself to be the living God, in our day as formerly, to all who put their trust in Him."

George Muller

REPENT YE!

by Gipsy Smith



Gipsy Smith was born in 1860, and grew up in a gypsy wagon, without ever seeing the inside of a school house or church building.

He was converted at the age of sixteen, taught himself to read, began to preach seven months later at the age of seventeen, and became one of the greatest evangelists of the present century.

He died in the work in 1947, at the age of 87.

"Jesus came into Galilee, preaching... saying, Repent ye."

(Mark 1:14,15)

The Bible, especially the New Testament, is the handbook of repentance. It commands it,

it urges it, enforces it, repeats it, drives it in everywhere. Over sixty times repentance is enforced. The great doctrine of repentance occupies a very prominent place in the teaching of Jesus Christ and His apostles. All the epistles were written to show men how to do it, because there is no such thing as vital communion, fellowship with God, with out it. And I want to speak plainly about Bible repentance, and I pray God to help me, for I have not anything pleasant to say. It is far easier to congratulate than it is to expostulate.

My business is not to speak smooth things, but to say some things that you may resist, fight, get angry with; and you may get angry with me for saying them, but they are here, and it is my business to say, *"Thus saith the Lord."* There is no intelligent conversion with out an intelligent understanding of these words. May the Holy Spirit breathe light upon these truths, and help us to see them! For it is my business to make you see what God means when He says, **"Repent ye."**

I am afraid that in our zeal to get people into the kingdom or the Church we have lowered the standard. These words meant far more when they were uttered than they do today with most people. I am afraid that with the familiar way with which we use them and the constant contact with them and with the daily handling of them, we have somehow allowed their edge to

be worn off. They do not mean as much to us. The depth, the breadth, the height, the length of these mighty utterances do not search us and illuminate and startle, and thrill and overwhelm as they used to. But they do mean as much.

If we have not eyes to see and ears to hear, if by long contamination with evil, and soothing the conscience with opiates from hell, if crying, "*Peace*" where there is no peace has brought a stupor upon us, that is our responsibility, not God's or His Word's. God means as much by these words today when He says, "*Repent ye,*" as He did when they were first uttered.

I am afraid we have brought them down, we have lowered them, we have pulled them from their heights down to the low levels of our own poor experiences. But that is not the way to climb with measured step the hills of light, and walk in unbroken fellowship with God. I am afraid that in our zeal to get people into what we call the Church we have been more anxious about heads than hearts.

In order to capture, we have compromised and lost. We have been more concerned about filling our Church registers than we have about the kingdom. We have not sufficiently emphasized the greatness of coming to Christ, and we have said, "*It is only a step.*" **Who told you so? Only a step to Jesus? It is not true.** It is not gospel. Only a step to Jesus? Then it is a very big step. We have made it a very little thing, and we have multitudes of people joining the Churches. It is child's play. It used not to be.

When I came to Christ I came under the old Act. It was a conflict, it was a warfare, it was a pilgrimage, it was a struggle, it was cutting off the right arm and plucking out the right eye, it was being maimed if necessary. It meant sacrifice. There was a

day in our calendar called Good Friday; there was a place called Calvary. It meant coming out, being forsaken, abused, slandered, rejected, despised, hated, persecuted, a fool for Christ's sake, sneered at, laughed at, misrepresented, suffering the cross.

What does it mean now? A picnic. It is a "*social,*" it is an entertainment, it is a guild, an ordinance; and with multitudes of people who call themselves Christians it means nothing more. We have made it too easy, but Jesus never made it so: He never deluded anybody. He never cried "*Peace*" where there was no peace. He knew the danger of saying "*Peace*" when the soul was in anarchy and the will in rebellion, and the whole man against God. He could not cry "*Peace.*"

No, He never made it easy. We have said to anybody and everybody, "*Only believe.*" The New Testament does not say so. The devil believes, and believes more than you do; in his heart he knows more about it. He believes; and if he says he does not, he is a liar, he is shamming. He believes far more than any of us, but he is not a saint. Jesus has never made it easy.

There was one man who came and asked, "*Are there few that be saved?*" and He said, "*Strive, struggle, agonize to enter in at the strait gate.*" He never made it easy. Here is another man who came and said, "*Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.*" But Jesus knew he had not counted the cost, and said, "*Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.*"

Here is another who came and said, "*Lord, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*" Jesus diagnosed the case instantly, and put His finger on the weak spot of his life and said, "*If thou wilt be perfect, sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and come, follow Me.*" He did not make it easy.

Here is another man who came and said, *"Lord, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him."* Jesus said to him, *"Ye must be born again."* And to the multitude of people who listened to Him He said, *"If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross and deny himself."*

He never made it easy; and the man who makes it easy to be a Christian preaches a mongrel gospel. Jesus said, *"Repent."* John preached repentance. He came to preach it. It had the first place in his sermons. It was first and last with John, *"Repent, repent."* You say it is too startling, sensational, vulgar; but remember, it was God's vulgarity *"Repent."* No man who preaches as John did will be popular.

They put John in prison for preaching repentance, and so that the doctrine should not be silent, as soon as John was shut up Jesus began where John left off, and His first public sermon to the world was on repentance. He knew where to begin. *"Repent ye,"* said Jesus. That is His first utterance, and if you care to go to His last before He left His disciples and was received up yonder in the clouds, He gave them the commission to go and preach repentance.

So that in the first and the last utterances of the Son of God you have repentance enforced.

And when He was back again on the throne, when angels and archangels had received Him with the shouts of triumph and welcome which He deserved, when He had been exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance, as though He knew that some of us would shrink from driving it in, as though He knew that some of us would be afraid to push it home, He said to Saul, *"Saul, you go to the Gentiles and make them----make them----do works meet for repentance."*

Jesus never made it easy. Let any man who ever tried honestly but one day in his life to serve God with all his powers, let him tell me if it was an easy thing to do. It is not easy. It is a struggle, it is a fight. Jesus Christ on Calvary is not a substitute for the life He means you to live, but the means by which you get the power to live the life.

No, there is no salvation without repentance. This is the first step. First things first. And the man who misses repentance will miss everything. If your repentance is shallow your religious life will be shallow. If your coming to Christ does not mean everything you will not get everything. If your surrender is not complete you cannot receive. If your hands are filled you cannot take hold. It is only those who come empty-handed that can cling. It is only those who turn from darkness to light that understand God. It is only those who leave the devil who can receive God. No, we must repent.

"Then," you say, "what is repentance?" Listen, it is not conviction. It is possible to be convicted without repentance. Why, it is hardly possible to meet and talk with anybody in these days but at some moment of their life's history they have been convicted of their need of Christ. It is hardly possible to meet with anybody who does not know what he ought to do and what he ought to be. You cannot meet and talk with any man that has not light about these things; but light is not life.

What brings you to a mission service? Deep down in your conscience, the soul of you, the man of you, back of everything, hid away that nobody else can see, there is a real cry in your soul for God. That is conviction. That is God-given; that is Holy Ghost-brought, that is the result of the light that flashes over the cliff-tops of eternity, that is the soul's awakening. It is one thing to be awake, it is another thing to get up. You have often heard

your minister preach. Maybe you have been hearing him for years. Perhaps you sit in the gallery or away back in one of the pews, or near to him, and every time he preaches and you hear him, you go home and say, *"My pastor is right; I ought to be a Christian, I know I ought,"* and you feel beneath the powerful pleadings of your own pastor, beneath the pleadings of the evangelist, you know God's claims, you admit them, you feel them. They are right, they are reasonable, and you ought to surrender. That is conviction. But it is one thing to be convicted and another thing to repent. Conviction is not repentance.

What is repentance? It is not sorrow. Sorrow for sin is one element of repentance, but you can be sorry without repentance. There is a kind of sentimental sorrow, a sorrow at the thought of coming retribution and exposure, which is mean, selfish, devilish, and is not healthy and life-giving. There is a sorrow that weeps at funerals and sentimental plays, and weeps beneath the ordinary preaching and the special preaching. There are multitudes of people who think they are not far from the kingdom because their tears come easily; they whisper all sorts of sweet messages to themselves because they can weep. They tell themselves they are not hard, and therefore there must be hope for them, and all the while they are holding on to forbidden things and walking in forbidden paths, and keeping company with those who are destroying them and leading them far from God.

It is no good to cover God's altar with tears while your heart is in rebellion. It is no good to hold out one hand apparently to the Cross with the other holding on to a black hand behind you. You cannot hold Dagon in one hand and the Ark of the Covenant in the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

It is no good to sing on Sunday with your face toward the Cross and on Monday with your feet toward the beer shop.

I sat in a home a few days ago playing with a boy of ten. His face was bright as the sun. He looked as happy as any child in the home, calling me *"Uncle."* Presently his mother had missed something, and she came in and said, *"Jack, have you taken so-and-so?"* His head dropped. *"Jack, have you taken so-and-so?"* No answer. *"Jack" --- and she came and put her hand on his shoulder --- "did you take --- "* *"Yes, mother;"* and he began to cry. Oh, he was sorry; he did look sorry; he sobbed as though his heart would break. What for? He was just as guilty five minutes before, and he knew he was. What made him sorry? Sorry that he had sinned against his mother? No. Sorry that he had sinned against God? No. Well, what was his sorrow? He was sorry because he was found out. And there are multitudes of professing Christians whose religious sorrow is no deeper. That is the sorrow that worketh death. There is a godly sorrow, sorrow because I have sinned against God. *"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. ..For thou desirest truth in the hidden parts, honesty where no eye but Thine can see, transparency where no light but thine can penetrate."* There is a sorrow that means death. There is a sorrow for sin that worketh life. Which is yours?

What is repentance? Listen. It is not promising to be better. There are plenty of people who have been promising to be better ever since they can remember, from boyhood or girlhood. When God has laid His hand upon them, as He does in a thousand ways, they are ready to promise, and do promise. Where are you, you who have been making promises till your hair is grey and broken every one of them, and angels beholding your

shattered promises have shuddered to the tips of their wings. You are further from God than ever you were in your life, with all your promises. Your psalm-singing and your hymn-singing, and your church-going, and your offerings, and all the rest of your religious paraphernalia, are so much mockery because you have not walked the straight and blessed path of obedience and trust.

It is not enough to promise. It means more than that. If it is not conviction, if it is not sorrow, if it is not the desire to be better and the promise to be better, what is it? What is repentance? Is it crying? No. Is it excitement? No. Is it emotion? Is it kneeling down and groaning? No. Is it going and hearing preachers? No.

What is it? Listen. Jesus Christ tells you in that beautiful picture in the fifteenth of Luke. It is a wonderful chapter. There are three cases in that chapter ---- the silver, the sheep, and the son. The sheep was lost out of the fold, the silver was lost in the house. The sheep was lost without any intention of being lost, but it was lost.

The silver was lost in the house through somebody's carelessness, and it may be there is somebody lost in your house, in your pew in the church, through somebody's carelessness. God help you to find out who that somebody is!

The son was lost, and it was his own fault. He was a prodigal before he left home. He was a rebel before he got a penny of his fortune. He was as bad in heart and in mind before he received a cent of the money as when he had spent it all. He was guilty the moment he said to himself, *"I will demand the portion of goods that falleth to me."*

When the sheep went astray a man went after it. When the silver was lost a woman went after it. When the son went astray

nobody went after him. How is that? Remember who told the story. Nobody went for him. How is that? Because he was a man, because he was a moral agent, because he was accountable to God for his own act. Why did not the father gather his servants with the elder brother, why did he not gather his neighbours together, and say, *"Look here, I have lost my boy, let us go and find him and bring him back in spite of himself"*? Why did he not? Because if they had brought him back again he would have been a prodigal still, he would have been a rebel inside the house as well as out of it, for no man comes till he returns; and heaven and the Bible, Christ and Calvary, the Holy Ghost and eternity stand absolutely defeated before the citadel of the human will. Do not forget it. Listen. The prodigal went astray, took every step from the homestead of his own deliberate choice, step by step away up into the far country, and he had to come to himself, he had to come back every inch of the way, and he did not send a letter home to his father and say, *"If you will sent the old chariot I will come home,"* and he did not ask anybody to give him a lift.

He had to walk back every inch his own self, step by step, with bleeding feet and aching head, and broken heart. He had to do it. "But," you say, "the father ran to meet him, did he not?" Yes he did, and He will run to meet you when He sees you coming, but you must come. Coming is repentance. It is the response of the will.

Repentance is the response of the enlightened, redeemed man to the call of God, the "I will" of the soul. It is putting your hand on your heart and getting hold of what has been your curse, the thing that has chained you. It is getting hold of the thing that has made hell of earth for you, the sin of your heart ---- for I have discovered that there may be a dozen sins in a man's life, but there are not a dozen that predominate;

there is one overmastering, predominating, all-prevailing sin that enslaves and damns, and if that sin goes everything goes. It is putting your hand to your heart and plucking that out root and branch and saying to God, "There it is, and I will die before I will sin again." Have you repented in that fashion?

Don't talk about Church membership, don't insult God by talking about the Communion until you have done this: this is the first thing and the others will not be expected until you have done this. "*Repent ye,*" make a full surrender to God.

Brother, listen to me once more. Repentance, when it is done, is such a beautiful thing that Jesus Himself said, "*There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.*" Have you repented along that line? There are some of you who do not understand how it is you have no peace and no joy in your profession. I know, just as well as if I lived with you, I know if you have no joy and no peace in your professed faith it is because you have never turned to God wholly. Some of you say, "I want peace." Never mind peace; do as you are told, and peace will come. There are some people more concerned about nice feelings, happy feelings, ecstasies and joys, and all the rest of it, than they are about putting God in His place. You put God in His place, and you will have peace; you honour God, and you will have peace.

A dear fellow came to me when I was in South Africa, and he said, "*Sir, I want to get relief from a guilty conscience,*" and he had an awful story to tell, a story that made me shudder. He unfolded a page in his history that I dare not tell you. Then he said, "*Sir, I want God's pardon.*" I said, "*My brother, how do you expect to get it?*" He said, "*By an honest attempt to undo the past.*" "Then," I said, "*turn your face that way and wait for peace.*" "But," he said, "*that will mean*

prison, and it may mean a lifetime in prison." I said, "*Turn your face that way. It is no good to talk about peace while there is wrong to be righted, while there are stripes that need to be washed; it is no use to talk about peace till you get right with God.*" "*The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace.*"

Righteousness, that means rightness, wholeness, harmony ---- and then the music. There will be no music till the instrument is put in tune. You know where you have to yield; you know the point of controversy between you and God; you know the thing that has hindered you, you know the thing that robbed you, you know the thing that has darkened your sky, you know the thing that has come in between you and God, you know the thing about which you have persisted in having your own way and not God's. When you yield on that thing, you will repent.

Will you do it now? "*But,*" you say, "*I am a church member.*" Never mind. You say there is some one near that knows you. Never mind. You say people expect better things of you. Never mind. Be honest. Put God in His right place. Turn from sin to God, from darkness to light ---- and you can do the turning. The Spirit enlightens, the Spirit breathes tenderness, the Spirit coaxes, woos, tries to win. God the Holy Ghost is doing His work in your heart, but, brother, you must submit. When you submit wholly, that is repentance. God help you to do it!

---- Reprinted from *As Jesus Passed By*, by Gipsy Smith.

“Repentance is the response of the enlightened, redeemed man to the call of God, the ‘I will’ of the soul.”



The Christian's Greatest Enemy

by A. W. Tozer

Article excerpted from *Rut, Rot or Revival*

East of the Jordan in the territory of Moab, Moses began to expound this law, saying: The Lord our God said to us at Horeb, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance into the hill country of the Amorites; go to all the neighboring peoples in the Arabah, in the mountains, in the western foothills, in the Negev and along the coast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the Euphrates. See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land that the Lord swore He would give to your fathers - to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - and to their descendants after them"(Deuteronomy 1:5-8).

In the Old Testament, the enemy that threatened Israel the most was the dictatorship of the customary. Israel became accustomed to walking around in circles and was blissfully content to stay by the safety of the mountain for a while. To put it another way, it was the psychology of the usual. God finally broke into the rut they were in and said, "You have been here long enough. It is time for you to move on."

To put Israel's experience into perspective for our benefit today, we must see that the mountain represents a spiritual experience for a spiritual state of affairs. Israel's problem was that they had given up hope of ever getting the land God had promised them. They had become satisfied with going in circles and camping in nice, comfortable places. They had come under the spell of the psychology of the routine. It kept them where they were and prevented them from getting the riches God had promised them.

If their enemy, the Edomites, would have come after them, the Israelites would have fought down to the last man and probably would have beaten the Edomites - Israel would have made progress. Instead they were

twiddling their thumbs, waiting for the customary to keep on being the customary.

What is the worst enemy the church faces today? This is where a lot of unreality and unconscious hypocrisy enters. Many are ready to say, "The liberals are our worst enemy." But the simple fact is that the average evangelical church does not have too much trouble with liberalism. Nobody gets up in our churches and claims that the first five books of Moses are just myths. Nobody says that the story of creation is simply religious mythology. Nobody denies that Christ walked on the water or that He rose from the grave. Nobody gets up in our churches and claims that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God or that He isn't coming back again. Nobody denies the validity of the Scriptures. We just cannot hide behind liberalism and say that it is our worst enemy. We believe that evangelical Christians are trying to hold on to the truth given to us, the faith of our fathers, so the liberals are not our worst enemy.

Neither do we have a problem with the government. People in our country can do just about whatever they please and the government pays no attention. We can hold prayer meetings all night if we want, and the government would never bother us or question us. There is no secret police breathing down our backs watching our every move. We live in a free land, and we ought to thank God every day for that privilege.

Dictatorship of the Routine

The treacherous enemy facing the church of Jesus Christ today is the dictatorship of the routine, when the routine becomes "lord" in the life of the church. Programs are organized and the prevailing conditions are accepted as normal. Anyone can predict next Sunday's service and what will happen. This seems to be the most deadly threat in the church today. When we come to the place where everything can be predicted and nobody expects anything unusual from God, we are in a rut. The routine dictates, and we can tell not only what will happen next Sunday, but what will occur next month and, if things do not improve, what will take place next year. Then we have reached the place where what has been determines what is, and what is determines what will be.

That would be perfectly all right and proper for a cemetery. Nobody expects a cemetery to do anything but conform. The greatest conformists in the world today are those who sleep out in the community cemetery. They do not bother anyone. They just lie there, and it is perfectly all right for them to do so. You can predict what everyone will do in the cemetery from the deceased right down to the people who attend a funeral there. Everyone and everything in a cemetery has accepted the routine. Nobody expects anything out of those buried in the cemetery. But the church is not a cemetery and we should expect much from it, because what has been should not be lord to tell us what is, and what is should not be ruler to tell us what will be. God's people are supposed to grow.

As long as there is growth, there is an air of unpredictability. Certainly we cannot predict exactly, but in many churches you just about can. Everybody knows just what will happen, and this has become our deadliest enemy. We blame the devil, the "last days" and anything else we can think of, but the greatest enemy is not outside of us. It is within - it is an attitude of

accepting things as they are. We believe that what was must always determine what will be, and as a result we are not growing in expectation.

The Progressive Stages

As soon as someone begins talking like this, the Lord's people respond by getting busy. What I'm talking about, however, is internal. It is a matter of the soul and mind that ultimately determines our conduct. Let me show you the progressive stages.

I began with what I call the rote (mechanical or habitual repetition of something). This is repetition without feeling. If someday someone would read the Scripture and believe it and would believe what is sung in the great Christian hymns, there would be a blessed spiritual revolution underway in a short time. But too many are caught up in the rote, repeating without feeling, without meaning, without wonder and without any happy surprises or expectations. In our services God cannot get in because we have it all fixed up for Him. We say, "Lord, we are going to have it this way. Now kindly bless our plans." We repeat without feeling, we repeat without meaning, we sing without wonder, and we listen without surprise. That is my description of the rote.

The treacherous enemy facing the church of Jesus Christ today is the dictatorship of the routine, when the routine becomes "lord" in the life of the church.

We go one step further and come to what I will call the rut, which is bondage to the rote. When we are unable to see and sense bondage to the rote, we are in rut. For example, a man may be sick and not even know it. The doctors may have confided in the man's wife instead, "We don't want to frighten your husband, but he could drop any minute. He is critically ill, so just expect it any moment." The man himself does

not know he is seriously ill. He goes about his business as if nothing is wrong. He may play golf or tennis, maybe even go on a hunting trip. He is sick, and yet he does not know how sick he really is. This may in fact hasten his end. Not knowing is risky business and full of danger. Spiritually speaking, the rut is bondage to the rote, and the greatest danger lies in our inability to sense or feel this bondage.

There is a third word, and I do not particularly like to use it, but the history of the church is filled with it. The word is rot. The church is afflicted by drive rot. This is best explained when the psychology of non-expectation takes over and spiritual rigidity sets in, which is an inability to visualize anything better, a lack of desire for improvement.

There are many who respond by arguing, "I know lots of evangelical churches that would like to grow, and they do their best to get the crowds in. They want to grow and have contest to make their Sunday school larger." That is true, but they are trying to get people to come and share their rut. They want people to help them celebrate the rote and finally join in the rot. Because the Holy Spirit is not given the chance to work in our services, nobody is repenting, nobody is seeking God, nobody is spending a day in quiet waiting on God with open Bible seeking to mend his or her ways. Nobody is doing it - we just want more people. But more people for what? More people to come and repeat our dead services without feeling, without meaning, without wonder, without surprise? More people to join us in the bondage to the rote? For the most part, spiritual rigidity that cannot bend is too weak notice how weak it is.

What Is the Church?

For clarification, what is the church? When I say that a church gets into the rote and then onto the rut and finely to the rot, what am I talking about?

For one thing, the church is not the building. A church is an assembly of individuals. There is a lot of meaningless dialogue these days about the church. It is meaningless because those engaged in the dialogue forget that a church has no separate existence. The church is not an entity in itself, but rather is composed of individual persons. It is the same error made about the state. Politicians sometimes talk about the state as though it were an entity in itself. Social workers talk about society, but society is people. So is the church. The church is made up of real people, and when they come together we have the church. Whatever the people are who make up the church, that is the kind of church it is - no worse and no better, no wiser, no holier, no more ardent and no more worshipful. To improve or change the church you must begin with individuals.

When people in the church only point to others for improvement and not to themselves, it is sure evidence that the church has come to dry rot. It is proof of three sins: the sin of self-righteousness, the sin of judgment and the sin of complacency.

When our Lord said, "*One of you will betray Me,*" thank God those disciples had enough spirituality that nobody said, "Lord, is it he?" Every one of those disciples said, "*Lord, is it I?*" If they would not have so responded there could not have been a Pentecost. But because they were humble enough to point the finger in their own direction the Holy Spirit fell upon them.

Self-righteousness is terrible among God's people. If we feel that we are what we ought to be, then we will remain what we are. We will not look for any change or improvement in our lives. This will quite naturally lead us to judge everyone by what we are. This is the judgment of which we must be careful. To judge others by ourselves is to create havoc in the local assembly.

Self-righteousness also leads to complacency. Complacency is a great sin and covers just about everything I have said about the rote and the rut. Some have the attitude, "Lord, I'm satisfied with my spiritual condition. I hope one of these days You'll come, I will be taken up to meet You in the air and I will rule over five cities." These people cannot rule over their own houses and families, but they expect to rule over five cities. They pray spottily and sparsely, rarely attending prayer meeting, but they read their Bibles and expect to go zooming off into the blue yonder and join the Lord in the triumph of the victorious saints.

Is Simply Self-Deception

I wonder if we are not fooling ourselves. I wonder if a lot of it is simply self-deception. I hear the voice of Jesus saying to us, "You have stayed long enough where you are. Break camp and advance into the hill country." This would be a new spiritual experience that God has for us. Everything Jesus Christ did for us we can have in this age. Victorious living, joyous living, holy living, fruitful living, wondrous, ravishing knowledge of the Triune God - all of this is ours. Power we never knew before, undreamed of answers to prayer - this is ours. "See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of [it]." The Lord gave it to you in a covenant. Go take it - it's yours. It was given to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all their seed after. Jesus prayed, "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message" (John 17: 20). That embraces all those who belong to the church of Jesus Christ.

If we call Him Lord, how dare we sit any longer in the rut! The Lord has called us to move on. But when people are in a rut, not even the angel Gabriel can help them if they will not come out of it. This is not an accusation but a suggestion. If you are not in a rut, don't get mad - somebody else is. But if you are in a rut you ought to get out of it.

The difference between a wooden leg and a good leg is that if you prick a wooden leg the person would never notice. The difference between a church that has dry rot and a church that is alive is that if you prick the live church it will respond. If you prick the other kind, it is already dead. The tree that stands alive has lush, green leaves. Take a knife, scar the bark deeply and the tree will bleed. It is alive. The old dead tree just stands there, a watchtower for old sentinel crows. Take your knife and dig in as far as you want to, and nothing will happen because the tree is dead.

So it is with my message. If you'll get neither mad nor glad nor sad under my preaching, I know nothing can be done. But there are some who are alive, and I believe it is the majority.



**"Declare ye among the nations, and
publish, and set up a standard;
publish, and conceal not"**
(Jeremiah 50:2)

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