

Repentance and Remission

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately teaches that true repentance and the remission of sins are divine gifts to be preached in the name and authority of Jesus Christ, assuring believers of full and eternal forgiveness.

Scripture: Luke 24:47, Acts 2:38, Romans 11:33, Psalm 34:18, John 3:16, Romans 8:33, John 10:27-28, 2 Corinthians 5:21

Topics: "Repentance", "Forgiveness", "Gospel Preaching"

Description

In this powerful sermon, C.H. Spurgeon expounds on the vital Christian doctrines of repentance and remission of sins, emphasizing that these truths must be preached in the name and authority of Jesus Christ. He challenges the church to uphold preaching as God's primary means of salvation and assures sinners of the full, free, and eternal forgiveness available through faith. Spurgeon calls believers to embrace repentance as a divine gift and to proclaim the Gospel boldly to all nations until Christ returns.

Transcript

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke 24:47.

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text is #1729, Volume 29—BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM.]

THIS verse is among our Lord's last words to His disciples just before He left them to return to Heaven. He wished to impress upon them the Truth of God that it was His purpose and desire that their lives should be devoted to the preaching of His Gospel among all nations upon the face of the earth. In Christ's own words and throughout the New Testament, we find the greatest stress laid upon preaching. Preaching is the great battering ram that is to shake the gates of Hell! Preaching is God's chief method of winning souls unto Himself—"for after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." We cannot too often remind this age in which we live of this Truth, for this is a time in which it is supposed that rites and ceremonies, human learning and literature and I know not what else, may very properly be allowed to supplant the preaching of the Word! Yet our Lord has given no intimation of any change in His purpose and plan—on the contrary, His great commission is evidently intended to cover the whole of this present dispensation—"Go you, therefore, and teach (that is, make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them (that is, those who have been made disciples) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things

whatever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (or, more properly, unto the end of the age). Amen." So, until this dispensation is brought to a close by the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ, "repentance and remission of sins" are to "be preached in His name among all nations." Blessed, indeed, are those who, in this land or anywhere else, have heard their Lord and Master say to them as He said to His disciples before He left them, "and you are witnesses of these things."

As I have been called, by His Grace, to be one of His witnesses, I will now try to put the text to practical use by preaching, first, upon the subject, and secondly, upon the audience here mentioned by our Lord.

I. First, let us consider THE SUBJECT OF OUR PREACHING as here stated by our Lord—"that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name."

So the first part of the subject is that repentance should be preached in the name of Jesus. There is a very important point that must here be noted—and that is that repentance is not to be preached in the name of Moses as a legal duty. Undoubtedly, it is a legal duty, for everyone who sins against God ought to repent of doing so. Whenever we have broken any Law of God, we ought to be sorry for having broken it. It is the natural, commonsense duty of the creature, when he has disobeyed any command of his Creator, to grieve that he has thus grossly offended his Maker and to resolve that if possible, he will not do so any more. But it is not in this fashion, simply as a legal duty, that Christ has bid His servants preach repentance. If we preach it thus, our labor will be in vain—at least to a very large extent!

Nor are we to preach it merely as a matter of faint hope. There is, indeed, more than a faint hope for any man who is bid to repent because he will suppose, naturally and properly, that the God who bids him repent must have some designs of love towards him. But we are not to preach to sinners in such a fashion as simply to make them faintly hope that they may be saved. You know that when Jonah passed through the streets of Nineveh, his mournful and monotonous message was, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." When that message was carried to the king, he laid aside his gorgeous robe and put on sackcloth, sat in ashes, proclaimed a fast for man and beast and commanded his people to turn from their evil ways! Yet he had no better hope than this—"Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?" When they repented, God did have mercy upon them and spared them. But we

have to carry to sinners a far more hopeful message than that heathen king's enquiry, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent?" Our Lord Jesus Christ has ordained that repentance should be preached in quite a different fashion than that!

We are not even to preach it after the manner of John the Baptist who preached repentance as a preparation for the coming of Christ. His message was, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." To the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism, he said, "Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance," evidences of a change of life, because there was One far mightier than he coming after him—whose shoes he was not worthy to bear. John was only sent to prepare the way for Him who should baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. There are some, nowadays, who seem to think that repentance is a sort of preparation for faith in Christ, but that is not as we understand the Word of God—as we will try to show you before we have finished our discourse. We have not to preach repentance after the manner or in the nature of Moses, or Jonah, or John the Baptist—we have to preach repentance in the name of Jesus Christ! What does this mean?

First, it means that we are to preach repentance as the gift of God. Christ was exalted with His Father's right hand, to be a Prince and a Savior, "to give repentance" as well as "forgiveness of sins." Wherever there is real sorrow for sin, wherever there is an honest determination, by God's Grace, to cease from sin, wherever there is a complete change of mind with regard to sin—for that is what repentance means—that repentance has been produced by the Spirit of God and it is as much a gift of the Covenant of Grace as even the pardon which comes with it is! This is the repentance which we are to preach in Christ's name, and of which Joseph Hart so sweetly sings—

"Come, you needy, come and welcome,

God's free bounty glorify!

True belief and true repentance,

Every Grace that brings us near,

Without money,

Come to Jesus Christ and buy!"

You are not to seek to draw up repentance from the depths of your own heart, as you might draw up water from a well, but to ask Christ to work repentance in you by His Holy Spirit, through belief of the Truth of God as it is recorded in the Word of God, or as it is set before you in the preaching of the Gospel. As you learn how terribly Christ suffered because of sin, that Truth will, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, be the means of leading you to hate sin. And you will realize how the Holy Spirit, by enlightening the understanding and influencing the affections, produces repentance even in that sterile heart which had never been previously softened and made fertile by the gentle dew and rain of Grace. So we are to tell sinners that God gives repentance—that it is one of the free gifts of His Grace—and that whoever has it may rest assured that the hand of the Lord has been upon him for good and that, in fact, the work of salvation has been already begun in his soul!

Further, to preach repentance in the name of Jesus also means that wherever there is real repentance, it is the token of the pardon of sin—not merely a hopeful sign, but the sure and Infallible sign of pardon. If any man's heart is turned away from sin. If he prostrates himself in the dust before God because of his offenses. If he looks with true penitence to Christ upon the Cross, crying, "Lord, remember me," "Lord, save me," "God be merciful to me, a sinner"—it is not a question whether forgiveness may or may not be granted to him—it is a fact that he is already forgiven! David's words are still true, "The Lord is near unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as are of a contrite spirit." It was for such as these that Jesus suffered upon Calvary. So let the message ring out through every land beneath the canopy of Heaven, that wherever there is a soul that loathes sin and leaves sin, Eternal Mercy has already commenced its gracious work and that soul is forgiven!

I also think that to preach repentance in the name of Jesus means that we are to preach it on the authority of Jesus. We are not merely to bid men repent and to try to persuade them to do so by various reasons that might be urged! We are to take far higher ground than that, as Paul did at Athens when he said, "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent." The servants of Christ are not to preach repentance on their own authority, or even on the authority of the Church of Christ, but they are to preach it on the authority of the Church's ascended Head! This was Christ's own

message, for we read, "After that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent you, and believe the Gospel." So no true minister of Christ need be either afraid or ashamed to tell sinners—even the very worst sinners—that they should repent! When Jesus went into the country of the Gadarenes, a man possessed by an unclean spirit met Him—a wild man whom no mere human being could tame, a man who snapped the fetters and chains with

which he was bound, a man who lived in the mountains, or among the tombs, a man who was a terror to the whole countryside and from whom all who could, fled—did Jesus flee from him or pass him by as too bad to be cured? No, the fiat of Omnipotence was, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit." And though it was not merely one demon, but a whole legion of evil spirits that possessed the man, they all departed at Christ's command! And the man, himself, was shortly afterwards found "sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind." And soon he, too, was taken into Christ's service, "and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel." In like manner, the true minister of Christ is not only to call upon the most moral and the most hopeful to repent, but he is to give the same message to the most immoral and the most hopeless! On the day of the Pentecost, when Peter had charged his hearers with putting Jesus to death, they were pricked in their heart and said to the Apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." You know what followed—about three thousand of them gladly received Peter's words, were baptized and the same day were added to the Church! Our commission to preach the Gospel to every creature was issued by Him to whom all power in Heaven and in earth had been given! It is, therefore, under Divine authority that "repentance and remission of sins" are to be preached in Christ's name among all nations! "Repentance and remission" are so joined together that wherever we find the one, we are sure to find the other. Where there is no repentance, there can be no remission. But where there is true repentance—that godly sorrow for sin that needs not to be repented of—there is the full and free forgiveness of all sins of the one who has thus sincerely repented!

According to our text, this remission of sins is to be preached in the name of Jesus. We have the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ for declaring that "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." And when Paul was preaching at Antioch concerning the Resurrection of Christ, he put this Truth of God very plainly—"Be it known unto you, therefore, brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses." We also are to preach, not as unauthorized persons who hope that what we say may possibly prove to be true, but as those who are proclaiming Divine Truths and certainties on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! As one of the Lords witnesses, let me tell you, my dear Hearers, that there is promised to penitents a full pardon of every sin they have ever committed, whether it has been a sin of thought, or word, or deed—whether it has been a sin of omission or of commission! This pardon makes a clean sweep of the accumulated heaps of defilement that have resulted from years of iniquity! It is a pardon as great as it is full—pardon for the most horrible and oft-repeated offenses, pardon for uncleanness, for theft, for blasphemy, even for murder if the murderer has truly repented! It is a—

"Pardon for crimes of deepest dye, A pardon bought with Jesus' blood." The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin, all who truly repent and believe in Him! It cleanses from the sins that banish men from the presence of their fellows, and from the sins that would banish them forever from the Presence of the thrice-holy God! Yes, pardon is to be proclaimed in the name of Jesus for sins such as

these—they are not too black to be forgiven by God—they are not too deeply ingrained to be washed out by the precious blood of Jesus!

And this great and full pardon is also a pardon that is given instantaneously. In a moment the guilt of the penitent sinner is forgiven! To quote Hart, again, "His pardon at once he receives." The instant that faith is begotten in the soul, we are justified in the sight of God and we can say with the Apostle Paul, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies." The believing penitent turns his weeping eyes to Christ upon the Cross, gazes with mingled sorrow and joy upon the blood that flowed from His many wounds, places all his reliance upon the God-appointed Propitiation, "the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world," and in that very moment all his iniquities are gone forever! The Lord has blotted them out and driven them away like clouds that have been dispersed by a tornado, and that can never be found again!

This pardon is realized by the penitent sinner who receives it. "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." Oftentimes, the sense of pardon comes upon a man like a piece of good news that makes him almost leap for joy—he was never before thrilled with so wondrous an emotion! He is half inclined to sing—

"He has lifted me out of the miry clay, And set my feet on the King's Highway"—

but, perhaps, instead of doing so, he bows himself before the Lord in solemn silence, feeling that he could never express the gratitude he feels for such amazing mercy. Or, possibly, he finds David's words just suited to his experience and, therefore, he says, "Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all His benefits who forgives all your iniquities." He realizes, as David did, that all his iniquities are forgiven and with the royal Psalmist he sings, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

Nor is this all, for this pardon is one that is never reversed. O Sinner, if you really repent of your sin and believe in Jesus, the sinner's Savior, you are saved with an everlasting salvation! Remember that you have to deal with a God who never changes—He gives to the guilty penitent full and free forgiveness, not a reprieve or a respite! Once washed in the precious blood of Jesus, you shall never go back to your sin so as to live in it, and to die in it and perish. If you are truly trusting in Jesus, you are saved, not merely for today, tomorrow and next week, but forever. What says the Lord Jesus Christ Himself? "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." Were you, my dear Hearer, ever pardoned by God for Christ's sake? Then you are pardoned forever! But if not, I pray that you may repent and believe the Gospel this very hour.

Perhaps you say, "But all this seems so strange to me. You tell me that my sins can all be forgiven in a moment, and forgiven forever—and that I have nothing to pay for this priceless blessing, but am simply bid to repent of my sin and believe in Jesus." Yes, that is all true. But I do not ask you to believe it because I say it, for I only repeat to you the message that I have received from the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, through His Word and by His Spirit. He cannot lie—and it is He who says, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." He has given the best proof possible that your sins can be forgiven in the fact that He died in the place of sinners. Jesus Christ, who was God as well as Man, suffered as the Substitute of all who believe in Him. He bore their sins in His own body up to the tree and away from the tree! And now, for all who truly trust Him, there is no condemnation forever!

"But," says one, "I do not doubt that repentance and remission of sins are to be preached in Christ's name. My difficulty is as to whether they are for me!" Well, that is a point that you must settle under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Have you really repented of your sin? Have you sorrowed over it as the great curse of your life? Have you hated it and turned away from it, and sought to live as the holy God would have you live? Well, then, if the repentance is yours, the remission, also, is yours—for they go together in Christ's own words—"repentance and remission of sins." To hate sin because it slew Christ. To hate sin because God is so good that we ought not to sin against Him. To hate sin because God is so gracious as to forgive it. To weep over sin, not like a child who has done wrong, and so keeps away from his father, but like a penitent child who lays his head in his father's bosom and sobs out his grief there, and mourns that he has offended such a loving father who is so ready to forgive him—this is evangelical repentance and wherever it is found, there is also the remission of sins! If you do not know experimentally what it is thus to repent, breathe the prayer, "O Lord, show me the guilt of my sin. Teach me to mourn over it, to loath it and leave it. Let me see Your dear Son bearing its penalty on my behalf and then assure me, by Your Spirit's gracious instructions, that my sins, which were many, are all forgiven for Jesus' sake, that so I may go on my way rejoicing as a sinner saved by Sovereign Grace."

Those of you who were here last Sabbath morning [See Sermon #925, Volume 16—INDIVIDUAL SIN LAID ON JESUS.] will remember that my text was, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." And you will also recollect that I tried to describe various characters to whom that verse applies. I hope God gave comfort and blessing to some who listened to the sermon here. But oh, it was a joy to me to hear of one far away in Scotland who had been for years desponding and despairing who was led to find rest and peace through reading the printed sermon! But why should not many more of you be blessed while hearing the Word of God as so many are in reading it? Poor captive Soul, why should you not be set at liberty? Arise and shake yourself from the dust, for in Christ's name pardon is preached unto you if you will but repent of your sins and trust Him to save you from them!

II. Now, secondly, we are to think of THE AUDIENCE THAT IS TO BE ADDRESSED UPON THIS SUBJECT—

"that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Why is this Gospel to be preached among all nations Well, first, because all nations need it! And then, because the Gospel is exactly suited to all nations. And further, because God has a chosen number in all nations who will receive the Word and be saved by it. And also because it shall be a witness against those in all nations who hear it but refuse to heed it.

Some nations were learned, yet when Paul was addressing the Greeks who were proud of their philosophy and were continually seeking after wisdom, he preached repentance and remission of sins in Christ's name—the same A B C Doctrine of Jesus Christ and Him crucified that he proclaimed wherever he went! And the greatest scholars of the present day, if they would be wise unto salvation, must stoop to learn the same Gospel alphabet! No, rather they will be elevated as they acquire these elements and rudiments of heavenly knowledge and become scholars in Christ's School of Grace!

Other nations were very ignorant. In the Apostles' days there were some parts of the earth where the people were rude barbarians without any knowledge of books and letters. Yet the Apostles went to them

and preached repentance and remission of sins—and the Gospel was simple enough for them to understand—and many of the heathen turned from their idols to serve the living God! And in later days, many of the greatest triumphs of the Truth of God have been won among the savages and untutored tribes of Africa, India and North America—and the islands of the southern seas. Ignorant and degraded as they were, many of them have become new creatures in Jesus Christ, living here to the praise and glory of God and, in due time, going to join the ranks of the blessed above!

There are nations that worship God after a very imperfect fashion, although they know not Jesus Christ, whom He has sent to be the Savior of sinners. To these, also, we must preach repentance and remission of sins in Christ's name, for no man can come unto the Father except by Jesus Christ, His Son! Men cannot know God until they see the brightness of His Glory revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ. To theists and polytheists, those who believe in one God and those who worship "gods many and lords many," we have but one message, even that which our Lord Himself delivered, "Repent you, and believe the Gospel." And already, many of them, by Divine Grace, have repented and received the remission of their sins in Christ's name!

There are three very important words at the end of our text—"beginning at Jerusalem." John Bunyan has a masterly treatise upon this text, entitled *The Jerusalem sinner saved*; or, goodnews for the vilest of men: being a help for despairing souls, showing that Jesus Christ would have mercy in the first place offered to the biggest sinners. Those of you who have his works will find the whole treatise well worth reading, but I am going to borrow some of his divisions and speak upon them after my own fashion.

Bunyan's first reason why Christ would have mercy proclaimed first to the biggest sinners is "because the biggest sinners have most need thereof" A surgeon who is caring for the wounded on a battlefield and who has several soldiers awaiting his attention, will be anxious, first, to attend to the man who is the most seriously hurt and whose life seems fast ebbing away. He will leave for a while the one who has only a slight scratch or cut on his flesh, and devote all his thought and care to the man who is so terribly maimed and lacerated that it is a marvel how he manages to live at all! He will have him put in the ambulance and taken at once to the field hospital, that his life may be saved if it is possible. And oh, if among my hearers there are some great offenders—some who have sinned very terribly, some who have sinned against God and man, against their own bodies and souls, some who may be truly called, "Jerusalem sinners, the vilest of men"—I want to assure them, first, that my Master has sent me to preach especially to them and to tell them that if they repent of their sins—many and great as they have been—they shall all be forgiven!

Bunyan's second reason why Christ would have mercy preached first to the biggest sinners is "because when they, any of them, receive it, it redounds most to the fame of His name." If a doctor cures someone's finger that is only slightly injured, he may get the credit of it, yet no one will say much about it. But if there is a person who is suffering from a disease that is believed to be incurable and a wise physician is the means of his restoration to health, how the whole neighborhood will ring with his praises! When someone else is very ill, friends will say, "You should send for Dr. So-and-So. You know what he did for that other poor man, perhaps he could do as much for you." And when the Lord Jesus Christ saves some black blasphemer or some leader in vice and iniquity, how fast the news flies throughout the whole region where he lives! Why, even among the lowest of the low, when one of their companions is converted, you know how they talk about it! They cry, "Have you heard what's happened to old Jack?" "No. What is it?" "Why, you know that he used to go along with us, first in all manner of evil—and now he has become a Christian!" That is sure to be repeated among all his old connections and so Christ gets fame and honor through His great work of Grace and, therefore, it is that He would have the biggest sinners specially bid to

repent and believe the Gospel.

Bunyan's third reason is "because, by their forgiveness and salvation, others, hearing of it, will be encouraged the more to come to Him for life" When sinners hear that some big black sinner has been forgiven by Christ, they naturally ask, "Then why should not we be forgiven?" A rebel city is besieged and the king threatens to hang every traitor when he captures it. They do all they can to strengthen their defenses and to beat off the besiegers, resolved never to yield. But when one of their greatest captains is captured and the king, instead of hanging him, sends him back to the city loaded with gifts and bids him tell his fellow rebels that if they will only open the gates, he will forgive them and he will give them a royal charter for their city, and will be the patron of all their industries, what do they do? Why, Sirs, they fling wide the gates! They ring the bells and they beg the king to enter at once and accept their loyal homage! You can easily apply the parable to your own case. I pray that many of you may do so right now.

The time flies so fast that I cannot take Bunyan's lessons in detail. His next one is that when the biggest sinners are saved, they weaken Satan's kingdom the most. Catch the ringleaders and you can soon break up the band. Often one man can twist quite a number round his fingers and make them do as he pleases. When he is converted, he brings his mates to hear the preacher whose word was blessed to him—and thus many are won to Christ and Satan's ranks are thinned!

Besides, how it strengthens the Church when great sinners are converted It was a great day for the Churches of England when John Bunyan was saved. It was a glorious day for the Apostolic Churches when Saul the persecutor became Paul the preacher! And this will be a grand night for the Tabernacle Church if the Lord will turn some great sinner here from the error of his ways and enlist him beneath the banner of the Cross! This is the kind of man who will lead the forlorn to hope in Christ, and plant the victorious banner of the Gospel on heights of sin that seem inaccessible to ordinary Christians! Great sinners, when they are converted, are the men to do great exploits in the name of Jesus!

Further, where great sinners are forgiven, it is a clear proof that the Gospel has power to bless other sinners. When the elephants entered the ark, all the beasts outside could see that the door was wide enough to admit them. As God's Grace saved the chief of sinners, that Grace can save you, my Friend, however great a sinner you have been! There may have come in here tonight, as they often do, those who are not usually found in places of worship. My Brother or my Sister, for as such I regard you, sinner as you are, I have to tell you that if you will repent of your sin and trust in Jesus as your Savior, you shall go out of this house justified, even as the publican went out of the Temple of old after he had, from the depths of his soul cried, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Thus have I tried to preach repentance and remission of sins in Christ's name to the Jerusalem sinners, the very worst men and women here! But I must not close without also preaching in the same fashion to you who think you are not the worst sinners here. O you respectable sinners, you moral and amiable sinners! You also need a Savior! Though you would stand by yourselves and say, "God, we thank You that we are not as other men and as other women are," yet Christ's message to you is, "You must be born-again." You, too, need to be washed in the precious blood of Jesus! Therefore, in His name, I preach to you "repentance and remission of sins," just as I have done to the greatest sinners here. May the ever-blessed Spirit come to you and take away your pride and your self-righteousness, and bring you down where you must come—just as publicans and harlots must come—to the pierced feet of Him who loves sinners, receives sinners and saves sinners—and who will receive you and save you if you will but trust Him! God grant it for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ACTS2:36-47.

You know that Peter had been preaching a plain, simple, straightforward sermon upon the death, Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who was once such a coward that he trembled before a little maid, now that he is filled with the Spirit, boldly charges this crowd with being murderers and Deicides because their kind put to death the Lord of Life and Glory! If you turn to the 36th verse, you will see the effect of Peter's plain preaching through the power of the Holy Spirit—

36, 37. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart [See Sermon #2102, Volume 35—"pricked

IN THEIR HEART.] A little later in this same Book, we read of those

who listened to Stephen's sharp, sword-like sentences, "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart"—and soon they stoned Stephen to death! To be "cutto the heart" is not enough! But to be prickedin the heart is to receive a mortal wound! Happy is the man who has had his sin killed through having received a deadly wound from the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God! These people who heard Peter preach "were pricked in their heart" and, first, they were in doubt as to what they should do, but secondly, they were resolved that whatever they were told to do they would do at once.

37, 38. Andsaid unto Peter and to the rest ofthe Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin, and you shall receive the gift ofthe Holy Spirit Nobody but a Baptist minister could have preached that sermon! At least we shall have to wait a long while before we hear any other saying to a whole congregation, "Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you." This is, indeed, the full proclamation of the Gospel—and we have no more right to leave out the Baptism than we have to leave out the repentance! "Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you." Peter was not like those hyper-Calvinists who are afraid to give an exhortation to a sinner because he is spiritually dead! He spoke out boldly to those who had asked, "What shall we do?" and said to them, "Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."

39. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God

shall call. [See Sermon #2586, Volume 44—A FAR-REACHING PROMISE.] This is

a most blessed verse. The promise is to us and to our descendants—not merely to our children, but also to our grandchildren. Yes, and to our race as far as it yet may run! And the next clause, "and to all that are afar off" proves that the promise is made to the far-off ones as well as to our children, with only this limitation, "even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

40. And with many other works did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.. Not, "save yourselves from Hell"—that Christ, alone, can do for you, but "save yourselves from this generation" by coming boldly out from among the ungodly, taking upon you the distinctive mark of the Christian and so separating yourselves from those upon whom the sentence of death shall fall.

41-45. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostle's Doctrine and fellowship,

and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need. What a notable instance this was of the power of Divine Grace! We would not usually suppose that the Jewish race would be given to any excess of making common property—but where Grace came in the first flush of its dawn, see to what prodigies of liberality it excited the early Believers! Would that we had more of this generous spirit nowadays!

46. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. I believe that wherever two or three disciples of Christ meet together it is competent for them to celebrate the Lord's Supper. That ordinance is not, as some think it to be, a Church ordinance, to be confined to the official assembling of all Believers—but wherever two or three are met in Christ's name, there He is—and where He is, there may the emblems of His broken body and shed blood be partaken of in memory of Him!

47. Praising God, and having favor with all His people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be

saved. [See Sermon #1167, Volume 20—ADDITIONS TO THE CHURCH.]

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