

Changing a Bad Man into a Good Man

Sermon Outline

“And the rest of the men repented not” (Revelation 9. 20).

1. God never lets a bad man alone. He loves even bad men too much for that. That is why the Bible is one long urge to repentance. Moses calls upon the people to repent. The prophets cry, “Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die?” John the Baptist comes out of the desert, wild, uncouth, demanding repentance.

In the teaching of Jesus himself the call is frequent. “I come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” When John the Baptist’s ministry ends because John is cast into prison, we read: “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Just before he vanished for the last time he said: “Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sin should be preached among all nations beginning at Jerusalem.” In his great Pentecostal sermon, Peter says: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you. . . . Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.”

Paul on Mars’ Hill declared that, if there had once been a time when God condoned sin on account of man's ignorance, that time is now past; “Now [he] commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” He declares that the goodness of God leadeth men to repentance; that godly sorrow worketh repentance.

The writer of Hebrew speaks of Esau who found no place for repentance though he sought it bitterly with tears. In revelation not one, but eleven times, there sounds the ringing call for repentance. The Bible is radical book in that it calls for radical changes in human character; and it makes clear beyond all peradventure that God's first and fundamental and essential requirement in changing a bad man into a good man is that the man shall repent.

(Preaching the Apocalypse by Daniel Russell, New York: The Abingdon Press, 1935, 143-144, Paragraph Structure Modified)