

THE
SOUTHERN PREACHER :

A COLLECTION
OF
SERMONS,

FROM THE
MANUSCRIPTS OF SEVERAL EMINENT MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL,
RESIDING IN THE SOUTHERN STATES.

CAREFULLY SELECTED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS, WITH THE CONSENT AND
APPROBATION OF THEIR RESPECTIVE AUTHORS.

TOGETHER WITH

A FEW POSTHUMOUS SERMONS,

FROM THE
MANUSCRIPTS OF EMINENT DECEASED MINISTERS,
Who, when living, had resided in the Southern States.

CAREFULLY SELECTED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS,
WITH THE CONSENT AND APPROBATION OF THOSE IN WHOSE POSSESSION THEY WERE
FOUND.

BY THE REV. COLIN M'IVER.

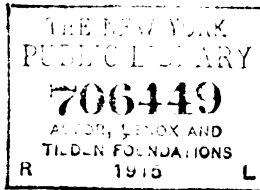
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, } DISTRICT OF CAPE-FEAR,
NORTH CAROLINA DISTRICT. } *To wit :*

BE IT REMEMBERED, that, on the 7th day of March, in the forty-eighth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1823, the Rev. Colin M'Iver, of the said District, has deposited in this office, the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, viz :—

“The Southern Preacher: a collection of Sermons, from the Manuscripts of several eminent Ministers of the Gospel, residing in the Southern States. Carefully selected from the Original Manuscripts, with the consent and approbation of their respective authors. Together with a few Posthumous Sermons from the Manuscripts of eminent deceased Ministers, who, when living, had resided in the Southern States. Carefully selected from the Original Manuscripts, with the consent and approbation of those in whose possession they were found. By the Reverend Colin M'Iver.”

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, “An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;” and also to an act entitled “An act, supplementary to an act, entitled an act, for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching. Historical and other prints.” Witness Carleton Walker, Clerk of the District of Cape-Fear.

CARLETON WALKER.

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SERMON XIII.

ON REPENTANCE.

LUKE XIII. 5.

“ I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

PERHAPS in nothing are men more apt to mistake, than in the judgment which they form with respect to the government of God over the creatures he has made. When a signal judgment lights upon an individual, or on a particular class of them, and sweeps them from among the living, in an extraordinary manner, we are apt immediately to conclude, that, surely they must have been sinners, before God, exceedingly; and that some uncommon stain, or deep malignity, has marked their character, above all men who dwell around them. To correct this common mistake, appears to have been the design of our Lord, in the words now read in your hearing. He had just received information of a very tragical circumstance, which had happened at Jerusalem. A number of Galileans had gone up to the temple to sacrifice. Pilate, it seems, either in person, or by his officers, had sallied out against them, had slain the sacrificers, and mingled their blood with their offerings. Who these Galileans were, or to whose jurisdiction they belonged, we are not here particularly informed. It is most probable, that they belonged to Herod, who presided over Galilee, and that this outrage by Pilate, occasioned the quarrel which took place between him and Herod. Some think,

that these Galileans were of the faction of Judas of Galilee, who disowned the authority of Herod, and refused to pay tribute to him; or perhaps they were only suspected by Pilate, to be of that faction, and were therefore barbarously murdered. However this may be, it appears there were present, at that season, some who informed our Lord of the fact, of these men having been slain in the act of devotion; and it would appear from our Lord's answer, that they were about to draw the conclusion, that therefore, these Galileans were great sinners, above all that dwelt in Jerusalem. To this story and suggestion, Christ replies, by telling them another story, which also gave an instance of people's being taken away by a sudden death. It had been but a little time since the tower of Siloam fell; and there were eighteen persons killed, and buried in its ruins. Doctor Lightfoot is of opinion, that this tower was immediately connected with the pool of Siloam, which is the same with that of Bethesda, and that it belonged to those porches, in which, we are informed, the sick and maimed were laid, who waited for the moving of the water; and that those on whom the tower fell, were either some of those diseased persons, or some who went into the pool to purify, for the temple service. Whoever they were, it was a lamentable story; and stood upon the same footing as that of the other, which they had just been relating. "But what conclusion," says Jesus, "do you wish to draw from these disasters? "Do you suppose, that those Galileans, whose blood "was shed by Pilate, or those unfortunate creatures who "were covered with the ruins of Siloam's tower, were "remarkable, beyond others, for the enormity of their "crimes, and were therefore swept away by these singular judgments? Do you mean thus to call in question "the piety of these worshippers, or to cast a reflection "upon the providence of God? I tell you, you are

“ wrong in this conclusion, and I denounce to you, that unless you repent, you shall *all* likewise perish. You have broken the laws of virtue and religion, as well as others ; and therefore, in order to your salvation, repentance is indispensably necessary.” Repentance is a duty, enjoined by every system of religion, and by every dictate of reason and of nature. It was strongly enforced by the Jewish Religion ; but it is the peculiar excellence of the Gospel, that it proposes the strongest—the most powerful reasons, to urge the practice of this duty, which possibly could be proposed to the human mind ; motives calculated to meet our hopes and our fears—our desire of happiness, and our dread of misery—motives drawn from the songs of the blessed, in the New Jerusalem, and the groans of the miserable, in the regions of sorrow. There is not a Christian duty, or a pre-requisite to salvation in all the revealed will of God, more insisted on, or more frequently inculcated, than that of repentance. Repent, repent, was the united voice of both Christ Jesus the Saviour, and his harbinger John. Repent, was the united injunction of the Apostles and Evangelists. This is a doctrine of natural, as well as revealed religion. This is a point, viz. the necessity of repentance, in which all mankind agree—Even those who reject the Gospel, or the necessity of the atonement by Christ, do it upon this principle, that the light of nature is sufficient to point out the necessity and propriety of repentance. In this doctrine, therefore, all agree—Infidels and Jews—Mahometans and Pagans—with all the various sects of Christians, throughout the world, proclaim, with one united voice, the absolute necessity of repentance. It is to this great—this universally acknowledged doctrine, and not to the controverted *tenets* of parties, I am now to call your attention. And may I not hope, my brethren, that the importance of the subject—the universality of

its belief—and its indispensable necessity to the salvation of man, will secure me a patient and attentive hearing, while I proceed to explain to you, what is implied in the doctrine of Repentance, as laid down in the Gospel.

Nothing can be more certain, either from reason or revelation, than that not every pang of sorrow for sin—every conviction of the danger to which it exposes—every resolution to turn from it, will amount to true—genuine—Gospel Repentance. For, were this the case, then it would follow, that Judas, Felix, and Herod, were true penitents. But all these characters knew nothing of true repentance; and therefore, we may have all these emotions, and anxieties of mind, and yet be destitute of that repentance, which is unto life. I suppose, in this assembly, an individual could not be found, so completely sealed up in hardened impenitence, so entirely delivered over to a reprobate mind, as never to feel compunction of soul for having transgressed the laws of the Almighty, or, at least, uneasiness for the punishment to which such transgression exposes him. No; my brethren; we might make the appeal to every bosom, and rest it there. Follow the man of the world home from his midnight revel; and could we have access to the recesses of his heart, what writhings of soul should we there discover! What misgivings of mind, at the recollection of mispent time, and the abuse of the blessings of Providence! What rising horrors, at the reflection upon what may be the end of these things! He has planted a thorn in his pillow, which disturbs his repose, when from scenes of extravagance, he retires to rest; and what remorse and anxiety corrode his mind, and destroy his peace! What resolutions of amendment should we there see formed! Tears, perhaps, bedew his pillow; and water his couch, when unwellcome; irresistible reflection forces the conviction upon

him, that, although he has had his day of mirth, yet there *may*, at last, be a day of judgment too. How is he even compelled to raise his eyes to the Heavens, and cast an anxious look to the hills whence salvation comes, that his offended God would pardon that iniquity which perhaps, he then determines never again to commit ! Many of you, no doubt, my hearers, have gone thus far ; and perhaps concluded, that this may amount to that repentance which is unto life ; when alas ! before God, you may, this moment, continue as impenitent sinners, in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. True, Evangelical Repentance, which is unto life, must possess the following characteristics ; by which, I pray you, my brethren, to examine yourselves. In the first place, Evangelical Repentance, extends to, and affects the heart, as well as the external deportment. Every true penitent, indeed, has an affecting sense of the deformity of sin, wherever it appears. On every object to which it attaches, it appears to him to leave a stain. Its covering is sable, and its appearance unpleasant. But, oh ! the true penitent stops not at the deformity of externals. He traces up these polluted streams, to their more polluted fountain. He enters into the deep recesses of his heart, the secret springs of his soul. *There* the painful burden lies. It matters not with him, that his fellow men pronounce his character unspotted ; that those whose eyes cannot pierce the heart, discover nothing amiss in his external deportment, so long as he finds in his bosom a heart callous to the groans of his suffering Saviour—a heart unaffected with the boundless love and goodness of the author of his being—unimpressed with the glories which shine around him, in the works of Creation, Providence, and Redemption. His soul is pained, because his heart is not right with God. He feels that he loves not God or man, as he knows he ought. The law by which

he is bound is holy ; and therefore requires obedience from holy principles ; but Alas ! he is unholy, in every faculty of his soul ! Every thought which rises in his bosom, every motion of his mind, which is sinful, alarms him like the symptoms of the plague, or the stirring of an enemy in ambush. While those around him are very well pleased, if they can square their external conduct by moral rules, he is carefully scrutinizing every motive, and examining every principle of action ; there it is, that he finds sufficient ground for repentance. Even when the matter of his actions is right, he mourns over the impurity and selfishness of the motives, whence they proceed. In short, the true penitent is one who criticises, with nicety, upon both his actions, and the principles of his actions ; and therefore finds sufficient cause for renewed and continued repentance, as long as he lives. All this is too evident to need proof. Can you suppose, that it will satisfy a real lover of God and goodness, that his outward conduct is pure and unspotted, while his heart within him is a mass of pollution ? Will God accept the obedience which flows from improper principles ? God has commanded all men every where to repent. Repentance, therefore, is an act of obedience to the law of God ; but can this obedience be accepted by a God of holiness, when he sees and knows that it proceeds from impure and selfish principles ? Surely not. Repentance which reaches not the heart, is worth nothing. The penitential cries of David, breathe the spirit of true Repentance. He there not only acknowledges that he is guilty of the blood of Uriah, but confesses that he was conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity ; and prays that God would create in him a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within him. This is the language of the true penitent, whose heart has been affected with a sense of his guilt, and the pollution of his nature.

E e

- "Prostrate, dear Jesus, at thy feet,
 " A guilty rebel lies ;
 " And upwards, to thy mercy seat,
 " Presumes to lift his eyes.
 " O, let not justice frown me hence ;
 " Stay, stay the 'vengeful storm ;
 " Forbid it, that Omnipotence
 " Should crush a feeble worm.
 " If tears of sorrow would suffice,
 " To pay the debt I owe ;
 " Tears should, from both my weeping eyes,
 " In ceaseless torrents flow.
 " But, no such sacrifice I plead,
 " To expiate my guilt ;
 " No tears, but those that thou hast shed,
 " No blood, but thou hast spilt.
 " Think of my sorrows, Dearest Lord ;
 " And all my sins forgive ;
 " Justice shall well approve the word
 " That bids the sinner live."

Examine yourselves, as you go along, my hearers, by these marks ; and try whether your sorrow for sin be genuine ; and when thus trying, this, your claim to eternal life, do not some of you, stand convinced that your title is not clear, when weighed in this balance of the sanctuary ? And do you not feel conscious that you are found wanting ? A dreadful conviction ! But, shut not your eyes, nor lock your bosoms against it. To be convinced of danger, is the first step towards a remedy.

Repentance unto life implies, in the second place, an affecting view—an impressive sense of the intrinsic evil of sin.

There is, my brethren, a grand secret—a mystery in iniquity, with which the ungodly world is not acquainted. To the unbelieving and unenlightened eye, it is sealed with seven seals. I suppose there is not on earth, an individual, who would not wish to be delivered from suf-

fering the penalty of the divine law ; but impunity—simple impunity, or exemption from punishment, to the mass of mankind, is quite satisfactory. If the impenitent sinner had his choice, he would prefer entering the portals of the N w Jerusalem, with all his favourite sins about him. If he could so contrive it as to commit the crimes, and escape the punishment, all would be well. And indeed, further than exposure to the consequences of his guilt, consisting in sufferings, he cannot extend his views. But widely different is the situation of the genuine penitent. He sees, that, in transgressing the Divine law, there is a two-fold evil : he feels, that it has justly exposed him to death, in all the dreadful import of that word ; but it has gone farther : a more dreadful, and if possible, a more painful consequence is, that it has spread contamination through his soul, and disqualified him for becoming an inhabitant of the purer realms of eternal day. He is conscious that such is the innate state of his mind, in consequence of his iniquity, that, were justice to relinquish her claims, the Cherubim to be dismissed, the flaming sword forever sheathed, the gates of Heaven to be thrown wide open, and he admitted to a seat in the general assembly, around the eternal throne, to touch the harp, and sweep the immortal strings, happiness, substantial happiness, he could not enjoy. Sin had destroyed his relish for the song. For him the temple of God, beyond the skies, of which the Lamb is the glory, has no charms at all. While rapture inspired the Heavenly inhabitants, and glory to the Lamb who was slain was all their theme, he would droop, at a gloomy distance, and hang the wing. The notes of Heavenly music, which warble from ten thousand tongues, and make the celestial mansions ring, to him would lose their melody ; and the insufferable blaze of the Divine glory, would cover him with confusion, and kill him with anguish. It is

for this effect, which sin has produced upon the human heart—disqualifying it for communion with God, and depriving it of a relish for the divine glories, that the true penitent weeps most bitterly. To this affecting view of the nature of guilt, which is peculiar to the true penitent, two things are indispensably necessary; a knowledge of the extent and spirituality of the Divine law; and a view of the love—the goodness, and boundless benevolence of God, displayed in the salvation of man. It is only by the law, says the Apostle, that the knowledge of sin can be obtained. Every man will acknowledge, in general, that sin is the transgression of a law; but it is only he who has discovered the spirituality of the divine law, that can truly know what constitutes its transgression. That nothing, short of this knowledge, will be sufficient to form an ingredient of genuine repentance, appears from this circumstance, that until this discovery is made, the penitent never despairs altogether, of being able to work out his own salvation, by the deeds of the law. Hence, those prayers, and those tears—that reformation of manners, and close attention to the duties of Religion, which we find to mark the sinner's character, after he has first been arrested in his career of vanity. He has been roused from his slumber, by the rattling of Sinai's thunder; and he flies from the gathering storm, to take refuge under cover of the deeds of the law; indulging a secret hope, that for his good works, his prayers, and his cries, God will have mercy, remit his sins, and receive him into favour; and from this strong hold he will never be driven, until the spirituality of the law, makes its way to the heart. Amidst all his reformations, his prayers, and his songs, a beam from the eternal throne, shows him that the law is holy; and just as he was beginning to conclude that all was going on very well, behold, he discovers that the thoughts, the motives and intents of the heart, are all

embraced as objects of this law. With this its spiritual part, he is conscious he has not complied ; nor ever can. Shuddering at the curse which is denounced against every one who continues not in all things, written therein to do them, he cries out, in earnest, “ O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ” He now feels that by the deeds of the law, he never can be justified ; that, if he ever be justified, therefore, it must be by the righteousness of another. Now it is, that he is shut up to the faith, and yields to the sceptre of the Prince of Peace. But after all, it is a view of the love, the infinite, boundless, unparalleled love of God, as displayed in the redemption of man, that melts the soul into tears of genuine sorrow for sin. O ! how does the iron enter the soul of the true penitent, when he sees the boundless love and infinite goodness of that God, against whom he has so ungratefully transgressed ! The author of the universe, the glorious king on Zion’s Mount, has followed him with his goodness, courted him by his favours, called him by his word, his spirit, and his providence, in the endearing accents of compassion, to turn, and live, saying, “ O sinner, why will you die ? ” And at last he has entreated him, by the cries, the groans, and expiring agonies of the Son of his bosom ; and yet he has done despite to the holy one of Israel, and trampled under foot the blood of the covenant, and by persevering in iniquity, declared that he accounted it an unholy thing. These are the considerations which wring the soul of the penitent, and melt him down in sorrow. But O, what generous, tender relentings of mind, does he feel, when he sees that notwithstanding all his ingratitude, and the malignity of his guilt, yet the throne of his offended Sovereign is encircled with mercy ; that the sceptre of peace is extended to him, and he yet invited to draw near and touch it ! What Godly sorrows fill his soul,

when faith shows him the price of his salvation ; when,

“ Back to Calvary she flies,
“ To view her bleeding Lord !”

His cries, in the Garden, and his groans on the Cross, overwhelm him with a flood of distress. Now is the time, when he looks upon *him* whom his iniquities have pierced ; and mourns for him, as for an only son, and is in bitterness for him, as one who is in bitterness for a first born. While others are contenting themselves with trying to avoid the punishment of their sins, his prayer is, “ deliver me from their dominion, and their stains—deliver me from the power of the carnal heart.”

“ Furnish me, Lord, with Heavenly arms,
“ From Grace’s Magazine ;
“ And I’ll proclaim eternal war,
“ ’Gainst every darling sin.”

This leads to a third thing implied in true repentance ; and that is, a hatred to all sin, without exception ! This, to many, my brethren, will appear a hard saying. Here, perhaps, offended disciples will turn back, and walk no more with us. But, my hearers, this is an essential ingredient in true repentance. If you cannot stand this—if you still plead for *one* beloved lust, whatever may have been your sorrows, however your bosoms may have been chilled with the fear of punishment, or heaved with the alarms of guilt, you may rest assured, that you are yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity ; a stranger to true repentance which is unto life ; and if, in this situation, you lie down under the clods of the valley, you will be found to have died in your sins, and must bear the consequence, whatever that may be. True repentance is a genuine sorrow, for having transgressed the laws of a God of boundless goodness, mercy, and benevolence ; it must, therefore, necessarily, extend to

every thing which is commanded, or forbidden, in these laws. He who commanded us to keep holy the Sabbath, has also prohibited the profanation of his name ; and he who commanded us to love the Lord, with all our heart, has also enjoined it upon us, to love our neighbour as ourselves ; to do justly ; to love mercy, and walk humbly with our God ; to live denied to *all* ungodliness and worldly lusts ; to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world ; to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts, and shun all appearance of evil. To the neglect of one, as well as the other of these things, therefore, must true repentance extend. Examine yourselves by this mark. See if there be any secret sin which finds a welcome refuge in your bosom ; one which you would rather the law of God had left unnoticed : If so,—if your hatred extends not to all sin, as such, you are yet in a state of impenitence—strangers to true repentance—far from the covenant of promise, and really without God in the world. Fly then to the strong holds, ye prisoners of hope. Your iniquities, on repentance, shall yet be forgiven ; for the King of Israel, is a merciful king.

A fourth thing, implied in genuine repentance, is reformation in manners, and a constant walk with God, in all the paths of new obedience. And in this, my brethren, there is the most marked distinction to be found between the *true* penitent and the legal penitent. The one sins and repents—and turns again to folly—his whole life is little else than a continual series of sinning and repenting, and repenting and sinning. He yields to calls of temptation. His soul recoils at the recollection of the dreadful consequence ; the possibility of a future reckoning fills his mind with terror ; it pursues him from the throng ; enters his secret chamber ; and disturbs his midnight slumber. It is like a canker in his bosom, which destroys his peace. When he looks forward to the gloom

of a dying chamber, he is filled with horror : Eternity, with all its tremendous possibilities, chills his soul ; he breaks forth into tears and bitter cries, and determines to reform his conduct ; but Alas ! his repentance is like the morning cloud, and the early dew, which vanish away. Temptation again presents itself ; he is swept away as by a mighty torrent ; his resolutions are gone, until his repentance again returns. Whereas the other has had his inmost soul enlightened with the truth, his affections dissolved with love to God, whose mercy has provided for his salvation ; with gratitude to his Redeemer, who gave himself a ransom for his sins, to save him from the eternal destruction due from the justice of God, for his depravity and guilt. I have here placed before you, my brethren, the repentance which is unto life. I might still enlarge ; but I would fix your eye upon this all-important point, in its singleness, and its essential merits. On this, I would leave you to meditate ; in the hope, that the bosom of every sinner who has been within the sound of this declaration of God's will to-day, may not cease to be agitated by the deep emotions of a godly sorrow, until he has experienced that peace of God which passeth all understanding. *Amen.*