

# Repentance Defined:

## Second Instance of Repentance in the Bible

By Paris Reidhead\*

Now will you turn, please, to Exodus, Chapter 32. For our evening's meditation, we are following in the series on Repentance, which shall engage us mornings, Wednesdays, and evenings, till the Lord seems to lead otherwise. You say, Well we aren't all here. But you are here, and you are faithful custodians of the Word, and probably will do more with what you hear tonight than if the hall were filled with people that simply came to be entertained or for some reason. And so, the Scriptures says, That which thou hast perceived, the same commit to faithful men. And I am just counting tonight that He has made you faithful in heart, and in intent, and in purpose, and what you receive you are going to share with others.

Now I am reading just verses 7 through 14. There is a great deal more that I would like you to read. If you would read just Chapters 32 and 33 about two or three times to find out what it says, and once on your knees between now and next Lord's Day morning, I am sure it would be excellent preparation for what the Lord might say to you.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves: They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed there unto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever. And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.” (Exo. 32:7-14)

Now, in Genesis, the 6th Chapter, we have an interesting statement where it repented God that He had made man, and He decided to destroy the race that then was, and so He did, by the flood, saving only Noah and his family in the ark which is a picture of Christ, and a type of Christ. God changed His mind about having made man, changed His intent, changed His purpose, and carried forth exactly what He said He would do. It repented God that He had made man, and so He destroyed man. This is the teaching that we have been establishing for you, that repentance means a change of mind, a change of intention, and a change of action. And God repented, and so He changed His mind, and He changed His intention, and He changed His purpose, and He changed His action, and He destroyed that generation that was, thought warning them for 120 years and pleading with them to come into the ark which was provided for them.

Now the second time that the word repentance is used in the Bible, it is used of God. The second instance is also used of God, strangely enough. Oh, it is said in an early chapter in Exodus, Lest the people should repent when they had gone to war. But it was in the sense of a prediction of what might happen, and not an action that took place. And so here in this portion that I have just read for you, we find that God repented, but in this case He spared man. He had purposed to destroy Israel, but now in His repentance He has changed His mind, and His intention, and His action. And instead of destroying Israel in bringing forth a new nation from Moses, He changes His mind and brings punitive justice, but not destruction and ruin.

You understand what happened. God called Moses up into the Mount to commune with Him, and while he was gone some 40 days the people became disturbed. They were redeemed in the sense they had come out of bondage, and slavery in Egypt. But their leader was away. He was not in sight any longer. They could not go to him. And so they said, We need to do things our own way. And does not this speak to us of the Lord Jesus up on the right hand of the Father, in the presence of God. And oh, how prone His people are even today to sense in His absence that they should do things in their own way. And every

generation experiences dirth and absence of blessing does it because they have taken things into their own hands, and they have been successful in getting the leaders, the religious leaders to follow them. And so we find now that Aaron is under pressure, and the kind of pressure that is extremely difficult for him to resist. And so he submits to it. And he has them bring their earrings, and they were put in the fire. Of course when he was accosted by Moses he lied. He said, I just threw them into the fire and the calf came out, which was a horrible lie. He cast it in this form, and then engraved it. And so, nevertheless, Aaron bowed to the pressure of the people, and prepares the calf. Now the thing that we find here is that in the 7th verse, after all of this has happened, Aaron has made the Calf, and that must have taken several days, made an altar, established a form of worship, taught the people how to worship, gotten them before the altar to worship, had a banquet prepared that they could sit down after they had worshipped and eat and share together, and then they had risen up to play — whatever that meant. The Scripture is not explicit, but it was such that it made God terribly angry. And all the time this has been happening, God has been communing with Moses, and so finally God tells Moses of Israel's sin. And you see this in verses 7 to... 7 and 8 really. He could have told him much sooner. There was no reason at all why God could not have said, Moses, look what they are doing. Look what they are trying to persuade Aaron to do. Look what Aaron is consenting in his own mind to do. You hurry right down there, and stop this thing. Keep them from doing it.

And the question might be asked, Why did God allow sin to come into this camp. And the question might be asked, Why did God allow sin to come into your life after you were born again? Why did God allow you to fail? and me? For He certainly did. He could have sovereignly taken us home into His presence. He could have lifted us out of the scene of crime, and brought us where He is, or He could have sent someone by angelic visitation that would have interrupted us and stopped us. Why did God allow it to go on? Well the answer is not hard to seek. God knew that before He could do anything for these people, they had to see themselves. Now He knew all about them. He never brought them out of Egypt, because they were nice. He never brought them out of Egypt, because they were pure. He never brought them out of Egypt, because they were any better than the Egyptians. He brought them out of Egypt, because in His grace, and in His wisdom, power, and love, He had a purpose for them. And the purpose was His glory.

And so, in infinite wisdom, and in great righteousness and judgment and justice, it was good for God in His eyes, seeing and knowing the whole thing, to allow Israel to go into sin. And not to prevent it by any supernatural intervention, or by sending Moses down earlier. Why? They had to see themselves. They had to see the kind of hearts they had. They had to see the kind of minds and imaginations they had. They had to see that just because they had been delivered from slavery in Egypt, and brought out of death through the Red Sea, that they had been pardoned for past transgressions, and forgiven for their sins, that nothing really had happened in them to make them any different from what they had been back there.

You know, if we could understand this, and realize this, we would recognize why it is that after we are born of God and our past is forgiven, that so frequently we find ourselves being drawn away into something that is going to grieve Him. For this is generally the experience, though of course it does not have to be. What did God say about their sin? What are the words that He used? If you will look in the 7th verse, you will see He says that the Israelites have corrupted themselves. Now this we must look at. No man is tempted of God. For when he is tempted, he is led aside of his own lusts. And they had been tempted. But not of God. God simply left them where they were, till they made a covenant with Him at Sinai. They had said exactly what they would do, as God told them exactly what He would do. And yet they deliberately chose putting pressure upon the leader who would have restrained them to some degree at least. They corrupted themselves.

And, my dear friend, whenever you or I fall into sin and grieve God, let us be honest and face it. We have corrupted ourselves, whether it has been the monitoring voice of the Holy Ghost that has been warning us. There have been the clear teachings of the Word of God that have been instructing us. There have been the previous examples of those who had suffered for these things forcibly warning us. And yet we have corrupted ourselves. This always is the case. It cannot be that we blame it on anything other than ourselves, for if any man is tempted he is not tempted of God. He is led aside by his own desires, and temptation after all is the proposition, presented to the mind, to gratify a good appetite, in a bad way. Now they wanted to see something. They wanted to have God visible. They had prospered, and they wanted to continue to prosper. They had enjoyed life, and they wanted to continue to enjoy life. They had had position and power, and they wanted to continue to have it. So they decided to take it into their own hands. And whenever you sin, whenever anyone sins that is a Christian, it always is that

he has decided to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way. Maybe an appetite for status, and so he is going to use some means to get position. He may use wicked means. He may use cruel means. He may use dishonest means. But there is an appetite to be satisfied, and he is not willing to wait God's time. Moses tarries too long in the mountain. And so he says, I'll take care of my status. I'll fight back. I'll start a rumor. I'll do this. I'll do that. And so, Aaron makes a golden calf.

A person wants something, and is not willing to leave it in the hands of God to bring it in due course. And so he engineers a way to take just a little bit out of the till. Doesn't intend to be a thief. Never thought he would be a thief at all. It just turns out that he wants it, and so it is a step. A person wants something, and so he lies. It is not the intention to be a liar. It is just that it is going to be convenient for him now to not have the truth known, but one lie demands another. And a person wants to have some experience, and he is not prepared to wait God's time. And so he just engineers this thing that can give him the experience. But in so doing, he has corrupted himself. This is the thing that God had to show Israel, so they would not blame it on their background, and would not say, Well this is something we got out of Egypt; wouldn't blame it on their nature, blame it on Adam, or anybody else. They would recognize that they were a delivered people, and in deliverance God had made provision, and given instruction, and when they sinned they corrupted themselves. This is what God said about it.

The next thing you have to see is that they turned aside, out of the way. The way was marked. The way was set before them. They did not need to have turned away. There was a highway there, and a way. God's way was clear. God's Word was explicit. God said what He meant, and meant what He said. There was not any reason at all to turn away. They turned aside out of the way.

Now whenever this happens to anybody, and it has happened to all of us at some point, it is that we turned out of the way. You say, Well Satan, Satan made me do that. This is unpalatable nonsense, to say, Blame it onto Satan. Satan did not do it. We cannot swallow that. That is nonsense. Satan sets up a system. Satan sets up a philosophy. Satan sets up an opportunity. But when people go out of the way, they go out of the way because they have turned out of the way. And the gods of this world does not have the power to make a Christian turn out of the way if his mind is set, and his eyes are fixed straight ahead, and he is determined to do the will of God. Daniel did not have to turn out of the way. He had every incentive and reason to become politic about the situation, and just after all become a little bit Jesuitical and say, The end justifies the means, and I am in a magnificent position here and have great influence; but he would not turn out of the way. He would not shut the window when he prayed.

But Israel did, and I have done it, and you have done it, and we have not anyone to blame but ourselves. We have corrupted ourselves. We have turned out of the way.

But you notice the next thing. They turned out of the way quickly. Oh, how this aggravates the guilt, and how this must incense a righteous God. Just a few days earlier He has revealed Himself. A few hours before, there has been thunder and lightning around the head of Sinai. Just a little while before, He has brought them out of the Red Sea, and given them this wonderful deliverance. And now what have they done? Quickly. Oh, how this aggravates God. And I will assure you of this, that the moment of your highest experience is probably going to be the precipice of your greatest fall. For the greatest revelation that you will have with God will so open the sensitive pores of your heart as to cause you to become disarmed, and I submit to you that when God deals with you graciously and spiritually, that you be particularly alert, because it is the time when He reveals Himself that the enemy comes in, for he knows that in some sense, at least, our armor is down. They turned out of the way quickly, and so their guilt was greatly aggravated.

Now God's attitude toward sin is clearly set forth. You see, these were people that He loved. These were people He had redeemed. These were people He had delivered with His stretched-out arm and His great power. And I suppose some people would say they had a license to sin. No, not at all. Look what God says about them. He says, This people, thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt. He blames it all onto Moses now. He says, thy people. I won't even have My Name associated with them. Thy people which thou brought out of Egypt. God has disowned them. God has broken fellowship with them. God has said, I am not interested in them any longer. Because you see, God can forgive sin, but He cannot condone sin. And now His people have turned out of the way quickly, they have corrupted themselves, and so He says, Thy people. They had

shamed themselves, they had shamed God, they had shamed Moses, and God has indicated that He will not have any fellowship with them.

Now God expresses His wrath and His anger with sin, and His purpose to judge it. For you see in vs 9 these words: "The Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people.. I have seen them." (Exo. 32:9) Oh, I wonder if you will for a moment allow me to suggest that the Moses that you and I are interested in is the Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Throne on High.

I wonder if your heart can take comfort for just a moment in the fact that I John 2:1, saying "that we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." I wonder, if it is not true, when after you have been pardoned, and forgiven, and brought out of death into life, and sinned against Him, that our Heavenly Father may not have said to His Son, Thy people whom Thou broughtest. Oh, I am so glad there was someone there that owned me. I am so glad there was someone there that had my name written on His hands, someone that knew me, that understood me, and someone that could take my part. I am glad there was a greater than Moses at the right hand of the Father when I sinned. Are you not? For He said of them, I have seen this people. What did He say about it? I have seen this people that they are a stiff-necked people. They are unwilling to come under Divine rule. Oh, they said, Whatever Thou commandest thus we will do. I will receive Him as Lord. But when the One with whom they were yoked said, Go this way, they turned that. They went out of the way. And so He said, They are stiff-necked, speaking of that oxen that has had his neck in the yoke so that he is touched with the goad, he does not turn, unwilling to come under Divine rule, unwilling to take the yoke upon them, and to learn of Him. They are governed by a contradictory spirit. How strange. Born of the Spirit of God, and yet there seems to be now another spirit governing their lives. There is an averseness to good, and a proneness to evil. It is hard to pray. It is hard to be forgiving. It is hard to be patient. It is hard to be loving. It is hard to be understanding. But it is easy to be quick tempered. It is easy to get even. It is easy to do this, and easy to do that. And averseness to good, and a proneness to evil. Stiff-necked, this is what He says of them.

And then it says, They are obstinate against the measure that He has ordained for their improvement, and employed for their cure. And God has used the Word, and God has used the grieved Spirit, and God has used circumstances and chastisement, but everything seems to be insufficient, because of the stiffness of neck.

I wonder how many times the Spirit of God has spoken to your heart about some attitude or some action, or something. You have just ignored it. We have compared ourselves among ourselves, and said, Well I am no worse than he is, or I am no worse than she is, and our necks have been fixed, and our thighs and sinews have been thighs and our sinews have been set, and in averseness to good, and in proneness to evil. And God says, I see it. I have seen it. And then He says upon them. "Let Me alone. Let Me alone that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them." (Exo. 32:10)

You see, this is what God had a perfect right to do. This is what God had in a sense had His only attribute in justice must have done. But you see the reason that He could be merciful was because the greater than Moses... Moses said, You are going to destroy them, blot me out of your book. And the greater than Moses said, If you are going to destroy them, destroy Me. And He put Himself in my place, and the sword of God's wrath that ought to have fallen upon me fell upon His Son, and the arrow that ought to have pierced me was put into His heart. And so this is the reason why God's wrath did not consume me and did not consume you. It is because there was someone there.

And today when the Lord Jesus sees you and me, and sees that stiffneckedness, if there is such, and sees that refusal to own His government and to accept the ministries that He brings for our improvement and our cure, He is there holding up His nail pierced hands. But does this finally avert it? No. No. The only thing it does is to delay it. God could have right then opened the earth to swallow Israel, the same way it did the followers of Korah. But He did not destroy at once.

And He helps Moses now to see his place by the suggestions that He makes, for Moses had to learn, also. He holds out an inducement to Moses not to intercede, but the inducement not to intercede carries with it tremendously strong leverage that Moses should intercede. And knowing the man for what he was, the type that he was to have and fulfil, He was perfectly safe in saying to Moses, You just let Me blot them out and I will make of you a great nation. For He knew what Moses would do. And in His omniscience and in His foreknowledge, He said that to Moses, so that Moses might be in this sense a type of our

Lord Jesus Christ, and that Moses might learn intercessory ministry, so that Moses could teach us. For you know that we too are made to be kings and priests unto God. And so we find that Moses intercedes with God in the behalf of Israel.

And, beginning in the 11th vs: "And Moses besought the Lord his God. The Lord his God." (Gen. 32:11) He did not say, The God of Israel, for God has disowned Israel. He said, The Lord his God. My God. For he was using the relationship which God sustained to him, proving to us that everybody ought to use every privilege that he has in behalf of the church, and in behalf of others. And you ought to recognize, therefore, that whereas Moses could no longer say, The God of Israel, and you might not be able to say, The God of the church, or the God of the Christians, or the God of the group, you can say, My God, if you are on the basis of fellowship with Him. And on that basis you can approach Him. And so He pleads with very strong concern that God would remember mercy. "Moses besought the Lord his God, and so he says, Lord, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people, which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand. Wherefore would the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people." (Exo. 32:11,12)

Isn't that strange that he should say of God, Repent. If repentance is to feel sorry for sins, then this has destroyed God. For it is an inditement of God that He had sinned. But repentance does not mean sorrow for sins. In spite of what every book may say, and what any person may say, repentance does not mean sorrow for sin. Repentance means a change of attitude, a change of action, a change of intention, a change of purpose, and God changed because there were grounds for change. God changed because He found an intercessor, He had found a mediator, changed His action, changed His intention, changed His purpose. But He did not feel sorry for sin, for He had not sinned. Let us just take our minds off of repentance in this particular, shall we. Let us get our minds free from this terrible thing that has crept over from Rome, and has paralyzed the Church, because it has taken the truth of the Word, and changed it into a horrible travesty, that repentance means sorrow for sin. It does not. The word means a change of mind, and a change of purpose, and a change of action, and God's judgment upon Israel, if it had been that instant carried out would not have been sin; it would have been maximum justice. But with Moses standing there and saying, These are Thy people whom Thou broughtest out. Did you bring them out so that the Egyptians could impune your motive and your glory that you brought them out to destroy them? Is that why you brought them out. You cannot do that. It will shame your Name. And so he said, Repent of this great evil. Evil, not in the sense that it was evil for God to have done it, but it would have been an evil happening to Israel had He done it. They would have interpreted it as evil, thought it would not have been evil on God's part, for He had clearly given them the law and they were quite responsible and capable. They had corrupted themselves, and turned out of the way, and in proper, just, moral government, He would have been quite within the realm of responsibility to have dealt with it just as He proposed. But to Israel it would have been evil. And in the eyes of the Egyptians, they would have so viewed it, just as today, people say, Well I think it is terrible for God to send people to hell. It would be infinitely worse if He did not. Because it would mean that the foundation of moral government in the universe is utterly disintegrated, and God was not worthy to be God. The men might have so interpreted it, and the Egyptians might so interpret it, Israel would, but in God's eyes this is the foundation of government, it was perfectly right and proper that He should so have done.

But Moses comes now, and he does not plead justice. He does not plead that. He pleads for mercy. And so it is, whenever anybody pleads for anyone, he has to plead not on the grounds of justice, but on the grounds of mercy. You have heard of the time when the young soldier under Napoleon had been found sleeping at his sentry post when they were in maximum danger situation. And specific orders had gone out, saying that anyone found asleep at the sentry post would certainly be court martialed. He was found asleep at his post. He was tried, duly tried, and was sentenced. He was to be shot. And the morning of his execution when the soldiers gathered around, a ragged woman came in, broke into the cordon of soldiers surrounding the situation, and came up to where Napoleon was on his big white horse, took a hold of the toe of his boot, and laid her face against it, and cried, O Sire, Sire, I plead for my son. And he looked down at her from the distance and said, What do you plead, woman? Justice? She said, Oh, no. No, you have given my son justice. But I have given you, my Sire, four sons, three of whom have been killed in your service, and the fourth whose life you now would take. He deserves to die, but oh I plead not justice, but mercy, mercy, for I have no other. And he looked down and said, Let the lad go. And then he turned to her and said, Had

you pled justice, your son would have died. But since you pled mercy, I can let him go free. And Moses did not plead justice. Moses pled mercy, mercy.

And if you and I as a generation of Christians were to get from God justice, we would be taken from the face of the earth. And room would be left for others that would not shame Him. But Moses did not plead justice. He pled mercy. And my High Priest today does not plead justice for me. He pleads mercy. Mercy, Father. Mercy on him.

What does this do? What is the purpose of this? To allow us to go on in our sin? To allow us to condone our sin? Oh, no. The purpose is to induce us to repent, and give us opportunity to repent. God repented. God changed His mind. He said, I will not destroy them as I have said I could, and would, and might. But because you have pled for mercy, I will extend them mercy, and I will give them an opportunity to repent. God changed His mind.

What is repentance on your part? Is it not a change of mind about how you are going to order your life? about taking that yoke that He said was easy and light, and yet you found so irksome at times? that you have been unwilling to walk in yoke with Him? Learn of Him, for He said He was meek and lowly in heart, and yet how little of that meekness and lowliness of heart His church today reflects. If we see God repenting, changing His mind, and His intention, His action, then we find here the strongest inducement why we should repent, instantly repent, and bring ourselves to see that we may have corrupted ourselves and turned out of the way. And this is sufficient for if God's wrath is to fall upon us, then this is the reason why we ought to repent, because we have someone pleading for us. But His plea is on the basis that we repent.

And the evidence of the genuineness of God's work in your heart is a broken spirit. And the evidence that you really are His, and you are truly brought out of Egypt, and through the Red Sea, is the fact that when you discover you have turned out of the way, and corrupted yourself, with a broken heart you bow before Him. And so repentance must characterize us. Whenever we discover that in any attitude, in any way, in any action we have turned out of the way, this is the time and the season, this is the point where we should repent, change our mind about this attitude, change our mind about this action, change our mind about this deed, change our mind about this situation, change our mind about this, and bring our mind into accord with His mind. And this is what repentance means. For God purposed to destroy Israel, but when Moses interceded, He changed His mind that He might spare them for the repentance that He would seek from them.

And so, what would repentance mean to you? induced by the goodness of God, the clearness of His Word, the gracious mercy of the Lord Jesus, to deal with anything and everything that grieves Him constantly, and have a broken and a contrite heart, as the primary characteristic of your being in Christ. He repented. Ought not we to repent? Can you not see that unwillingness to repent is the proof above all others that we are a stiff-necked generation? And the willingness to repent, the willingness to change our attitude and our action is the proof that we have new hearts.

Let us bow together in prayer. We ask Thee, our Father, to teach us Thy Word, to show us this truth, to rid our minds of all thought that repentance is an emotion, something we have got to feel, something of some sensibility. Show us that repentance is right in the realm of the will. And right now as we look into our lives and see where we may have turned out of the way, whatever it might be that the Spirit of God shows us, where we have corrupted ourselves in whatever degree, that we are now, this moment to change our minds about it, to deal with it as sin, and call it what Thou hast called it, sin, and to forsake it as sin, turn from it as sin, instantly. Show us, our Father, that if we choose to go out of here tonight with anything that we know in our lives that grieves Thee, be it attitude, be it relationship, be it any act of the past, or anything in the present, or any prospect of purpose in the future, anything that grieves Thee we intend to do it, we give evidence that we have not only corrupted ourselves and turned out of the way, but we are indeed that stiff-necked generation, against whom certainly Thy wrath ought to wax hot. Show us tonight, our Father, that the evidence of genuineness of heart is not to wait for us to feel sad about our sins, nor for us to feel some emotion, but right now, simply because we are intelligent beings dealing with a morally glorious God we are going to deal with everything in our lives that we see that is wrong, whatever it is. We are not going to wait for anybody else. We are not going to linger for some heavens to open, and some sweet dew to come down that will make it easy to do what tonight we know we ought to do. Show us, Lord, that repentance is not only an act that we

performed before we were saved, but an attitude that we have toward everything in our lives that should in any wise be less than Thy will for us.

Now, dear heart, with your head bowed, and your eyes closed, do you have some insight into what repentance is? You have been waiting for an emotion. You have been waiting for a great sweep, tears to come over the audience, a great sense of stirring up of the cockles of your heart to make it easy for you to do what you know you ought to do. Oh, this is the sin of sins and compounds it a hundredfold, for sin is to be dealt with, not on the basis of how we feel, but how God feels, not on the basis of the atmosphere, but on the basis of God's attitude. And if you see in your life tonight anything that grieves God, don't you understand what it means? A change. God changed because of intercession. So you change because of the intercession of Moses, the Lord Jesus Christ, your advocate, who is praying and holding back the Father's wrath until you repent. But repentance is going to mean this, a complete confession of your sin to Him, and to others if it has involved them. It is going to mean an instant forsaking of all sin, and every doubtful thing, and every questionable thing, and every attitude that is less than His will, and it is going to mean a complete right-about-face in action. If there is necessity of apologies they will be freely made. If there is necessity for asking forgiveness, it will be freely sought. This is repentance. This is repentance. God repented. He changed. Will you repent? Will you repent and change.

O Spirit of God, look down upon us. Thou seest us. Thou knowest us.

Invitation.

Now I want you to know this, that until this happens, if there is anything in your life that God sees, there will be no spiritual growth until it is done with. You have put a road block in your way. You have said, I do not want to become any more mature. I do not want to know any more truth. I do not want to be any more useful. I am just standing here under the sentence of God's discipline. Oh, what a sad thing it is for a person to know to do good, and to do it not. To him it is sin. And if you tonight know you ought, and decide against certain attitudes you have allowed, certain actions you have permitted, you ought to do it now, and not to let them go...

O God, can we interpret this that there is no one here to whom Thou art speaking? No one here that has that with which they must deal? No one here? Oh, if that is the case then Thou hast here a people that can be blessed with Heaven's richest blessing. But, O God, we feel it is not so. Our hearts tell us it is not so, that Thou art seeing a stiff-necked, rebellious hearts, that Thou hast spoken to some among us that have not said yes....

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