
CHRISTIAN SUN.

Elder Daniel W. Kerr, Editor.

Hillsborough, N. C. April 13, 1844.

REPENTANCE.

Repentance is a doctrine that stands at the very threshold of experimental religion, and no transgressor can by any means obtain salvation without having experienced it. Hence we find it inculcated and urged in the most solemn and impressive manner in many and various parts of the divine records, and especially in the New Testament. It implies a proper and due sense of sin, both inward, as well as outward. He that supposes or imagines that it consists in mere external reformation, entirely misses the correct scripture definition of the thing; and he may assuredly know, that whatever may be his claims or pretensions, he is still in his sins, and has no experimental knowledge of that redemption which is in Christ Jesus. For indeed, it is not impossible but that one may, in view of repentance, reform his life, pursue a moral and to all appearance upright course of conduct, and yet at the same time possess no particular and definite experimental knowledge upon the subject. In fact, it does not consist in any external actions whatever; even tears, lamentations, groans and confessions constitute not true and genuine repentance. These may be the fruits and legitimate productions of repentance, but are by no means the thing itself. Repentance being mainly the work of preparation for the reception of Christ, it follows as a consequence, that it is of indispensable necessity to the salvation of sinners; hence the Lord Jesus Christ has solemnly declared, (Luke xiii. 3.) "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." The glorious dispensation of mercy and grace was ushered into the world by the baptism of repentance. John, who

was the minister of this initiatory dispensation, instructed the multitudes that flocked to his baptism, to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," and not to imagine that because they were the natural descendants of Abraham, that therefore they were entitled to the privileges of the new dispensation which he was introducing. Evangelical repentance, the Apostle has taught us, is a godly sorrow for sin; a sorrow for sin which has respect unto God, that is, produces in the mind a disposition of returning unto the offended Sovereign of the universe. It stands opposed to the sorrow of the world, inasmuch as the one is connected with despair, and leads to death; the other is connected with hope, and leads to life. Indeed, genuine, evangelical repentance may be considered as a part of that glorious spiritual system which Christ came to introduce, and which he died to establish; and it is no less the work of the divine Spirit in the hearts of transgressors, than the work of regeneration itself is. Whoever, therefore, may conclude that he can obtain repentance, or rather the grace of it, at his own option, and when it may suit his own convenience, in the end may find himself wofully mistaken. It is consequently of absolute importance to pay timely and earnest attention to this duty.

Although repentance is the work of God in the sinner's soul, yet that work is not effectuated and carried out without the concurrence of the sinner himself. The first fruits of it are produced in the soul by divine grace, but are not consummated except by the consent and co-operation of the subject himself. It is evident that the divine Being cannot repent for transgressors; and it is equally evident, and perfectly consistent with the general tenor of the word of God, that he does plant the seeds of it in every heart. These require nurture and cultivation. That contrition of heart which is an indispensable conce-