

A solemn sham and an impudent mockery!**C.H. Spurgeon:****"Rend your heart—and not your garments." Joel 2:13**

Garment-rending and other external signs of religious emotion, are easily manifested, and are frequently hypocritical. True repentance is far more difficult, and consequently far less common. Unsav- ed men will attend to the most multiplied and minute religious ceremonies and regulations—for such things are pleasing to their flesh. But true godliness is too humbling, too heart-searching, too spiritual for the tastes of carnal men! They prefer something more ostentatious, flimsy, and worldly. External religious rituals are temporarily comfortable; eye and ear are pleased; self-conceit is fed, and self-righteousness is puffed up. But they are ultimately delusive, for at the day of judgment, the soul needs something more substantial than religious ceremonies and rituals to lean upon.

Apart from vital godliness—all religion is utterly vain! When offered without a sincere heart, every form of religious worship is a solemn sham and an impudent mockery of the majesty of God!

Heart-rending is divinely wrought—and solemnly felt. It is a secret grief which is personally experienced, not in mere form—but as a deep, soul-moving work of the Holy Spirit upon the inmost heart of each believer. It is not a matter to be merely talked of—but keenly and sensitively felt in every living child of the living God. It is powerfully humiliating and sin-purging! But also, it is sweetly preparative for those gracious consolations which proud unhumbled souls are unable to receive! This heart-rending distinctly belongs to the elect of God—and to them alone.

The text commands us to rend our hearts—but they are naturally as hard as marble! How then, can this be done? We must take them to Calvary! A dying Savior's voice rent the rocks once—and it is just as powerful now. O blessed Spirit, let us effectually hear the death-cries of Jesus—and our hearts shall be rent!