REPENTANCE—A CONDITION FOR REGENERATION

Answering the Extra-Biblical Nonsense of the Grace Perverters

There is a dangerous and false element in *Christendom* today undermining the *Gospel doctrine* of *repentance*. These false teachers and their proponents make the absurd claim that *repentance* is not a condition for regeneration. Or, that *repentance* should not be understood as a '*turning away from sin*', but rather, is a mere synonym for *faith* or *turning from unbelief*. In doing so, these lying messengers alter the message of the *Gospel* of the *Lord Jesus Christ,* subverting it into a message of *death* instead of a declaration of *life* (*2 Cor 7:10*). In the *Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, he warns of God's judgment on the *Judaizers* who added to the *Gospel* message...

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." —1 Galatians 1:8-9

Granted, these '*repentance re-definers/deniers*' do not *add*, but rather, *remove* a vital conversion prerequisite and in so doing, pervert the pure *Gospel*. Obviously, to either *add* or *take away* from the *Scriptures* is a very serious charge with weighty and eternal ramifications…

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." —Revelation 22:18-19

This false doctrine, along with many other classic *sin-accommodating* lies like—*Easy-Believism*, *Once-Saved-Always-Saved*, *Imputed Obedience*, etc.—are all popular with today's *grace-perverters* (*Jude 1:3-4*). All these false ideas are constructs of a sophisticated and complicated network of correlating and supporting schools of theological error. Namely, *Antinomianism*, *Calvinism*, and *Dispensationalism*.

For example, if not full-blown *Antinomian*, denying obedience to God is Biblically mandated under the new covenant, they cling to dangerous doctrinal premises like…

- Imputed Obedience (*Christ obeyed the moral law for all believers*).

- No one can stop sinning, even Christians under grace (*1 Cor 10:13; Jude 1:24*).
- *Romans 7* represents a *Christian experience* rather than a *legal experience (Rom 6:14).*
- For the Christian, all sin, past, present, and future are unconditionally forgiven (*1 Jn 1:6-7, 9*).
- When a Christian sins, God only sees the *righteousness of Christ (Job 34:21; Ps 10:11; Prov 5:21; 15:3).*
- *Divine grace* is strictly defined as *unmerited favor (Tit 2:11-12).*
- *Grace* changes the *nature of sin* rather than the *nature of the sinner* (*Ezk 18:4; Rom 6:23; 2 Cor 5:17).*

This school of thought has also been greatly influenced by the satanic doctrines of *Mr. Calvin*. If they're not classical '*five-pointers*', confessing the full theological acronym of the *T.U.L.I.P*…

- T=Total Depravity (*no free-will*).
- U=Unconditional Election.
- L=Limited Atonement.
- I=Irresistible Grace.
- P=Perseverance of the Saints (*OSAS*).

...at the very least, they tend to hold to the '*P*'—'*Perseverance of the Saints*' or '*Once-Saved-Always-Saved*'. However, to acknowledge man's free-will in *conversion* but deny it in *perseverance* presents a theological contradiction. Theology must first be Scriptural, but it should consequently be rational and consistent as well. The *Greek* word translated into our English term, '*Word*' is '*logos*', meaning divine utterance appealing to logic and reason (*Isa 1:18*). In other words, sound doctrine will be believable, free from self-conflicting and self-refuting contradictions—at the very least, to the spiritually initiated and intellectually honest. Therefore, our *Soteriology*, or the doctrine of *regeneration* or *conversion*, should be consistent with our *doctrine of Perseverance.* If we are *Monergistic* in our *Soteriology*, believing conversion is unconditional, a work done irrespective of any choice of man, then it stands to reason, *Perseverance* is also unconditional. However, if we are *Synergistic* in our *Soteriology*, believing conversion is conditional, demanding cooperation between human freedom and divine grace, to remain philosophically consistent, we must also believe *Perseverance* is conditional. Granted, those who espouse the diabolical and Satanic teachings of *Mr. Calvin* (*Monergism*) are guilty of embracing extra-Biblical doctrine. However, those who hold to simply the '*P*' of *Calvinism* but reject the corresponding '*T.U.L.I.*', are not only guilty of abandoning the Scriptures, but their doctrine is also an embarrassing, illogical, self-conflicting web of nonsense that would make the most pitiful

intellectual-buffoons blush. We can be *Monergistic,* or we can be *Synergistic*, but we cannot logically be both. God and His Word are reasonable. Whatever a man must '*do*' to be born-again, he must likewise '*do*' to persevere in the faith and ultimately be saved. To deny this is to inexcusably wax worse than stupid.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD..." —Isaiah 1:18

Moreover, if not *Hyper-Dispensationalist*, these false teachers tend to be grossly leavened by the *Dispensationalist error.* In the name of '*rightly dividing the Word of truth*' these misguided souls ultimately misinterpret, misapply, undermine, and negate the Scriptures themselves. Admittedly, it's a master satanic plan—under the guise of sound hermeneutics, manipulate those reading and studying the *Bible* to quarantine themselves from highly relevant and liberating *Scripture* passages as inapplicable.

This perverse, extra-Biblical, non-sensical theological model is perhaps the most pervasive and accepted doctrine found among *Southern Baptists*, *Evangelicals,* many *Independents,* and some *Fundamentalists*. Nonetheless, there are few things more dangerous, more satanic, more anti-christ than this theology. It's a *license to sin* for the rebellious, a *religious excuse* for the self-willed, and a *counterfeit balm* for the convicted. It was certainly not gleaned from the *Scriptures* by a pure heart to *know God* or hungry souls seeking to understand divine truth, but rather, sired by evil hearts of unbelief. No one arrives at such extra-biblical and bizarre conclusions apart from an unconscious drive to defend the autonomy of fallen man and shield the '*old-man*' from the horror and sentence of the *cross*. At every turn, the truths of *Scripture* that challenge sin and human independence are nullified and negated by godless lies. This erroneous doctrine unashamedly weaves and bobs, twists and turns, all while waxing utterly irrational to explain away much of the Bible. I am convinced that this category of false doctrine is essentially what the Scriptures refer to as the *doctrine of the Nicolaitans (Rev 2:15)*, the *doctrine of Balaam* (*Rev 2:14*) and it's the single most dangerous spiritual challenge the church faces today.

MY TESTIMONY

Before we delve too deeply into the topic at hand, allow me to share briefly from my personal testimony and deep experience with the false doctrine under discussion. I was born into a nominal Christian family. I made a '*profession of faith*' very early in life after attending a *Billy Graham Crusade* as a pre-teen. Soon after, I was baptized in water and officially joined the church my family attended. The church, a member of the *Southern Baptist Convention*, promoted the typical *Antinomian, Easy-Believism, Everyone-Sins-Everyday* powerless gospel. The satanic doctrine of *Once-Saved-Always-Saved* was drilled

into my mind and spirit throughout my childhood. My *'conversion'*, at the very best, was a shallow and fleeting experience and my advancement in the *Christian* faith was non-existent. I had no hunger for God. I rarely, if ever prayed. I did not understand the *Scriptures*, never witnessed, and continued in all manner of sin, even though I was highly involved in religious activities until I graduated high-school and left home. However, I never doubted my salvation because of my perverted view of what constituted *Christianity*. By my early twenties I was living a life of drunkenness, drug abuse, fornication, and hatred. After attending college and a stint in the *Army* I was at rock-bottom. In 1986 an acquaintance of mine was dramatically converted to *Christianity,* and this provoked me to examine my life in light of *God's Word*. For the next few years, I was under terrible, haunting conviction for my sinful and God-rejecting lifestyle. For the first time in my life, I saw my religious profession for what it was in reality: *an empty and superficial lip-service to a God I did not know*. I was fearful and disturbed; I had no assurance of salvation. Consistent with my '*Easy-Believism*' and '*Once-Saved-Always-Saved*' indoctrination, I '*re-dedicated*' my life to *Jesus* by confessing my belief in the facts of the *Gospel* and saying dozens of '*sinner's prayers*'. Nothing happened, I had no peace, and the *Holy Ghost* conviction only grew more intense. I began to realize that I had not met the most basic Biblical conditions for salvation, nor was I truly submitted to *Jesus Christ* as Lord. Gradually, I was forced to acknowledge that even though I insisted that I was a Christian, I was nothing more than a sin-loving, religious hypocrite. Under conviction, I was made to see that my many and varied *sins* grieved and angered a holy God. However, more importantly, God was not merely interested in me abandoning specific *acts of sin,* but more so, surrendering my entire *life*. Yes, He hated my *sin*, but he was far more interested in fully apprehending *me*. Ultimately, I was dramatically born-again and instantly and powerfully delivered from drugs, alcohol, perversion, and a myriad of other debilitating sins. However, this was only after a thorough *repentance*, a willingness to turn from all sin and surrender my life to *Jesus*. In retrospect, the single greatest hinderance to my conversion was the *false*, *no-repentance*, *easy-believism gospel* I was taught in my formative years.

REPENTANCE DEFINED

The '*repentance-deniers*' have redefined *repentance* in a way that undermines its moral ramifications. They write it off as simply a change of mind about *who Christ is* or a repudiation of *unbelief*. This kind of *repentance* has nothing to do with *turning from sin* or *abandoning self.* It is utterly devoid of any recognition of personal guilt, any intent to obey God, or any desire for true righteousness. Is this the kind of *repentance* mentioned throughout the Scriptures? I think not.

Repentance is a key theme in the Bible, and we generally associate it with the reality of conversion (*conversion is constituted by both repentance and faith*). The verb '*repent*' or '*repented*' occurs thirteen times in the *Old Testament*. The noun, '*repentance*' is used twenty times and the verb, '*repen*t' appears twenty-seven times in the *New Testament*.

Let's define our terms...

In the *Old Testament* there are two *Hebrew* words, both verbs, we should note, the first is שׁוּב or '*šhûv*'. *Shuv* can be translated '*to tur*n', '*to turn back'*, '*to turn around*'.[1] It does at times denote the kind of complete heart change we will come to see in the *New Testament*. For example, in *1 Kings 8:46-53 shuv* is used to denote turning one's heart and confessing perverseness and wickedness (*see also 2Chron. 6:37; Psa. 7:12; Isa. 1:27; Jer. 5:3; Ezek. 14:6; 18:30*). The other is נָחַם or '*nâḥam'. Naham* has a number of meanings: '*to sigh, to be sorry, to regret, to make sad, to pity, etc.*'. It is the verb used when God '*repents*' of his decision to make man on the earth (*Gen. 6:6*) and elsewhere in the *Old Testament* and obviously means '*regret or grieve*' in the divine application.

In the *New Testament* the noun '*repentance*' comes from the *Greek* word μετάνοια or '*metanoia*', and the verb '*to repent*' comes from the *Greek* verb μετανοέω or '*metanoeō*'. The two words are almost identical in definition. Both *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* and *Strong's Greek Dictionary* define these words as '*compunction for guilt, including reformation, a reversal, to think differently afterwards, to reconsider morally, to change one's mind for better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins*'.[2]

Granted, the most common thought associated with the word '*repentance*' is a '*change of mind*'. For this reason, we concede that *context* often plays an important role in the application of the word '*repent*'. Like many Biblical words that have multi-applications, context often determines the usage. For example, the Biblical word '*flesh*' can mean the natural constitution of either *animal* or *human anatomy*, but it also can mean the *old man*, or *carnal nature*. The context generally governs the usage. Hence, we acknowledge the word '*repent*' can mean a *change of mind* regarding something other than *sin*; it's the context that often provides the proper usage.

The influence of *repentance* can be seen in three key areas:

1. <u>The Mind</u>—One of the key components of *repentance* is *a change of mind*. The sinner, after being confronted with *God's Word*, if he *repents*, must *change his*

[1] *Strong's* Hebrew & Greek Dictionary.
[2] *Strong's* Greek Dictionary & *Thayer's* Greek Lexicon.

mind, and acquiesce to the truth about *God*, His *law*, His *Christ*, and must denounce his own *sin*.

2. The Emotions—Once a sinner hears the *Gospel*; once he understands how God's wrath is upon him. Once the sinner sees he deserves hellfire, but God sent His only *Son* to die so he can be forgiven, delivered, and saved—a full range of emotions should be evident. Namely, fear, guilt, sorrow, humility, gratitude, etc.
3. The Will—Ultimately, it's the *will of man* that must bow before *God* and *God's will* before conversion can take place. True *repentance* reveals the stubborn *will* of the sinner is broken. It's then *God's Spirit* apprehends the convicted unbeliever and brings him prostrate before a *holy God.*

Hence, *regeneration* demands *repentance*, or a godly *change of mind,* a *change of the emotions,* and a *change of the will* inspired by *Holy Ghost* conviction.

Another word that is relevant to this discussion is the word '*converted*' or '*conversion*'. If *repentance*, or the willingness to *cast off sin,* is not required for *Biblical conversion* and only a belief in the *Gospel*, then consequently this should be reflected in the nature of *conversion*. For example, let's consider *Matthew 18:3* where *Jesus* declared...

"...Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." —Matthew 18:3

The *English* word '*converted*' is translated from the *Greek* word *στρέφω* meaning, '*to twist, to turn quite around or reverse, to turn oneself from one's course of conduct, to change one's mind*'. Another example with a slightly different *Greek* word but coupled with the word '*repent*' is found in *Acts 3:19*...

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord..." —Acts 3:19

Here, the *Greek* word, ἐπιστρέφω is different than in *Matthew 18:3*, but is also translated into *English* word '*converted*'. It means to, '*to revert morally, to turn about, to turn to the worship of the true God, to turn to the love and obedience of God*'. The above two examples are consistently the *Greek* words translated '*conversion*' in the *New Testament*. Hence, *New Testament conversion,* by its very definition, demands a radical moral change or a *turning from sin* to God.

Having now been acquainted with their root definitions, let's consider these two words '*repent*' and '*converted*' coupled together. It's true, the *Greek* word, μετανοέω, translated into our English word, '*repent'*, does not literally mean '*to turn from sin*'. However, in

studying the Scriptures, '*repentance*' and '*turning from sin*' are often associated with one another (*Jer 31:19, Eze 14:6, 18:30, Luke 17:4, etc.*). Moreover, it's against Biblical logic to assume we can *turn to God*, without first *turning from sin*. Yet admittedly, the implications of the *Greek* term μετανοέω are more mental—about what goes on in the mind of the person *repenting*. Etymologically speaking, μετανοέω, '*to repent*', is a compound of νοέω or '*noeō*', which means '*to understand, to ponder, to think about*', and μετα or '*meta*', which means '*with*'. So, μετανοέω means '*to understand with, to use the mind*'. Thus, when we *repent*, we are using our mind to realize that we have done wrong, to hate and regret our sin, and to *change our mind about sin* for the better. It is about a willingness and desire to co-operate with God so as turn from and be delivered from all sin. Thus, the *Biblical repentance* required for *conversion* can be defined as a *change of mind toward sin*. A change of *intention,* that's why the Scriptures teach we must prove our *repentance* by bringing forth worthy fruit (*Lk 3:8; 2 Cor 7:10-11*). True *conversion*, or a radical moral change, verifies and confirms genuine *repentance* (*Matt 7:18*).

> "*Repentance* is a change of mind, as regards God and towards sin. It is not only a change of views, but a change of the ultimate preference or choice of the soul. It is a voluntary change, and by consequence involves a change of feeling and of action toward God and toward sin." —Charles G. Finney[3]

> "When there is no fear, there is no change of conduct. Where there is no change, there is only a vain '*repentance*'. For it lacks the fruit for which God purposed it—the salvation of man." —Tertullian[4]

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The heretics who promote *faith* without *repentance* or redefine *repentance* as merely a *turning from unbelief* are almost always leavened by some degree by *Dispensationalism*. For this reason, they tend to reject the *Old Testament Scriptures* as proof-texts for practical *New Testament doctrine.* However, regarding *conversion*, what they fail to recognize is that no man can logically be reconciled to God unless his *sins have been forgiven* and divine *forgiveness of sin* has always been possible for only one reason—*the atonement of Christ*. God has never forgiven anyone apart from the *atonement of Christ*. Certainly, if *forgiveness* is based solely on the *atoning work of Christ*, there cannot be two different ways a *sinner* and a *Christian*, should he sin, be *forgiven*. There is only one God, one faith, one mediator between God and man, one *Gospel*, and only one *way of salvation*. The

[3] *Charles Finney*, Finney on Revival, p. 85.

[4] *Tertullian*, The Pilgrim Road, quoted by David Bercot.

ground of this *salvation* is the *atoning* work of *Jesus Christ*. There is not one way to be saved in the *Old Testament* and a different way to be saved in the *New Testament.* That would be two different *Gospels*. There wasn't one way for the *Jew* to be saved, and now a different way for the *Gentile* to be saved. That would be two roads to heaven. There's only one road to heaven. In the *Old Testament*, they were saved by looking ahead to the coming of *Christ*. *Jesus* said in *John 8:56*, *"Abraham saw My day, and he was glad."* Today, we are saved by looking back to the first coming of *Christ*, who died on the cross bearing our sins. Old and New, we all meet at the foot of the cross. This being true, if we can find Scripture verses, even in the *Old Testament*, that verify that *turning from si*n is a condition for *mercy*, *forgiveness*, *blessing*, or *life,* all typical of *divine-human reconciliation*, we prove the *repentance-deniers* are liars. There are many such examples, but for the sake of space I only list the following...

"If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land." —Leviticus 26:40-42

"When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them: Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance." —1 Kings 8:35-36

"And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house; Then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers. When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; yet if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them; Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel..." —2 Chronicles 6:24-27b

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." —2 Chronicles 7:14

"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." —Psalm 32:5

"Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." —Psalm 52:2-3

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." —Proverbs 28:13

"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." —Isaiah 55:6-7

"Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion…" —Jeremiah 3:12-14

"Yet ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, 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. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die." —Ezekiel 18:25-27

"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." —Ezekiel 18:30-32

These verses confirm that *repentance*, or a *turning away from sin*, has always been a prerequisite for *forgiveness* and *mercy*. It's impossible to be '*born-again*' or *reconciled to*

God without being *forgiven of si*n and according to the *Scriptures*, a heart-posture of *confessing* and *turning from sin* is a condition for *forgiveness* and *mercy*.

"*Sin forsaken* is one of the best evidences of *sin forgiven*." —J.C. Ryle[5]

Another important point is that these *repentance-deniers* foolishly claim that God will not only *forgive the sins* of the *unrepentant,* but also hear their prayers. This is contrary to what *Scripture* clearly teaches...

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me..." —Psalm 66:18

"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." —Proverbs 28:9

"And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil..." —Isaiah 1:15-16

"Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." —Isaiah 59:1-2

Again, the absurd idea that men can *turn to God* without first forsaking what the Scriptures unmistakably point out *separates them from God*, is utterly foolish. Without the antecedent of a *repentant heart*, or the intention or willingness to *turn from all sin*, the very prayer of the unrepentant sinner is an abomination to God. How could God answer such a prayer and stay true to His *Word*?

Another question that's pertinent—'*Is it possible for a man to be converted to Christianity without the fear of God? The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom?'* Consider the following *Scriptural* absolutes...

"...that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel" —1 Kings 8:43b

"The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." —Psalm 25:14

[5] J.C. Ryle.

"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." —Proverbs 8:13

"...it is abomination to fools to depart from evil." —Proverbs 13:19b

"...by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil." —Proverbs 16:6b

"But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." —Luke 12:5

The *fear of the Lord* is fundamental to an accurate *revelation of God*. Without the *fear of God,* we are void of the most basic spiritual *wisdom* (*Prov 9:10*), nor can we *know the secret of the Lord* (*which many believe speaks of Christ and the Gospel plan*). If we do not *fear God*, He will not show us *His covenant*. According to *Proverbs 16:6* someone without the *fear of God* will not depart from evil (*Prov 16:6*) meaning they will not *repent* or *turn from sin* and *Proverbs 13:19* teaches only a *fool* refuses to *turn from sin*. The Biblical definition for the *fear of God* is to *hate evil*, *pride*, etc. (*Prov 8:13*). Certainly, it would be non-sensical to assume someone *hates evil,* yet they refuse to *turn from it*. Seeing all this is true, the *repentance-deniers* promote a *salvation* where *fools*, who neither *understand God* or *His covenant*, are somehow *reconciled to a God* they cannot *know*, refuse to *obey*, will not *fear*, and yet, claim to '*believe in*'. Strange doctrine indeed.

THE GOSPELS

John the Baptist (Matt 3:1-2), the forerunner to *Christ*, the *Lord Jesus Christ* Himself (*Matt 4:17*), and the *Apostles* (*Mk 6:12*) all preached *repentance* '*metanoeō*', or—'*to think differently, to feel moral compunction, to change one's mind for better, to heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins'*.[6]

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." —Matthew 3:1-2

"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." —Matthew 4:17

The opening word of that first sermon characterized the theme of *Jesus'* entire earthly ministry. *Jesus* Himself described His own objective this way— '*to call...sinners to*

[6] *Strong's* Greek Dictionary and *Thayer's* Greek Lexicon.

repentance" *(Lk 5:32*). *Repentance* was a recurring motif in all His public sermons. He stood boldly before the stiff-necked multitudes and proclaimed, *"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish'* (*Lk 13:3, 5*).

Repentance is often yoked in specific verses with either *sin* or *sinners*, implying the obvious—*turning from one's sins* is equivalent to *repenting of one's sins*.

"For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." —Matthew 21:32

"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." —Luke 5:32

"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." —Luke 13:3-5

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." —Luke 15:7

Often, when *repentance* was preached it was yoked with the *command to believe*. What does this mean?

"...the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." —Mark 1:15

The conjunction '*and*' implies a coupling of *two distinct conditions*. Is it rational to assume *Jesus* was saying we must *believe* and *believe*? I think not. He is calling men to *turn from their sins* and *believe the Gospel*.

One of the clearest outlines of the basic conditions for *New Testament* conversion is expressed by the *Lord Jesus Christ* in three of the four *Gospels* (*Matt 16:24-26; Mk 8:34-36; Lk 9:23-25*). We'll cite Matthew's rendition of this all-important *Gospel* discourse by *Jesus*...

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" —Matthew 16:24-26

There are four criteria communicated in *Jesus* words, three explicitly and another by inference...

1. Deny self—*temperance*.
2. Take up the cross—*death to the old man and his deeds, which are sin.*
3. Following *Jesus—Lordship*.
4. Faith—*believe the Gospel and trust in the atoning work of Christ.*

It's also clear, as *Jesus* pointed out above, any man who rejects these prerequisites will essentially, '*lose his own soul*'. This is also verified in *Luke 14:27...*

"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."
—Luke 14:27

It's obvious from this passage that *repentance of sin* and abandoning *human autonomy* are conditions for *Christian conversation*. To suggest otherwise is to accuse *Jesus* of lying.

Allow me to point your attention to the verse that serves as the introduction to the *Parable of the Prodigal Son...*

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." —Luke 15:10

Jesus offered the parable to illustrate and illuminate what *Gospel repentance* was about. Notice what the *prodigal son* turned from to be reconciled to his father...

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." —Luke 15:18-19

A careful examination of this parable yields many spiritual truths. Some of the most basic and obvious *spiritual lessons* reveal the *Prodigal son* said to his father, *'give me'* when he left, but humbly confessed, *'make me'* when he returned. In this *parable,* it was necessary for the *wayward son* not only to *believe,* but to *act* on that *belief,* to be *reconciled to his father*. This demanded he *turn away from the pigpen, turn back toward his father, leave his life of sin* and *independence,* and humbly *confess his sin* to his *father. Jesus* offered this parable to explain what the *repentance* that *reconciles sinners to God* looks like.

As we mentioned before, no one can be *reconciled to God* apart from *divine forgiveness*. We saw in the *Old Testament*, *forgiveness* demanded a *forsaking of sin*. Likewise, in the

Gospels, *forgiveness* is presented as conditional. In reality, it would be impossible that *forgiveness* was *unconditional*. If so, God would be a *Universalist* and all men would be saved as *Christ* died for all. However, as the *Scriptures* teach over and over, the offer of *forgiveness* is indeed *conditional*, a *turning from sin* is required. For example, *Jesus* clearly teaches that if men refuse to *repent* for *unforgiveness* they cannot be *forgiven*...

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."
—Matthew 6:14-15

"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." —Matthew 18:35

"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." —Mark 11:25-26

THE BOOK OF ACTS

On the day of *Pentecost*, while those in *Jerusalem* observed the supernatural display of God upon the 120 and heard the preaching of *Peter* regarding *Christ*, they asked, '*What shall we do?*' The *Apostle,* filled with the *Holy Ghost*, answered them accordingly in the following verse...

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
—Acts 2:38

Notice, the *remission* or *forgiveness of sin*, is linked to *repentance*. Therefore, *repentance* is a condition for *forgiveness of sins.* As we've said over and over, *reconciliation to God* is impossible apart from obtaining *divine forgiveness*. However, the *repentance-deniers,* contrary to the entire tenor of *Scripture* and sound reasoning, deny that the object of *repentance* is *sin*. They insist that the command to *repent* is leveled toward *unbelief*. What they fail to acknowledge is '*unbelief*' is *sin.* The *Greek* word, ἀπιστία translated '*unbelief*' throughout the *Bible*, literally means *unfaithfulness* or *disobedience*. Hence, even if the call to *repent* was solely aimed at *unbelief*, this is essentially the call to *repent of sin.* You may recall, the overall *Gospel* preaching of the *Apostle Paul* is summed up in *Acts 26:20...*

"But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." —Acts 26:20

The structure of the above statement, especially the demand for '*works*' to verify *repentance*, leads us to the only logical conclusion—the *command to repent is the call to turn from sin*. How would one verify a *turning from evil works*? By doing the opposite, or *good works* instead. Similar language is used in conjunction with *repentance* elsewhere in the *Book of Acts* (*Acts 3:19, 26, 37-40; 5:31, etc.*).

Another interesting occasion is found in *Acts 17*...

"Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." —Acts 17:23-31

Here, at *Mars Hill*, the *Apostle Paul* is stirred by the pervasive *idolatry* of the region to address the *Athenians* with the *Gospel*. He clearly indicates that God commands all men, everywhere to *repent* and the object of that *repentance* is irrefutably *idolatry*. However, the *repentance-deniers* are ever willing to twist Scripture to support their false theological presuppositions. In my experience, one of the most effective ways to overthrow heretical doctrines, is to simply *hand their promoters the microphone.* Commenting on *Acts 17:30* and *1 Thessalonians 1:9*, *Pastor Steven Anderson,* an avid *repentance-denier*, makes the following embarrassing remarks...

"When the *Apostle Paul* at *Mars Hill* preaches, '*God commandeth all men everywhere to repent*' what is he telling them to repent of? He says, '*Look, you're worshipping idols, you're worshipping false gods, you think that this statue is god.*' He's telling them to repent or turn from worshipping false gods and turn and worship the one, true God. Was He telling them to repent for their sinful lifestyle? Was He saying, '*You guys need to quit smoking, and quit drinking, and quit carousing? You need to quit fornicating, and quit stealing, and quit lying. You need to turn from all that in order to be saved. To be saved you need to be willing to turn from drinking, and smoking, and partying, and fornicating, and stealing, and lying, and murder, etc.*'. Is that what He was telling them? No. But that's what we hear today, preachers take *Acts 17:30* and say, '*In order to be saved, you must be willing to turn from your sins.*' So, what we see here is that they had to turn from idols because that's not God. Look at *1 Thessalonians 1:9* and I'll explain it to you, '*For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God'*. Now, could that be described as repentance there? That's repentance, right? They were worshipping idols, false gods, and they turned to God from idols so they could serve the Living and true God. That was repentance. Did that repentance save them? Yea, because that meant they were not believing in their false god and now they're believing in the one, true God. But was that repenting of sins? Was that a willingness to turn from a sinful lifestyle? No. People say, '*Yea, but isn't idolatry a sin?*' You know what my answer to this is? My answer is, '*Avoid foolish questions*'. Let me put that in modern vernacular, '*Avoid stupid questions*' because that is a stupid question. Because any mathematician who knows anything about logic would know that it's illogical to say, '*Well, if you have to repent of believing in a false god, if a false god is a sin, then therefore you have to repent of your sin.*' Now, this might go over the head of some in the auditorium—who here knows a lot about math or you're a computer programmer, put up your hand if you're a computer geek or math nerd? (*He raises his own hand*) I'm guilty, I'm one of them. Hopefully everyone understands, everybody turn-on your math brain for a second, ok? Look, <u>idolatry does not equal sin: idolatry is a subset of sin</u>. (*While raising his hand*) Who understands what I just said (*no one in the camera view raises their hand*)? So, you know, uh, <u>unbelief is not equal to sin, unbelief is a subset of sin. Therefore, all unbelief is sin, but all sin is not unbelief, they're not equivalent. Let me put it to you a way that might be simpler. This is the logic. Cat equals mammal. Dog equals mammal. Therefore, cat equals dog. Stupid, isn't it?</u> (*In a mocking voice*) '*You must repent of bowing down to a statue and thinking it's God to be saved. Bowing down to a statue and thinking it's God is a sin. Therefore, you have to repent of your sin to be saved.*' (*he mocks by blabbering and stroking his lips like a confused fool*)." —Steven Anderson[7]

[7] '*Repent of Your Sins*', A False Gospel Exposure Documentary.

Mr. Anderson's ridiculous comments are enough alone to cast a great shadow on the *false doctrine* he espouses and seeks to prove. However, he also makes several troubling assertions that are direct contradictions to what the *Scriptures* teach, for example...

"*Idolatry does not equal sin; idolatry is a subset of sin*." —Steven Anderson[8]

This is brazen heresy. Nowhere in the Scripture is '*idolatry*' considered a '*sub-set of sin*'. The Bible clearly defines '*idolatry*' as *sin* (*Ex 20:3-6; Lev 26:1; Dt 4:16, 23, 27:15; 2 Ki 21:6-8; Isa 44:9; 1 Cor 5:11, 10:14; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:5; Col 3:5*).

"*Unbelief is not equal to sin."* —Steven Anderson[9]

An amazing statement which is also utter heresy. The Bible clearly defines '*unbelief*' as *sin* (*Jn 3:18-21, 5:40-44, 8:23, 24, 42-47, 12:47, 48, 15:22-25, 16:9; Mk 16:16; Acts 2:22-38, 3:14-19, 7:51-54, 26:9, 10, Rom 3:19, 20, 7:9; 1 Thes 2:15-16; 1 Tim 1:13; Heb 3:12, 10:28-29*).

"*Let me put it to you a way that might be simpler. This is the logic. Cat equals mammal. Dog equals mammal. Therefore, cat equals dog. Stupid, isn't it?"*
—Steven Anderson[10]

Mr. Anderson futility attempts to use a *Logical Syllogism* to discredit the idea of, '*Repenting of sin*' as a condition of regeneration.

A—Major Premise: All *cats* are *mammals*.
B—Minor Premise: All *dogs* are *mammals*.
C—Conclusion: Therefore, *cats* are *dogs*.

Unfortunately, his example is a well-known *Syllogistic Fallacy* referred to as a '*sweeping generalization*'. The *Syllogism* is false because A & B, the major and minor premises, are little more than general statements and obviously cannot irrefutably confirm C, the conclusion. Thus, it is erroneous to compared or use the above *Syllogistic Fallacy* to disprove the example *Mr. Anderson* mocks, expressed in the following valid *Syllogism*...

A—Major Premise: All *sinners* must repent of *idolatry* to be *right with God*.
B—Minor Premise: All *sin* is essentially *idolatry*.
C—Conclusion: Therefore, all *sinners* must *repent of sin* to be right with God.

[8] '*Repent of Your Sins*', A False Gospel Exposure Documentary.
[9] '*Repent of Your Sins*', A False Gospel Exposure Documentary.
[10] '*Repent of Your Sins*', A False Gospel Exposure Documentary.

Unlike *Mr. Anderson's* '*Cat are Dogs Syllogistic Fallacy*' the above *Syllogism* is true because both A & B are absolute and specific and they adhere to all six rules for *Syllogisms*, thus C is the inescapable logical conclusion. Moreover, the conclusion is confirmed by the authority of Scripture...

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king." —1 Samuel 15:23

This teaches that being both *stubborn* and *self-willed* are equated to being guilty of *idolatry.* Moreover, this is applied to a man who has rejected, or refused to *believe* the *Word of God*. Is this not the overall condition of *sinners*? In *self-will* they *stubbornly* refuse to *believe God's Word*. Therefore, all *sinners* are guilty of *idolatry* and all *sinners* are *idolaters*. *Mr. Anderson* fails to understand that the *Athenians* on *Mars Hill* had idols of wood and stone, but all sinners, by their sinful autonomy, are guilty of harboring *idols—idols* fashioned not with fleshly hands, but with the carnal mind; even some using *Scripture* passages taken grossly out of context. *Idolatry* is simply the worship or exaltation of something in place of deity. All men who reject *Christ* essentially make themselves *Lord*. This is *idolatry* and it is the universal condition of all unbelievers. Thus, contrary to Mr. Anderson's flawed logic—if the *Athenians* had to *repent of idolatry* and all *sin* is *idolatry*, then it stands to reason, no one can become a *Christian* without *repenting of sin.*

THE EPISTLES

"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God." —Romans 2:4-11

In this passage, *repentance* is the theme. An honest handling of the text reveals that a lack of *repentance* is manifest by...

- A *hard* and *impenitent heart*—the *Greek* word ἀμετανόητος translated *'impenitent'* literally means *unrepentant, admitting no change of mind*.[11]
- *Contentious*, refusal to *obey the truth* but *obeying unrighteousness.*
- Doing *evil*.

Thus, *repentance* here must be speaking about *turning from* the all the above, which are, without exception, *sins*.

"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." —2 Corinthians 7:8-11

The occasion for the above passage is the *discipline* of both the *fornicator* and the *Corinthian church* recorded in *1 Corinthians 5*. The *Apostle Paul* teaches several things in this passage. First, that *godly sorrow*, or *true repentance*, bears the fruit of *moral change*, which the *Corinthians* displayed (*v. 11*). *Moral change* demands the *turning from sin*, either *forsaking evil* or *conforming to divine will.* Secondly, the *repentance* under discussion clearly involves *salvation*. Hence, what can we conclude from this passage? *Godly sorrow* or *true repentance—which demands a moral change, either a forsaking of evil or a conforming to divine will*—is necessary for *salvation*.

"And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed." —2 Corinthians 12:21

It's apparent that the *Apostle Paul*, in using the term '*repented*' was speaking of *turning away from sin*. Again, the fact that this verse is directed to *Christians* makes little difference. Wherever there is *sin*, whenever there is *sin*, and whoever commits *sin*, God's will is always that they *repent*, *turning from their sin.* God *commandeth all men everywhere to repent* (*Acts 17:30*).

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." —1 John 1:9

[11] *Strong's* Hebrew & Greek Dictionary.

The word '*confess*' used here is an interesting word and has a much fuller meaning than merely to verbally cite. The root *Greek* word is ὁμολογέω, which means to *agree with*, to *admit*, to *declare oneself guilty of what one is accused of,* to *promise* and to *covenant with.*[12] *Confession*, according to *1 John 1:9* is a condition for *forgiveness*, not only for *Christians* but for anyone. But what does this mean? Is all that's required is that we verbally list the sins we've committed? Absolutely not, it means we must agree with God regarding sin, our minds must be changed about sin. Moreover, we then in covenant, promise by God's grace to *turn away from that sin.*

> "Confession of sin implies rejection of sin. Its power is broken only as we come into harmony with the *Cross*. But the *Cross* is no place of concealment, of hiding, of covering sin. It is the place where we break with sin, the place of exposure, of guilt, of open shame." —L.E. Maxwell[13]

> "The idea that *God* will pardon a rebel who hasn't given up his rebellion is contrary both to *Scripture* and to common sense." —A.W. Tozer[14]

Repentance is mentioned as a vital part of true *Christianity* throughout the *New Testament Epistles* (*Rom 2:4; 2 Cor 7:8-10; 2 Tim 2:25; Heb 6:1, 6; 12:17; 2 Pet 3:9, Rev 2:5, 16, 21-22; 3:3, 19; 9:20-21; 16:11, etc.*).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

One of the primary arguments used throughout this treatise is that the *repentance-deniers* have no *Scriptural* authority to allege the conditions for *forgiveness,* much less *salvation*, are different for different people. No one can be *reconciled to God* without *forgiveness of sins* and all men's sins are ultimately *forgiven* on the ground of the *atoning work of Christ*. Yet, *forgiveness of sins* and *Christian conversion* are clearly *conditional* and one of those stated *conditions* is *repentance*. The Book of Revelation offers us several examples that prove the *command to repent* demands a *turning away from sin*...

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." —Revelation 2:5

[12] *Strong's* Hebrew & Greek Dictionary.
[13] *L.E. Maxwell*, Born Crucified, p. 28.
[14] A.W. Tozer.

"Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." —Revelation 2:16

"And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds." —Revelation 2:21-22

"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." —Revelation 9:20-21

"And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." —Revelation 16:11

It seems unmistakable, *repentance of sin* is taught all over the Bible.

HUMAN AUTONOMY

In the *Scriptures*, *sin* is defined not only as specific acts (*Rom 14:23; 1 Jn 3:4*), but also, and more importantly, as a governing principle (*Rom 5:12; 6:14; 7:15-20*). Of course, the origins of sin can be traced to the *Garden of Eden*. It was here, our first parents, *Adam* and *Eve*, fell by *eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. In doing so, they essentially traded *utter dependance upon God and His wisdom* for *human autonomy*. This is the *essence of sin*. *Adam* introduced sin into the *human experience* and all men since have fallen into sin and it's bondage after the same pattern. God created man as a free-moral agent who exercised *moral freedom* in choosing to rebel against God. In other words, *Adam turned from God* while simultaneously *turning* to his own *autonomous will*. The *Gospel* is God's answer to the *fall*. *Jesus* came to save us from *sin* (*Matt 1:21; 1 Jn 3:8),* not merely *acts of sin*, but the governing *principle of sin*. If the *fall* can be summarized as *man turning from God* and *turning to human autonomy*, then restoration from the fall, or the *Gospel*, must be understood to *turn from human autonomy (sin*) and *turn back to God*. How could it be otherwise? Can anyone be *reconciled to God* without making the conscious choice to *submit to Him*? Can anyone *submit to God* while continuing to hold on to *sin*? Only the *repentance-deniers* and their twisted view of the *Gospel* would answer '*yes*'.

ONLY BELIEVE

As we've alluded to, the *repentance-deniers* claim the only condition necessary for a man to be *regenerated* is to *believe* the *Gospel*. They assert the call to '*repent*' in the *Gospels* is not to *turn from sin*, but rather, means to *repent for unbelief.* It's interesting to note, the *Greek* word ἀπιστία or *'apistia*', which is the root word behind our *English* word, '*unbelief*', literally means, not only *faithlessness* but *disobedience*.[15] So ironically, the *repentance-deniers* don't realize while promoting *repent of unbelief* they are actually teaching we must *repent of sin.*

Sadly, these false teacher's concept of '*believe*' is stripped from the need to *turn from sin*, *deny self*, or *follow Christ*, and by implication, is merely to make a *mental assent* to the historic facts of the *Gospel* story. By default, this can be defined as *easy-believism.* However, the Bible teaches *saving faith* is much more than mere *mental assent.* The *Greek* word πιστεύω or '*pisteuō*', translated into our *English* word '*believe*' means '*to commit, to put full trust in, to entrust one's spiritual well-being to Christ, to be committed unto, to place confidence in.*'[16] Likewise, the closely related *Greek* word πίστις, or '*pistis*', translated into our English word '*faith*' means '*moral conviction, absolute reliance upon Christ for salvation, assurance, belief, fidelity, conviction of the truth*'.[17] These words communicate something far deeper than *mental agreement*, but of a trusting, deep, covenant relationship where man is deeply committed to God via the atoning work of *Christ*. So, is *belief* simply to express mental assent to the facts of the Gospel and verbalize with the mouth? *Jesus* warned...

"Not every one that SAITH unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that DOETH the will of my Father which is in heaven." —Matthew 7:21

True *saving faith* is not confirmed by merely what we *say*, but by what we *do.* Hence, in one sense, to *believe* or *exercise faith* is a concise way to summarize the conditions for *Biblical conversion* because to *believe the Gospel* or *God's Word* and the *call to be reconciled to God,* demands we obey and do what we hear. To agree with and exercise all things demanded to be *saved* and continue to do so...

"By which <u>also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you</u>, unless ye have believed in vain." —1 Corinthians 15:2

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[15] *Strong's* Hebrew & Greek Dictionary.
[16] *Strong's* Hebrew & Greek Dictionary.
[17] *Strong's* Hebrew & Greek Dictionary.

So, in one sense, we would agree if one *believes* the *Gospel* he has done all that's necessary to be *justified*, *forgiven*, *reconciled to God,* etc. To *believe* the *Gospel* is to hear the call to *repent* and *turn away from all sin*, to *deny self*, to *exercise faith* in the *finished work of Christ,* to take up the *cross* and *follow Jesus,* and to continue to do so, *enduring* till the end. In *James 2: 18-20*, the *Bible* warns of a *belief*, or mere *mental assent*, that falls short of the *faith* that *saves*...

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" —James 2:18-20

The *repentance-deniers*, in an effort to find Biblical proof-texts for their insidious doctrine, '*only-believe-easy-believe*', like to quote passages like *Acts 16:30-33...*

"And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." —Acts 16:30-33

They do this because when the *Philippian jailer* asked, '*what must I do to be saved?*' he was instructed by *Paul* and *Silas* to '*believe*'. Ignoring the rest of the *Scriptures*, they claim that since only '*believe*' is mentioned, this proves *repentance*, or *turning from one's sins,* is not a condition for salvation. This is not only a dishonest handling of *God's Word* and a classic example of isogesis, but also the logical fallacy of '*an argument from silence*'. This is a narrative, which simply gives us a brief but accurate account of the events taking place in *Acts 16*. In such narratives, it's assumed some details are missing. The fact is, the passage informs us that *Paul* and *Silas*, '*Spake unto him the word of the Lord*', which would, no doubt, include the details of the *Gospel*, including the demand to *repent.* Hence, the *Philippian jail* and his household *believed* what *Paul* and *Silas* preached to them, obeying all they heard, and therefore were saved. The following analogy will serve to illuminate this dynamic...

> Imagine an older man who is wary of modern medicine and typically refuses to use doctors. Having recently experienced frequent chest pains and shortness of breath, his concerned wife and children urge him to seek medical attention. He is hesitant, but to curb their distress, he agrees to visit the emergency room. After undergoing a *CT chest-scan* and an *EKG*, the worst is confirmed. He is suffering from advanced *heart disease*. His coronary arteries are almost completely blocked and according to

a *heart stress-test*, he could experience a massive *heart-attack* at any moment. Alarmed, the testing doctor sits the man down and communicates the urgency of the situation. He explains the only rational option is to undergo immediate *open-heart surgery*. The sick man seems very apprehensive and asks, "*What exactly is required of me?*". The doctor careful relays details of the procedure, describing how the man must be willing to be put under clinical anesthesia and have a long incision made down the center of his chest. Furthermore, his sternum will need to be split wide open, giving the surgeons access to his diseased heart. Following the surgery there will be a tedious rehab, where abandoning his unhealthy lifestyle will be imperative for a full recovery. The old man is more than a little skeptical. He just can't believe he's that sick, nor does he trust the doctor's expertise. He also conveys to the doctor that he hates scalpels, is very uncomfortable with anesthesia, and isn't about to change his lifestyle, so he declines treatment. After seeking to further convince the man to no avail, the dismayed doctor approaches the family waiting outside the examination room and says to his wife, "*He could be saved, but he just won't believe*". The doctor briefly tries to solace the bewildered family but finally excuses himself.

It's true, if the sick man would simply '*believe*' the doctor, he would surely submit to the surgery and be saved thereby. However, when the doctor is communicating the grim scenario to the sick man's wife, he is merely summarizing the situation. Other conditions were clearly communicated and there was obviously more required of the man to undergo surgery. To '*believe the doctor*' essentially meant to fully acquiesce to every *condition* conveyed. Likewise, when the *Scriptures* communicate '*faith*' as the sole condition to be saved, we must understand the term '*believe*' as an encapsulating term. Why? Because, contrary to what the *repentance-deniers* claim, there are many other verses that communicate kindred conditions. Sound *Bible-interpretation* demands we allow the full *Corpus of Scripture* to illuminate our understanding of '*belief*'.

Thus, we concede, the call to *believe on the Lord Jesus* is an accurate summary of the conditions for *Gospel salvation*. Nevertheless, sound Bible hermeneutics demand we take the full counsel of God, especially via other *Gospel* preaching in the *New Testament*, to both temper and broaden our understanding of '*believe*'. *Denying self*, *taking up one's cross*, *hating one's life*, *repentance*, *forsaking all*, *following Jesus*, *etc*. are all authoritatively presented by *Jesus* in the *Gospels* as definite conditions to be *born-again* (*Matt 16:24-26; Mk 8:34-38; Lk 9:23-25, 13:3-5*, *14:26-33; etc.*). The way to *sound doctrine* is not to ignore this verses, but to harmonize all the verses that mention relevant salvation conditions (*1 Cor 2:13; 2 Tim 2:15, 3:16*).

THE TYPICAL ARGUMENTS

ARGUMENT #1—"If '*repent*' or '*repentance*' means *turning from sin*, then God had to *turn from sin* because the Scriptures teach God *repented*."

REBUTTAL: First, the Bible mentions God *repenting* several times, mostly in the *Old Testament*. However, in these cases the *Hebrew* word translated into our *English* word, '*repent*' is 'נָחַם' or '*nâḥam'*. As we already pointed out, *naham* essentially means '*to regret, or to grieve*'. This is a different word than the *Hebrew* word, 'שׁוּב' or '*šhûv*' which means '*to tur*n, *to turn back, to turn around*', denoting *turning from sin*. Only once is the word '*repent*' used in relation to *God* in the *New Testament*, in *Hebrews 7:21.* Likewise, this *Greek* word, μεταμέλλομαι, means '*regret*' and is distinct from the *Greek* verb and noun, μετάνοια and μετανοέω (translated '*repent*' and '*repentance*'), which both are used in relation to men *changing their minds* and *turning from sin.* Again, context plays an important role in determining the usage and application of the word, *repent*. Therefore, any reference to *'God repenting'* obviously doesn't indicate that God had committed *sin* and neither does it prove the command to *repent* isn't the call to *turn from sin.*

Secondly, the *repentance-deniers* claim that the *Gospel* command to *repent* is essentially to *turn from unbelief*. Thus, using the same logic the *repentance-deniers* apply in their argument, let's substitute their definition of *repentance* in the argument:

"If '*repent*' or '*repentance*' means *TURNING FROM UNBELIEF*, then God had to *TURN FROM UNBELIEF* because the Scriptures teach God *repented*."

So, their argument is obviously proven self-conflicting and false. It's true, as the pointed-out above, the *Bible* does teach God *repented*, but the answer lies in the unique *Hebrew* word used in the cases of *divine repentance* (*which means regret or grieving*).

ARGUMENT #2—"The words, '*repent of sins*' cannot be found in the Bible, so repenting of sins is not a perquisite for regeneration."

REBUTTAL: First, this is a lie. These words are mentioned by *Jesus* in *Luke 24*...

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." —Luke 24:46-47

Simply because the word '*remission*' is also coupled with '*repentance'* does not negate the fact that the phrase, '*repentance of sins*' is communicated here. Granted, the phrase is not verbatim mentioned much, but that doesn't necessarily prove anything. The word, '*trinity*'

cannot be found in the Bible either, but that doesn't negate the truth of the *Tri-union Godhead*. Again, the *repentance-deniers* claim that the *Gospel* command to *repent* is essentially to *repent for unbelief*. However, the words, '*repent of unbelief*' are not found in the *Scriptures* as well. So, according to their own twisted argument, this assertion is proven as hypocritical and erroneous.

ARGUMENT #3—"The *Gospel of John* does not mention *repentance*."

REBUTTAL: This is an *argument from silence*, a well-established *logical fallacy*. Furthermore, this argument demands we pull the *Gospel of John* out of context, the context of the *Corpus of Scripture*. *Scriptural Canon* is important for many reasons, one being it provides us with the full counsel of God. *Repentance*, or *turning from sin* is mentioned all over the Bible as well as the other *Gospels*. Sadly, this argument pits the Bible against the Bible, a pattern frequently employed by false teachers. So, in light of this argument, the questions should be asked, '*Then, is John's Gospel at odds with the rest of the Bible? Are the other Gospels which mention repentance inaccurate, adding to the Gospel?*' A Christian's presupposition regarding Bibliology is, '*there are no contradictions in the Scriptures*', ruling out such a bible-dishonoring argument. Finally, the *Apostle John,* under inspiration, mentions *repentance* several times in the *Book of Revelation*, and communicates the concept in his first Epistle (*1 Jn 1:9*).

ARGUMENT #4—"How was the *Eunuch* saved in *Acts 8* as *repentance* is not mentioned?"

REBUTTAL: This argument is faulty. It is another argument formulated from silence. The fact is, no one has ever been *forgiven* or *reconciled to God* without *repentance* because the Scriptures clearly teach a *turning from sin* as a condition for *Christian conversion*. Thus, the *Eunuch* was born-again when he *repented of his sins* and exercised *faith* in the *Gospel*. How do we know this? First, as we have seen, because this is taught elsewhere in the *Scriptures* as necessary for *Christian conversion*. Secondly, because the text tells us *Philip* '*preached Jesus*' to him (*Acts 8:35*). Just because the *Biblical* account doesn't mention *repentance* doesn't mean *Philip* didn't preach *repentance* to him. The *Biblical* record doesn't mention either the *cross* or the *resurrection*, but certainly we wouldn't assume *Philip* left that out of his *Gospel* presentation. Why? Because the *Bible* teaches it elsewhere and it would be unscriptural to believe the *Eunuch* could be saved if he denied either. Moreover, the account doesn't mention that *Jesus* is *deity*, but certainly the *Eunuch* could not be born-again without believing that *Jesus* is *God* manifested in the flesh. I wonder what the *repentance-deniers* think? Do they suppose that '*preaching Jesus*' simply means *Philip* repeated the name of *Jesus* to the *Eunuch* over and over? No, that would be absurd. *Philip* preached the *Gospel* that *Jesus* preached to him and the disciples when he walked

the earth. Remember, *Jesus* came preaching '*repent*' (*which literally means, by definition, a change of heart regarding sin*). Also, *Jesus* declared a man must deny himself, take up his *cross* and *follow*—impossible apart from *repentance from sin*. So yes, the *Eunuch believed* the '*preaching*' of *Philip*, which obviously included all the *Biblical* conditions for regeneration, including *repentance of sin*.

ARGUMENT #5—"*John the Baptist* preached '*believe on Christ*', per *Acts 19:4*, so his *baptism of repentance,* meant to *change the mind regarding what men believed*, not turn from their *sins*."

REBUTTAL: False doctrine always pits the *Bible* against the *Bible*. Emphasizing one truth against another, instead of harmonizing the entire *Corpus of Scripture*. Let's consider *Acts 19:4...*

"Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." —Acts 19:4

To suggest that *Acts 19:4* completely and thoroughly defines what *John the Baptist* preached and how to exclusively define the *Baptism of repentance* is not only absurd, its a careless and dishonest handling of the *Scriptures*. We agree that the *Baptist's* preaching ultimately pointed men to *believe on Jesus* the *Messiah*. However, the *Apostle Paul's* statement, in light of corresponding passages, must be understood as a concise summary rather than a narrowly defined statement. The rest of the Scriptural testimony gives us a much fuller picture. How can anyone harmonize the *repentance-deniers* '*definition*' of *John's* preaching with...

"Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He

answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages. And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people. But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done..." —Luke 3:2-20

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." —Matthew 3:1-12

These passages clearly indicate *John's preaching* of *repentance* was far more than merely exhortations to '*believe'*. The preaching content included the forceful denouncing of *sin* while urging men to turn from the *iniquity* and look to the coming *Messiah.* This is self-evident as many who were being baptized were *confessing their sins.*

ARGUMENT #6—"If '*repenting*' is required for *Christian conversion* then *Judas* was converted because he '*repented'."*

REBUTTAL: Typical of false teachers who have no genuine desire for truth, they tend to blindly pit the *Bible* against the *Bible*, refusing to use the full *Corpus of Scripture* to rightly interrupt the *Scriptures* (*1 Cor 2:13*). To suggest, even rhetorically, that *Judas* died a believer is to ignore the clear teaching of *Scripture*. The orthodox view, on either side of the theological camp, is that *Judas* was either never *born-again* or that he backslid and lost his soul. I believe *Judas* was once both *right with God* and *called to the ministry*, but via sin, he fell away (*Jn 17:12*). Either way, the Scriptures clearly teach that *Judas* died outside of grace...

- He was called a '*devil*' by *Jesus* (*Jn 6:70*).
- He fell from the ministry by iniquity (*Acts 1:15-20*).
- He committed suicide—no unrepentant murderer enters heaven (*Matt 27:5; Gal 5:19-21; 1 Jn 3:15*).
- The *Scriptures* declare it were better if he never were born, a statement inconsistent with someone who went to heaven (*Mk 14:21*).

"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders."
—Matthew 27:3

Again, the *Greek* word, μεταμέλλομαι translated '*repented*' used here in *Matthew 27:3-4* means '*regret*' and is not the *Greek* word, μετάνοια, which is typically used to denote *turning from sin.* Nonetheless, *sorrow for sin,* even *deep sorrow*, doesn't necessarily constitute *genuine repentance* or a sincere turning from self-will to God (*2 Cor 7:10*). Simply because *Judas* showed remorse for *betraying Jesus* doesn't mean he truly *repented of his sin* and was reconciled to God. Obviously, for reasons listed above, it's apparent he didn't. If he would have truly *repented* and renewed his *relationship with God*, he obviously wouldn't have committed suicide. Thus, the argument is proven futile.

ARGUMENT #7—"The doctrine of *repentance from sin* is a *dead work* and constitutes a work-based salvation."

REBUTTAL: The '*turning from sin to Jesus*' is not a *dead work*. In fact, it's a by-product of *Holy Ghost* inspired *conviction* that *draws men to Christ* (*Jn 6:44*). In fact, *repentance* is something God grants via grace (*Acts 11:18*). *Repentance*, or the '*intent to turn away from all sin and turn to God*' is a demonstration of a heart condition that is convinced that sin grieves God and the *Gospel* is true. In '*turning*' to *Jesus* one must '*turn*' from self and sin, yet this '*turning*' is not a *dead work*, but rather, a volitional act of man's free will, awakened by *God's Spirit* applying *Gospel truth* (*Rom 10:14*). It's man yielding, co-

operating and not frustrating God's gracious influence as He leads the lost soul to *Christ.* God created man with a *free will* to choose, with the ability to either acquiesce or resist God's merciful drawing. No man can deliver himself from sin. *Repentance* is not delivering oneself from sin, but rather, a covenanting with God to *turn from self-will and rebellion* and turn to God, believing Him for deliverance (*salvation*) from sin via the new birth (*Matt 1:21; Rom 1:16*). Moreover, *saving faith* is not a mindless faith. It's both a *rational* or *reasoning* faith and a *volitional* or *responding* faith. It's a faith that is birthed and fueled by God through the revelation of Himself and His Word. God reveals all things necessary for fallen man to understand and respond in faith to His offer of salvation. When one understands his sin and that it separates him from his *Creator*, it will logically produce a reasonable sorrow and rational change of mind regarding sin. It will consequently generate the volitional act of *turning from sin* and *casting oneself on Christ* and His atoning work on the cross for forgiveness and establishing a relationship with God.

Allow me to offer an illustration—Suppose a married man is in an adulterous affair. After months of unfaithfulness, the man's conscience is aflame with guilt. Haunted by the great harm he's brought upon his marriage, the brazen disregard to his nuptial vows, and the great sin against his wife, he informs his mistress the affair is over. Tormented with shame and remorse he approaches his wife with tears...

> "Dear wife, I have been committing adultery with another woman and I've been hiding the affair from you for months. I have broken off the relationship with my former mistress and promise to permanently separate from her. Nonetheless, I have broken our marriage vows, sinned against you, and brought a reproach on our name. I am extremely sorry for the pain I've caused you and I don't want our marriage to be dissolved. I would not blame you for hating me, for I have been vile and wicked. I don't deserve your forgiveness and I can only hope you are willing to accept my desire to reconcile. However, I'm casting myself upon your mercy. Please, forgive me and allow me to prove that I can be the faithful husband I once vowed to be."

Who, upon hearing these words, would think to themselves, "*This man deserves to be forgiven by his wife. He sure earned it*"? I would suspect, no one. *Repentance*, simply because it's something we do, doesn't mean it's a *dead work.* Foremost, as we've already mentioned, *repentance* is provided by God (*Jn 6:44-45; Acts 11:18*). Nonetheless, it's simply a proper and right response to the truth of *God's law* and the accompanying conviction of *God's Spirit*. Thus, *repentance* is not a meritorious human work.

ARGUMENT #8—"Simon the sorcerer was a *Christian*, so his need for '*repentance of sins*' doesn't apply."

REBUTTAL: Let's first read the text in question...

"And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me." —Acts 8:18-24

The text conclusively establishes that *Simon* had to *repent* of the stated *wickedness* before he could be *forgiven*. The *repentance-deniers* claim this does not apply to *sinners* because *Simon* was a '*Christian*'. First, this makes little difference, as the *Scriptures* never teach there are different standards for *forgiveness* for *Old Testament* and *New Testament saints*. *Jews* and *Gentiles* are not saved differently. Likewise, *believers* and *unbelievers* are not forgiven by different means. As we've already pointed out, there is only one way anyone can be forgiven, on the ground of the *atonement*. Hence, any verse that teaches *someone*, yea *anyone* must *repent of wickedness t*o be *forgiven,* reveals all must *repent of wickedness* to be *forgiven*. To suggest otherwise is heresy. Furthermore, the claim that *Simon* was a '*Christian*' is absurd, if not laughable. Such dishonest handling of the *Scriptures* by the *repentance-deniers* reveals an unabashed eisegesis and the utter dedication to their twisted theological presuppositions. *Simon the sorcerer* may have '*believed*' and been '*baptized'* in *verse 13*, but by *verse 18* he had obviously *fallen into sin* and if not completely *fallen away* by his transgression, was certainly in danger of losing his soul. His condition is unmistakably described by the *Apostle Peter* under divine inspiration...

- He had neither *part* nor *lot* in *God's Spirit.*
- His *heart was not right* in the sight of God.
- He was in need of *heart forgiveness.*
- He was in the *gall of bitterness.*
- He was in the bond of iniquity.

To suggest *Simon* was *right with God* in light of such absolute statements is shocking. Nonetheless, we shouldn't be surprised as these *Antinomian repentance-deniers* are driven to defend sin of every sort. Sadly, the fact that they could consider *Simon* a *Christian* reveals what sort of converts undoubtedly fill their darkened churches.

Finally, this is a strange argument and its rooted in the *easy-believism* and *once-saved-always-saved* errors of the twisted theology of the *repentance-deniers*. These same heretics generally believe the religious myth that a Christian's sins are all unconditionally forgiven past, present, and future. However, they also illogically insist only Christians need to '*repent of sin*'. Why would a Christian need to *repent* o*f sins* if *sins* are unconditionally forgiven even before they're even committed?

ARGUMENT #9—"Telling sinners to *stop sinning* is somehow spiritually counter-productive and poisons the *Gospel* message."

REBUTTAL: This is one of the most absurd and shameful allegations I've ever heard.

The phrases, 'sin not' (*Ex 20:20; Ps 4:4; 1 Cor 15:34; 1 Jn 2:1, etc*.), 'cease from evil' (*Isa 1:16*), 'sin no more' (*Jn 5:14*), 'go and sin no more' (*Jn 8:14*), 'do no evil' (*2 Cor 3:17*), 'eschew evil' (*1 Pet 3:11*), 'cease from sin' (*2 Pet 2:14*) and similar commands are mentioned repeatedly throughout the Scripture. Likewise, the phrases, '*keep His commands*' and '*keep His statues*' (*Duet 6:17; Jn 15:10, etc.*), as well as the call to obedience for all men, are expressed all over the Bible.

The moral law, with its stated demands of, '*thou shalt*' and '*thou shalt not*', irrefutably communicates both God's displeasure with sin and His will that sinners refrain from sin. What Bible-believer will deny God desires sinners to stop sinning? Is this a lie or is it true? Granted, to teach sinners that mere obedience to God's moral law will grant them salvation is unscriptural and heretical. However, as a prefix and accompaniment to *Gospel* preaching, this is nothing more than summarizing one of the most basic messages of the Bible. Indeed, telling men God commands them to '*cease from sin*' is to quote the Bible, to communicate God's will, and to declare the essence of God's moral law. According to *1 Timothy 1:8-11*, the law is lawful to use in *Gospel* declaration as long as it's applied to sinners as a *schoolmaster that leads men to Christ* (*Gal 3:24-25*). Law always precedes grace.

Therefore, to condemn brethren for calling sinners to '*cease from sin*' is to condemn Christians for quoting the Scripture and accurately representing God. Yea, it is to condemn God Himself. Such an assertion is pitiful, utterly stupid, embarrassingly extra-Biblical, and even satanic.

"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD." —Proverbs 17:15

ARGUMENT #10—"*Catholics*, *Mormons*, etc. teach *repent for sins*, therefore, *repent for sins* is erroneous."

REBUTTAL: This argument is grossly flawed and is commonly referred to as the *fallacy of false association.* Both *Catholicism* and *Mormonism* are heretical cults who ultimately teach damnable heresy. Nonetheless, a mark of heretical cults is their teaching is generally a mixture of truth and error. Thus, simply because the *Catholics* and *Mormons* teach a specific doctrine doesn't necessarily make that doctrine erroneous. For example, both *Catholics* and *Mormons* affirm the *virgin birth of Jesus* but that doesn't mean the virgin-birth is false.

ARGUMENT #11—"The *thief on the cross* didn't repent of his sins, he didn't turn from his sins, or ask for forgiveness, but he went to heaven."

REBUTTAL: We agree, the *thief on the cross* did go to heaven. However, we contend he not only exercised '*faith*' or '*belief*', even though neither are mentioned, but also *repentance*...

"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, DOST NOT THOU FEAR GOD, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; FOR WE RECIEVE THE DUE REWARD FOR OUR DEEDS: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." —Luke 23:3942

Repentance is expressed in the text, certainly as much, if not more, than '*faith*'. This sort of argument by the *repentance-deniers* exposes their dishonest handling of the *Word of God* and their brazen eisegesis. They can rightly establish the thief's *faith* by his request, '*Remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom*', but obstinately ignore his *repentance* when he confessed, '*For we receive the due reward for our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss*'.

CONCLUSION

The assertion that *repentance from sin* is not a *condition* for *regeneration* is an astounding claim. A thorough study of the *Scriptures* rightly divided, as shown above, proves such a claim both absurd and dangerous. Those who arrive at such heresy are usually harboring a divided and impure heart (*Matt 5:8*) and therefore, obscured from the light, are unconsciously reckless with the *Words of God*. Moreover, they alter the pure *Gospel* message, presenting *another Jesus* by *another Spirit*. Such men and their followers, as the *Bible* warns, are accursed (*2 Cor 11:4*).

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the

faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." —Jude 1:3-4

—B.W.

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