

The Meaning of the Word Grace

by Lewis Sperry Chafer

The word 'grace' in the Bible represents the boundless goodness and kindness of God toward humanity, and indicates the supreme motive which actuated God in the creation, preservation, and consummation of the universe.

Scripture: John 3:18, Romans 3:24, Romans 6:23, Galatians 1:8, Ephesians 2:8, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Divine Grace", "Gods Love"

Description

Lewis Sperry Chafer delves into the profound meaning of the word 'grace' in the Bible, emphasizing that it signifies the boundless goodness and kindness of God towards humanity, extending beyond salvation to the very motive behind the creation and preservation of the universe. He highlights that grace is the unlimited love of God expressed in measureless favor, closely related to the concept of favor in the Old Testament. Chafer explores seven fundamental facts about grace, including how grace is not withheld or lessened due to human demerit, cannot incur a debt, is not exercised in the just payment of a debt, and does not appear in the immediate divine dealings with the sins of the unsaved or the saved.

Transcript

The exact and discriminate meaning of the word grace should be crystal clear to every child of God. With such insight only can he feed his own soul on the inexhaustible riches which it unfolds, and with such understanding only can he be enabled clearly to pass on to others its marvelous, transforming theme. Here is a striking illustration of the fact that very much may be represented by one word. When used in the Bible to set forth the grace of God in the salvation of sinners, the word grace discloses not only the boundless goodness and kindness of God toward humanity, but reaches far beyond and indicates the supreme motive which actuated God in the creation, preservation and consummation of the universe. What greater fact could be expressed by one word?

The meaning of the word grace, as used in the New Testament, is not unlike its meaning as employed in common speech--but for one important exception, namely, in the Bible the word often represents that which is limitless, since it represents realities which are infinite and eternal.

It is nothing less than the unlimited love of God expressing itself in measureless grace.

The word favor is the nearest Biblical synonym for the word grace. In this connection it may be observed that the one thought which is almost exclusively expressed in the New Testament by the word grace, is, in

the Old Testament, almost exclusively expressed by the word favor. Grace is favor, and favor is grace. Thus, in considering the Bible teaching on this great theme, equal attention should be given to all passages wherein either the word grace is used or favor is found. Grace means pure unrecompensed kindness and favor. What is done in grace is done graciously. From this exact meaning there can be no departure; otherwise grace ceases to be grace. To arrive at the scope and force of the Bible doctrine of salvation by grace alone we need to follow consistently the path indicated by the exact meaning of the word.

Seven Fundamental Facts About Grace

A. Grace Is Not Withheld Because of Demerit

This fact about grace is more evident, perhaps, than any other. It is the sense of demerit more than anything else which impels a soul to cry out for the kindness and benefits of grace. So, also, grace finds its greatest triumph and glory in the sphere of human helplessness. Grace ceases to be grace if God is compelled to withdraw it in the presence of human failure and sin. In fact, grace cannot be exercised where there is the slightest degree of human merit to be recognized. On the other hand the issue of human sin must be disposed of forever. Christ the Lamb of God, having taken away the sin of the world, has by His Cross forever disposed of the condemnation of sin. He has by the Cross created an entirely new relation between God and humanity. Consequently, men are now either accepting or rejecting Christ who has borne their sins. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). There is no middle ground.

All questions of demerit have been banished. Thus God is righteously free to exercise grace in every case. Salvation is by grace alone.

B. Grace Cannot Be Lessened Because of Demerit

God cannot propose to do less in grace for one who is sinful than He would have done had that one been less sinful. Grace is never exercised by Him in making up what may be lacking in the life and character of a sinner. In such a case, much sinfulness would call for much grace, and little sinfulness would call for little grace. The sin question has been set aside forever, and equal exercise of grace is extended to all who believe. It never falls short of being the measureless saving grace of God. Thus grace could not be increased, for it is the expression of His infinite love; it could not be diminished, for every limitation that human sin might impose on the action of a righteous God has, through the propitiation of the Cross, been dismissed forever.

God does not ignore or slight the fact of human guilt and sin, for He has met these issues perfectly and finally for all men in the death of His Son. There remains no demerit, nor degrees of demerit, to be considered or recognized. By grace there is now offered alike to all men all the infinite resources of the saving power of God. The grace of God is, therefore, exercised in perfect independence of human sin, or any degree of human sin.

C. Grace Cannot Incur a Debt

An act is in no sense gracious if under any conditions a debt is incurred. Grace, being unrecompensed favor, is necessarily unrecompensed as to obligations which are past, unrecompensed as to obligations

which are present, and unrecompensed as to obligations which are future. Grace must always remain unadulterated in its generosity and benefit. How emphatically this is true of the grace of God toward sinners! Yet how often this aspect of divine salvation is perverted! Infinite and eternal transformations are wrought by the power of God when He exercises His grace. He is thereby glorified and sinners are saved. Such far-reaching results cannot fail to satisfy and delight Him eternally, but He remains unrecompensed for His salvation through grace. What He does He bestows as a gift. Rightfully a benefit cannot be called a gift if it is paid for before, at the time, or after. This is a fundamental truth of the Word of God, and it is imperative that it be kept free from all confusing complications.

When a recompense for the gift of God is proposed, every element of salvation is obscured, and the true motive for Christian service is sacrificed as well. The Scriptures everywhere guard these two truths from such perversion; in the Bible, salvation is always presented as a gift, an unrecompensed favor, a pure benefit from God (John 10:28; Rom. 6:23). And, in like manner, no service is to be wrought, and no offering is to be given, with a view to repaying God for His gift. Any attempt to compensate God for His gift is an act so utterly out of harmony with the revealed Truth, and exhibits such a lack of appreciation of His loving bounty, that it cannot be other than distressing to the Giver. All attempts to repay His gift, be they ever so sincere, serve only to frustrate His grace and to lower the marvelous kindness of God to the sordid level of barter and trade. How faithfully we should serve Him, but never to repay Him! Service is the Christian's means of expressing his love and devotion to God, as God has expressed His love to those whom He saves by the gracious thing He has done. Christian service for God should be equally gracious.

It therefore becomes those who have received His gifts in grace to be jealous for the purity of their motives in service for Him. Unwittingly the grace of God is too often denied by well-meaning attempts to compensate God for His benefits. No semblance of the most vital facts about divine grace can be retained unless salvation is, in its every aspect, treated as a gift from God, and Christian service and faithfulness is deemed to be only the expression of love and gratitude to God.

According to the Scriptures, salvation is never conditioned on human faithfulness, or on the promise of human faithfulness. There is no payment required, past, present, or future. God saves unmeriting sinners in unrelated, unrecompensed, unconditioned, sovereign grace. Good works should follow; but with no thought of compensation. Christians are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10); they are to be a "peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14); and "they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). Thus, and only thus, are "good works" related to the gracious salvation from God through Christ Jesus. Grace is out of question when recompense is in question.

D. Grace Is Not Exercised in the Just Payment of a Debt

The fact is self-evident that the payment of an honest debt could never be an act of grace. In no circumstances, however, is the recognition of this truth more important than when grace is declared to be the present divine plan for the salvation of sinners. If God should discover the least degree of merit in the sinner, this, in strict righteousness, He must recognize and duly acknowledge. By such a recognition of human merit, He would be discharging an obligation toward the sinner and the discharge of that obligation toward the sinner would be the payment, or recognition, of a debt. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" (Rom. 4:4).

It is therefore imperative that every vestige of human merit shall be set aside completely if an opportunity is provided whereby pure grace may be exercised in the salvation of people. For the sole purpose that

pure grace might be exercised toward people, the human family has been placed under the divine judicial sentence of sin.

It is obviously true that all men are sinners both by nature and by practice, but the present divine decree goes far beyond this evident state of sinfulness wherein one man might be deemed to be more, or less, sinful than another; for God, in this dispensation, which began with the Cross, has pronounced an equal and absolute sentence of judgment against all, both Jew and Gentile. People are now "already condemned" (John 3:18); they are "children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2), not on the ground of their own sinfulness, but on the ground of their federal headship in fallen Adam.

People are now judicially reckoned to be "in unbelief" (Rom. 11:32); they are "under sin" (Rom. 3:9; Gal. 3:22); and they are "guilty" (Rom. 3:19). Thus all human merit has been disposed of absolutely and forever, and there is no longer the slightest possibility that, because of personal merit, a divine obligation may now exist toward any individual. The sole divine object in thus universally and judicially disposing of all human merit is clearly revealed:

"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11:32). Also, "The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Gal. 3:22).

That God now saves sinners by grace alone and apart from every human merit is the teaching of His Word: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10).

In this passage the only order which can exist between divine grace and human merit is made clear. Man is permitted to do nothing until God has done all that His grace designs. Good works grow out of, and are made possible by, the gracious work of God. To this exact order all revelation concerning divine grace is in agreement.

A striking emphasis is given to the fact that God now saves by grace alone when the biblical doctrines of salvation by grace and the believer's rewards for service are contrasted. Salvation, being always and only a work of God for man, is always and only by grace alone; rewards, being always and only that which is merited by the faithful service of the Christian, are always and only based on works. Human merit is always in view in the divine bestowment of rewards; the grace of God is never mentioned in connection with His bestowment of rewards (1 Cor. 3:9-15; 9:18-27; 2 Cor. 5:10). So, also, human works are never included as forming any part of the divine plan of salvation by grace.

An act ceases to be gracious, therefore, when it is a recognition of merit, or the payment of a just debt. "Being justified freely [without cause] by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24).

E. Grace Is Never the Overpayment of a Debt

Grace is no longer grace if it is complicated in the slightest degree with the payment of a just debt. It can never be that which is added to, or a part of, a righteous transaction. A bounty may be added to the payment of a debt--an extra amount above the full measure due, but in no case should this extra amount be considered a matter of pure grace. The character of the bounty thus added would, of necessity, be

qualified to some extent by the relation of the bounty to the debt.

The bounty will be either more, or less, than it would have been had it stood alone. Inevitably it will be affected to some degree by the righteous transaction with which it is combined. In the Word of God, as in common usage, the word grace, in its exact meaning, precludes any complications with other acts or issues however righteous and just. Grace speaks of a gift, not of barter or trade however unequal. It is pure kindness, not the fulfilling of an obligation. An act in order to be gracious must stand disassociated and alone. Divine salvation is, therefore, the kindness of God toward sinners. It is not less than it would be had they sinned less. It is not more than it would be had they sinned more. It is wholly unrelated to every question of human merit. Grace is neither treating a person as he deserves, nor treating a person better than he deserves. It is treating a person graciously without the slightest reference to his deserts. Grace is infinite love expressing itself in infinite goodness.

Through the death of Christ by which He took away the sin of the world, and through the divine decree which has constituted all to be "under sin," grace is free to save in every case, and only grace can save in any case. Divine grace is never decreased or increased. It offers a standardized, unvarying blessing to every individual alike. The blessing is measureless since it represents in every case no less than all that God, being actuated by infinite love, can do.

F. Grace Does Not Appear in the Immediate Divine Dealings with the Sins of the Unsaved

It is probable that no point in the gospel of God's saving grace is so misunderstood, and, consequently, so misstated as the revealed truth concerning the immediate divine dealings with the sins of the unsaved. It seems most difficult for the mind to grasp the fact that, as revealed in God's Word, God does not deal with any sin in mercy, or leniency.

The sinner is never forgiven because God is big-hearted enough to remit the penalty, or to waive the righteous judgments. Any presentation of divine forgiveness which represents God as directly exercising clemency toward a sinner is a fatal detraction from the meaning of the Cross of Christ, and is a disastrous misrepresentation of the truth contained in the Gospel of His saving grace. Those who dare to preach the gospel should give to the Cross its true place of vital importance as given to it in the Word of God. How can God utter a more alarming warning on this point than is disclosed in the revelation of the unrevoked anathema upon all who pervert the gospel of grace? "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" (Gal. 1:8-9).

Turning from human speculation to the Scriptures of truth, we discover one basic fact: The Lamb of God has already "taken away" the sin of the world (John 1:29). The fact that Christ, as substitute, has already borne the undiminished righteous judgments of God against sin, is the sole ground upon which divine forgiveness is now exercised.

The forgiveness of God toward sinners, therefore, is not an immediate act of grace; it is rather a judicial pardon of a debtor in view of the fact that his debt has been fully paid by another. We could not know how much He paid; yet, though unable to measure redemption, we may rejoice in the fact that all, even to the measure of the righteous reckoning of God, is absolutely and eternally paid by Christ.

It is not a question of the relative benefits which might possibly accrue to the sinner under one form of forgiveness or another--were he forgiven graciously, or in strict justice; it is a question of the basis upon which any divine forgiveness can be extended righteously. This righteous basis has been provided in the Cross. By gospel preaching, sinners are to be told that they may now stand forever pardoned before God, not because God is gracious enough to excuse their sins, but because there is plentiful redemption through the blood that has been shed (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7).

Being free to forgive at all, God is free to forgive perfectly. On no other ground can the marvelous statement, "having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13), be understood. This Scripture is addressed to Christians and it exactly defines the scope of divine forgiveness which is theirs. It likewise indicates the measure of forgiveness which is offered to the unsaved.

When God thus forgives, absolutely and eternally, through the Cross of Christ He is acting as Judge. By this judicial decree, He sets aside forever all condemnation. Such judicial forgiveness, which guarantees an unchangeable standing and position in sonship, should not be confused with the Father's forgiveness toward His sinning child, which is wholly within the family relationship, and which restores lost fellowship and joy to the child of God.

Every unsaved person is under the threefold sentence of sin.

He is a sinner by practice,

a sinner by nature, and

a sinner by divine decree.

God deals with this threefold aspect of sin by a threefold achievement in grace.

There is forgiveness for man in view of the fact that he is a sinner by practice,

there is imputed righteousness for man in view of the fact that he is a sinner by nature, and

there is the divine decree of justification for man in view of the fact that he is a sinner who, by divine decree, is "under sin."

Judicial forgiveness itself is not an act of grace, nor is judicial forgiveness a mere act of divine clemency for some particular sins of present moment to the sinner: judicial forgiveness covers all sin, and by it the sinner is, as to possible condemnation, pardoned forever.

This pardon covers all sins past, present, or future. God the righteous Father will, in infinite faithfulness, correct and chasten His sinning child, and the sinning child will need to confess his sin in order to be restored into fellowship with his Father; but the Father will never condemn His child (John 3:18; 5:24; Rom. 8:1 R.V.; 1 Cor. 11:31-32). The forgiveness of God toward the sinner is, then, made possible only through the Cross and is never an act of immediate grace, and, when it is free to be extended at all, it is boundless. It contemplates and includes all sin. It forever absolves and acquits the sinner.

Though divine forgiveness results in a position for the sinner wherein there is no condemnation, this fact should in no wise be confused with the deeper aspect of God's saving grace wherein He justifies the sinner. Forgiveness cancels every debt before God, but justification declares the sinner to be forever judicially righteous in the eyes of God. One is subtraction, the other is addition; both are righteously made

possible through the Cross.

Of the various divine undertakings in the salvation of a sinner, some are acts of divine justice, and some are acts of the immediate, superabounding grace of God. Those acts which deal with human unworthiness and sin are acts of justice. These include forgiveness, justification, death to the law, freedom from the law, and the whole new creation. All this is made possible through the Cross of Christ and, therefore, is not accomplished by an act of immediate grace. On the other hand, those aspects of salvation wherein God is revealed as imparting and bestowing His benefits are said to be immediate acts of grace. These include the gift of eternal life, the imputed righteousness of God, and every spiritual blessing. Limitless grace is seen in the love of God which provided the Cross; but when that Cross is provided, every saving act that is based upon it becomes an act of justice, rather than an act of immediate grace. "That he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

G. Grace Does Not Appear in the Immediate Divine Dealings with the Sins of the Saved

The divine dealings with the sins of the saved are similar to the divine dealings with the sins of the unsaved in one particular, namely, what God does in either case is done on the ground of the Cross of Christ. By that Cross all sin, whether it be that of saint or sinner, has been righteously judged, and the ransom price, which satisfies every demand of infinite holiness, has been paid.

By His death, Christ provided the sufficient ground for both the salvation of the unsaved, and the restoration of the saved. It is because of what has already been accomplished in the Cross concerning the sin of the world, that the unregenerate are freely forgiven and justified. This is a part of God's saving grace, and is wrought on the sole condition that they believe, while the regenerate are forgiven and cleansed on the sole condition that they confess.

These two requirements indicated by these two words, it will be noted, are wholly different. The human obligation as represented by each word is exactly adapted in each case to the precise relationships which, on the one hand, exist between God and the unsaved, and, the unsaved in this on the other hand, exist between God and the saved.

The salvation of the sinner is into union with God;

the restoration of the saint is into communion with God.

Believing and confessing are two widely differing human conditions, or obligations, and should never be confused or interchanged. The lost are never saved by confessing, and the saved are never restored by believing.

That there is no greater demand imposed upon the unsaved than that he believe, and no greater demand imposed upon the saved than that he confess, is due to that which Christ accomplished on the Cross. He wrought in behalf of sinner and saint in bearing the sin of the world, and every requirement of infinite justice is met for all in the finished work of Christ.

In the one case, there is nothing left to be done but to believe; in the other case, there is nothing left to be done but to confess.

The revealed attitude of God toward all men is that of grace alone. Therefore He does not need to be coaxed or persuaded. With His hand outstretched to bestow all that His grace can offer, it is highly

inconsistent to plead with Him to be gracious, or to coax Him to be good. By the unvarying teaching of God's Word, and by the inexorable logic of the accomplished value of the Cross, the forgiveness and blessing of God to the unsaved is conditioned upon believing, and to the saved it is conditioned upon confessing.

First John 1:1-2:2 is the central passage in the Bible wherein the divine method of dealing with the sins of Christians is stated. A portion of this most important passage is as follows: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.... My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not [be not sinning]. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

According to this Scripture, four vital elements enter into that divine forgiving and cleansing which constitutes the restoration of a sinning saint:

- (1) Confession is the one and only condition on the human side;
- (2) Absolute forgiveness and cleansing is promised on the divine side;
- (3) The Christian, while sinning, has been safe as to divine condemnation, because of his Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and
- (4) Divine forgiveness and cleansing is exercised toward the believer in unchallenged faithfulness and justice because Christ is "the propitiation for our sins."

In this transaction, as it is thus disclosed, the believer makes no disposition of his own sin; that has been made for him. So, also, the Advocate makes no excuses for the sinning Christian, nor does He plead for the clemency of the Father in behalf of the believer who has sinned. The Advocate presents the sufficiency of His own blood to meet the condemnation of every sin. The Father does not act in gracious kindness when forgiving and cleansing the believer; He acts in strict faithfulness to His covenant and promise of eternal keeping, and in strict justice because of the shed blood. Such is the unchanging value of the propitiation which Christ made in His blood.

It should also be noted that, according to this revelation, the sinning saint is never before any tribunal other than that of his own Father.

The eternal relationship between the Father and His child can never be set aside. The Father may correct and chasten His erring child (1 Cor. 11:31-32; Heb. 12:3-15), and through confession the child may be restored to the place of fellowship, but all of this is wholly within the inner circle of the family and household of God. Condemnation, which would expel the child from the place of a son, is forever past. Nor does the sinning Christian draw on the mercy and favor of God when he is restored to fellowship in the household of God. How easily mercy and favor might be exhausted and overdrawn.

On the contrary, the Christian, sheltered under the blood of propitiation, and standing in the merit of his Advocate, is on a basis where no past offenses have accumulated against him, for he is cleansed and forgiven under the legal justice of the Father. The justice of God is made possible and is righteously demanded in view of the shed blood of His own Son.

Let it not be supposed that this divine plan of restoration of the child of God to the Father's fellowship will react in an attitude of carelessness on the part of the Christian.

The sufficient answer to this challenge is threefold:

(1) True confession is the expression of a very real repentance, or change of mind, which turns from the sin. This is the exact opposite of becoming accustomed to the sin, or becoming careless with regard to it.

(2) This very revelation is given, we are told, not to encourage, or license us to sin, but rather that "ye sin not" (be not sinning). According to the Scriptures and according to human experience, the believer's safety in the faithfulness and justice of the Father and the advocacy and propitiation of the Son, is the greatest incentive for a holy life. It is clearly revealed that God has, by other and sufficient means, guarded against all careless sinning on the part of those whom He has eternally saved through the merit of His Son. And

(3) God can righteously deal with sin in no other way than through the absolute value of the blood of His Son; but when sin has been laid on the substitute, it can never be laid back on the sinner, or on any other. In the cross of CHRIST, the question of a possible condemnation because of sin is adjusted forever. Mercy and grace can never be commingled with divine justice. Boundless grace is disclosed in the provision of a perfect propitiation for the sins of the believer, but the application of the propitiation is never gracious; it is none other than the faithfulness and justice of the Father. Therefore grace does not appear in the forgiving and cleansing of the Christian's sins.

Restatement

It may be concluded that the word grace, as used in the Bible in relation to divine salvation, represents the uncompromised, unrestricted, unrecompensed, loving favor of God toward sinners. It is an unearned blessing. It is a gratuity. God is absolutely untrammled and unshackled in expressing His infinite love by His infinite grace

(1) through the death of His Lamb by whom every limitation which human sin could impose has been dispelled,

(2) through the provision which offers salvation as a gift by which human obligation has been forever dismissed, and

(3) through the divine decree by which human merit has been forever deposed. Grace is the limitless, unrestrained love of God for the lost, acting in full compliance with the exact and unchangeable demands of His own righteousness through the sacrificial death of Christ.

Grace is more than love; it is love set absolutely free and made to be a triumphant victor over the righteous judgment of God against the sinner.

Having examined into the meaning of the word grace, the threefold divine ministry and undertaking in grace should be considered. It will be observed that:

I. God saves sinners by grace.

II. God keeps through grace those who are saved.

III. God teaches in grace those who are saved and kept how they should live, and how they may live to His eternal glory.

* Under grace, the salvation of a sinner is declared in about 115 passages to depend only on believing, and in about 35 passages to depend on faith, which is but a synonym of believing. The Scripture everywhere harmonizes with this overwhelming body of truth. Without due consideration of the precise bearing of this revelation on the doctrine of grace, zealous workers have proposed to add certain conditions to the plan of salvation other than believing.

(1) It is not, "believe and pray." In view of His grace, it is in no wise necessary, or fitting, to implore GOD to save.

(2) It is not "believe and confess sin," Confession of sin, which is the one condition upon which a saint may be restored to fellowship, is never imposed on the unsaved. Confession is foreign to the ground on which they stand.

(3) It is not "believe and confess CHRIST before men." This condition, though imposed in the kingdom teachings of CHRIST (Matthew 10:32), is not, and could not be, a condition of salvation under grace. Romans 10:9 is given its final order and force in verse 10. There confession is seen to be the expression of salvation which has been received by believing. It is primarily the voice of the new-born babe in CHRIST speaking to its Father,- "Abba Father." Multitudes have been saved who were deprived of any opportunity of a public confession.

(4) It is not "believe and be baptized." Mark 16:16 is the one instance in Scripture where these two conditions are linked together. The omission of the word baptized from the negative statement, "he that believeth not shall be damned," is evidence that baptism is not the essential condition in the positive statement.

(5) It is not "believe and repent." About six times these two conditions are thus joined in the Scriptures which are addressed to the unsaved in this dispensation, and for obvious reasons. Over against this, it should be considered that believe, or faith, is used, apart from the word repentance, no less than 150 times; the Gospel by John which was written that men might be saved, does not use repentance in any form of the word; and the Book of Romans, which was written to unfold the whole doctrine of salvation, like the Gospel by John, does not once condition salvation on repentance, or anything other than believing. Repentance, which means "a change of mind," is never excluded from the terms of salvation; it is included as an essential part of believing. There is no Scriptural warrant for the grace confusing practice of some who insist that repentance and believing are separate obligations to be imposed on the unsaved. It is impossible for a person to believe who does not repent. In believing, he will experience that change of mind which turns from all else unto CHRIST as the Object of trust. Measureless harm has been done to souls when it has been taught that a self-imposed repentance must precede faith in CHRIST. Such insistence ignores every vital aspect of saving grace.

Saving faith is more than a belief in historical facts concerning CHRIST; it is to rely on CHRIST, to depend on His saving grace, and to receive Him; it is to believe the record GOD has given concerning His Son. In preaching the Gospel, emphasis should not fall on the mere human act of believing; it should fall, rather, on the precise message which is to be believed.

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