

I had a man in one of my congregations once who was a most attentive attendant at church, and gave signs of yearnings for a religious life; but he shocked me one day by telling me that "*he had never prayed in his life!*" He wept over it, and said that he hoped to be a "praying man," but could not pray. What was I to tell that man? That I could not help it; or that he could not help it? That it was just as well that he could not pray, for if he did his prayer would be only laughter for devils! Was I to tell him that? Would not that have been "breaking the bruised reed," "quenching the smoking flax"? I could not bring myself to do that. I told him *he must learn to pray* before he could hope for salvation, and in that I shall soon shew I was borne out by Scripture.

You understand that prayer and repentance must go together. I mean, there cannot be genuine repentance without prayer; for repentance is more than mere sorrow for sin. It is the outpouring of a broken and contrite heart, which can only shew itself genuine by the earnest prayers that it calls forth that God will have mercy upon a miserable sinner.

And now I proceed to give you some Scripture passages, in order to clear up this great point. Our Saviour himself says: "I am not come to call the righteous but *sinner*s to repentance."—(*Matt. IX., 13.*) Putting that in popular language, it is, "I am not come to call the '*saved*' but the '*unconverted*' to repentance. Surely repentance there *precedes* the call to righteousness.

St. Paul tells the elders of Ephesus that he had "testified to the Jews and also to the Greeks *repentance toward God* and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." The "Brethren" teach "faith, faith," and leave "repentance toward God" out altogether.

In the Old Testament there is this well-known text, "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed and doeth that which is lawful and right he shall save his soul alive."—(*Ezek. XVIII., 27.*) You see here before a wicked man can be saved he must *turn away from his wickedness* and live. But how can he do that unless he repents and prays for forgiveness? The "Brethren" would make the text read, "When the wicked man *believes that he is a saved man* he is a saved man" without the preliminary step of "turning from his wickedness."

I could give you scores of passages like these, but I have given enough to shew that the doctrines of Brethrenism with regard to repentance are not sound; and the theory that a man *cannot* pray or repent before he is a *saved man by faith* is contrary to God's word, as I have shewn. But for fear I have not been plain