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Restitution

by D. L. Moody

Â Â Â If there is a man or woman who has been trying to live a Christian life and has no joy in it, and no victory in it, and no song in it--I know the reason. It is that they have never repented. They have started wrong.

Â Â Â Repentance is the most neglected doctrine in the New Testament and the most unpopular. People do not like to be called to repentance and you do not often hear it preached. And yet the Bible is a handbook of repentance. It enforces it, commands it, and so demands it that no substitute can be accepted for it.

Â Â Â Over sixty times the Scriptures enforce it, and all the Epistles are written to show men how to repent, so that no one need be in a fog as to what repentance means, yet multitudes of people are.

Â Â Â A spurious repentance means a spurious Christian life, and the reason many church-goers have no joy and peace in the Holy Ghost is because they do not obey the Scripture-- "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

Â Â Â You ask, "What is repentance?" It is not conviction on sin. Conviction is an element of repentance but you can be convicted without repenting. No one repents until he is convicted, but not all who are convicted do repent.

Â Â Â Conviction is not enough. It is not repentance, and "except ye repent, ye shall...perish" (Luke 13:3). Is sorrow repentance? No, it is not enough to be sorry for your sins. Something more than tears is needed.

Â Â Â If repentance is not conviction, and not sorrow, what is it? Is it promising to do better? No. Some of you have been doing that for years and you are further from God than ever.

Â Â Â Is repentance reading the Bible or praying? No. It is the sanest thing in God's Word and one of the most beautiful.

Â Â Â What is it to repent? Repentance is turning from sin to God.

Â Â Â Repentance is getting hold of that which is your curse by the hair of its head and tearing it out by the roots. Pride is one of them. Pride can be as damning as drunkenness--and is. There is pride of face, pride of place, pride of grace, and pride of race.

Â Â Â We need saving from our good self, our religious self, our spiritual self--as much as from our bad self. Satan is very subtle and if he cannot hinder by our badness, he will hinder by our goodness. If he cannot hinder us by our depths, he will hinder by our heights. If he cannot alienate us from God, he will hinder us by our self-righteousness, and if we are not careful he will come to us as an angel of light.

Â Â Â Pride, self-righteousness, sham, fraud, hypocrisy, lust, duplicity--the sin in your life which enslaves you, let it go. Kill it--and all other things in your life that are wrong will slink away like so many whipped curs.

Â Â Â What is repentance then? It is the moral response of the awakened soul to the call of God, the home of the soul. Have you repented? Have you turned from sin unto God?

Â Â Â "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent...As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:2,3,19).