

# **God Does Not Accept Sinners “As They Are”**

*Sinners Must “Do Something To Be Saved”!*

Jesse Morrell

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch though in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”  
2Timothy 4:3-5

Many have turned away from sound doctrine, seeking fables that gratify themselves. Our holy Christianity is being replaced with a sinning Christendom. The marvelous transformation of heart and life is being replaced with a make believe covering of present and future sins. This false gospel leaves men comfortable in their sin, with an imaginary forgiveness, rather than calls me to leave their sin, making it possible for actual forgiveness.

It is with great zeal and urgency that we must seek to recover the lost gospel of repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ. It is with great anguish of heart and painfulness of soul that I perceive our most precious gospel under vicious fire, as many centuries of false and dangerous theology has paved the way to a complete denial of the call of the true gospel.

## **TODAYS DANGERS OF A FALSE GOD WITH A FALSE GOSPEL**

Today, many friendly, popular, big name preachers are just plain old fashion liars. The worst of lies can come from those who appear to be the best of men. In this era of apostasy, as in the former days of darkness, the worst of men are considered the best of men, while the best of men are considered to be the worst of men. These itching ear preachers exchange the truth of God for a lie and appeal to the sinful desires of men - easing the consciences of those yet in their sin, by declaring that God accepts them “as they are” and that they must not do anything in order to be saved.

My bible shows me that the preachers that the multitudes accept are the preachers the God Himself rejects, and the preachers that the multitudes reject are the preachers that God Himself accepts. The same preachers who declare to sinners, “God accepts you as you are” are the same preachers that God does not accept as they are. The same preachers who declare, “You cannot do anything to be saved” are the same preachers who are not doing what they must do in order to be saved!

God’s preachers are almost never popular and accepted, because we live in a sinful world with a backslidden Church. God’s preachers are often thrust out of the synagogues and locked up in the prisons. Those with an intolerant message towards sin, from a God who

is intolerant of sin, will not be tolerated by those who want to remain in their sin! Religious sinners always consider preachers of repentance and holiness as “unsound” and “unorthodox”, even as “heretics”. Religious sinners crying out, “crucify him! Crucify him!” when they hear a “preacher of righteousness” (2Pet 2:5) cry out “Repent! Repent!”

“Thus says the Lord of host, hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophecy unto you; they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, ye shall have peace; and they say unto everyone that walks after the imagination of his own heart, no evil shall come upon you. For who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his word? Who hath marked his word, and heard it?” Jeremiah 23:16-18

A false teacher will tell God’s enemies that God is at peace with them; telling sinners that God does not see their sin (Heb 4:13, Jeremiah 23:24) and that their sin will not harm them. (Isaiah 48:22, Isaiah 57:21)

“I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.” Jeremiah 23:21-22

A true prophet will tell God’s enemies that they must turn from their sin; a true prophet is a preacher of repentance and holiness, a preacher of righteousness, not an excuser of sinfulness and backslidings! Those who stand in God’s counsel will know God, and will not misrepresent God or His requirements, but will tell sinners exactly what God wants them to do in order to be saved.

The true word of God is sharper than a “double edged sword” (Heb 4:12), being as a burning “fire”, or as a “hammer breaking” into pieces hard hearts (Jer 23:29), but the words of false prophets are “lightness” (Jer 23:32) and “fair speeches” that are deceptive and destructive (Rom 16:18), with their messages of “peace, peace” for the wicked. (Isaiah 48:22, 57:21)

All over Christian radio, Christian TV; in Christian magazines and Christian books; from pulpits all over Christian Churches; from podiums in Christian Seminaries and Christian Colleges, false – fable – fairy tales are being preached about a false – fable – fairy tale god! This demonic god, this sin accepting god, this mamby pampy, soft, sin-overlooking god, with a soul destroying gospel, accepts all sinners as they are - not requiring of them anything in order to be saved! Some have gone even further by saying that it is not only acceptable to God for sinners to have sin in their lives, but that it is also accepted to God for Christians to have sin in their lives! This god is lawless; this gospel is the old dreadful heresy of antinomianism! And it’s poisoning the veins of the Church at an increasingly ramped rate, killing the holy spiritual life of the body!

The God of the bible does not tolerate sin. God’s problem with mankind is that mankind

has been at war with His Sovereign Will of holiness and righteousness by being disobedient and wicked. A rebellion against the Sovereign Will of God is what the fall and sinfulness of man is. To deny a rebellion against God's Sovereign Will is a denial of the fall and sinfulness of man, or is the blasphemy that God Sovereign Will is for men to sin and to do evil, but such a god is not the Holy God of the bible. The actual, real, and genuine Sovereign Will of God is that sinners, "sin no more" (John 5:14, John 8:11, Eph 4:28) And sinners resist and reject this Will, being at war with and rebellion against the Sovereign of the Universe, despising and trampling under foot God's holy and good plan for their life (Matthew 23:37, Luke 7:30), which holiness and godliness is the very purpose for their existence! (Eph 1:4)

### **GOD DOES NOT ACCEPT SINNERS AS THEY ARE!**

Nothing can be a more false message, a greater distortion of God, then telling sinners that, "God accepts you as you are" and that "sinners must not do anything to be saved". That is simply not true! That's a lie! Jesus did not preach such a god and such a gospel! Jesus said a man must be born again to be acceptable unto God! (John 3:3). Jesus said a sinner must repent or else he would perish! (Luke 13:3) Jesus said only the pure in heart, not the sinful in heart, would see God! (Matt 5:8) Peter did not preach a sinner-accepting-god! Peter said that God resists the proud! Peter said God accepts only the humble! (1Peter 5:5-6) The proud must humble themselves to be accepted by God. Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation" only to "them that obey Him"! (Heb 5:9)

"God accepts you as you are" sinners are told. God accepts who as they are? Does God accept everybody as they are? Does God accept sinners as they are? What does God accept them into? Where does God accept them into? Does God accept them into His family? Never! Not unless they keep His commandments. (1John 3:10) Does God accept them into His Kingdom? Never! Not until they are born again. (John 3:3) Does God accept them into Heaven? Never! Not unless they cease from all their sinning and rebelling in this life. (Rev 22:15) The only thing that God accepts from a sinner is true and total repentance, the complete renunciation of all sin and rebellion. And until then, nothing a sinner does is acceptable, and a sinner is not accepted anywhere except into hell-fire.

If God accepts you as you are, and you must not do anything to be saved, remain a drunkard or a fornicator, remain a whore or a whoremonger, remain a sodomite or a homosexual, remain a transgressor and a sinner, remain a failure and a loser if God accepts you as you are, for there is no reason for you to change. But this is as unbiblical as possibly conceivable: 1Cor 6:9-10, Gal 5:19-21, Rev 21:8. We know that "every transgression and disobedience will receive a just penalty" (Heb 2:2) for those who "neglect so great salvation". (Heb 2:3)

You cannot be a Christian drug dealer, a Christian murderer, a Christian adulterer, a Christian bank robber, etc; you cannot be a "carnal Christian" or a "sinning saint". Only Christ-like Christians are in fact Christians, those who name the name of Christ by calling themselves Christians, who actually depart from iniquity, that is, actually turn

from sin. (2Tim 2:19) Christians must love righteousness and hate iniquity! (Heb 1:9) Christians “keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” (1John 3:22)

Irrefutable Scripture tells us, “He that says, I know him, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” (1John 2:4) “We know that whosoever is born of God sins not; but he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and the wicked one touches him not.” (1John 5:18) And, “He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifest, that he might destroy the work of the devil.” (1John 3:8) And, “Whosoever abides in him does not sin: for whosoever sins has not seen him, neither known him.” (1John 3:6) And, “Whosoever transgresses, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.” (2John 1:9)

(( All this is not to say that a Christian may not temporarily fall into sin, or is not capable of backsliding completely. Since the human will is free and contingent, man’s moral character must also be free and contingent, able to change from righteous to evil or evil to righteous at any moment. A Christian, though dead to sin, still has the capacity of sinning, and of backsliding completely and forever, but he must repent or else he will perish.

Some new converts may strongly struggle with sin and backsliding, some more than others depending on their back rounds. They will need to be encouraged to “continue in the faith” (Acts 14:22) and to “continue in the grace of God”. (Acts 13:43) Some disciples have backslidden completely and followed Christ no more. (John 6:66)

Paul told Christians, “For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.” (Romans 8:13) And again Paul told Christians, “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” (Heb 3:14) Paul warned the brethren, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.” (Heb 3:12) And again Paul speaks of the punishment of a Christian who falls from sanctification, “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb 10:29) James says, “For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” (2Pet 2:21) And James speaks of Christians, “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that ye which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” (James 5:19-20) The only way one of the Brethren, that becomes a backslider, can escape the death of his soul, is by being reconverted unto obedience to Christ. For Jesus told His disciples, that only repented sins were forgivable sins. (Luke 13:3) ))

But it is the preaching of an all accepting god that has filled our Churches with fornicators, homosexuals, drunkards, sodomites, liars, thieves, backsliders, and all sorts

of wickedness and ungodliness. Sinners fill the pews and backsliders occupy the pulpits. God's house, which is to be a house of prayer, with holy men lifting up holy hands (1Tim 2:8), has turned into a den of sinners!! (Matt 21:13, Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46) While our Church buildings may be full of sin, there can be no sin in God, and those in Him can have no sin, for God takes away our sin! (1John 3:5)

But who is to blame for this darkness and deception within Christendom? Those whom Christ has left as the light of the world are to blame (Matt 5:14), the preachers and true Christians are to blame for not taking a bold and public stand against this false god and this false gospel!

Does this scripture describe a God who accepts everyone as they are? "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air, for I repent of making them." Genesis 6:5-7

Does this sound like the preaching of a God who does not require from sinners anything in order to be saved from his wrath? "Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent himself of the evil that he hath pronounced against you." Jeremiah 26:13

And again, "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced destruction, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it does evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them. Now therefore go to speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus says the Lord; behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a devise against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good." Jeremiah 18:8-11

Gospel preachers are not the brothers or cousins of secular motivational speakers; we come from a different family all together. Gospel preachers are the descendants of the Hebrew prophets, and I pray we learn from our elders.

It's clear as daylight that sinners have no problem with preachers preaching the Savior hood of Christ. It is not the Savior sinners are in rebellion against. It's the Sovereignty of God that sinners are at war with, that is, it's the Lordship of Christ that sinners are rebelling against! And it is this war, this rebellion, that must cease before pardon and forgiveness can be mercifully and graciously extended by God. (Acts 2:38)

## **THE "JUST BELIEVE" DECEPTION**

The gospel is not merely to be assented to, or intellectually affirmed; but the true gospel requires heart obedience – heart submission – heart surrender (Rom 6:17, Rom 10:16, Phil 2:12, 1Pet 1:22), and those who do not "obey the gospel" will be destroyed when

Christ returns. (Rom 2:8, Gal 3:1, Gal 5:7, 2Thes 1:8, 1Pet 4:17) The truth is not only to be believed, but the truth is to be walked in! (2John 1:4) And those who do not walk in the truth, “do not the truth” (1John 1:6), for the truth is not merely to be believed, but it is to be done! Disobedience has always been the problem that our Sovereign has with rebels, and obedience is what the true gospel requires of sinners.

“Just believe! Just believe!” cries the false gospel of “easy believism”. “Romans 10:9! Romans 10:9” is their constant cry. But if these sinners would read on, to Romans 10:10, they would see that it is only those who “believe unto righteousness” that shall be saved. For no one can “believe in your heart” without “believing unto righteousness”!

We must preach the Kingdom, or Government of God! (Luke 4:43, Luke 9:2, Luke 9:60) We must preach the “gospel of the Kingdom”, or the gospel of God’s Government! (Matt 4:23, Matt 9:35, Matt 24:14, Mark 1:14) And in this Kingdom there is a King (1Tim 6:15, Heb 7:1, Rev 17:14, Rev 19:16), and this King sent His son to die for his rebellious citizens (John 3:16, Luke 20:13), that those who cease their rebellion (Isaiah 1:16), putting an end to their sinning (Luke 13:3), may have gracious pardon and mercy given unto them for all of their past sins (Rom 3:24-26), being washed from all their old sins (2Pet 1:9), that they may be restored into a right relationship with their Sovereign whom they have been rebelling against! (Heb 8:12, Heb 10:17) That is our most glorious, most precious, most beautiful gospel given unto us in the Holy Scriptures, which God wants to reach all sinners with (Matt 28:19-20, Mark 16:15), using men full of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8), speaking as the very oracles of God! (1Pet 4:11)

But the theologians and preachers of today are saying that, “sinners must not do anything to be saved”. They are liars that know nothing about the gospel. To save their precious theologies, they do away with the foundations of the faith! The foundation of the faith, the first principles of Christ’s doctrine, is repentance and faith the bible tells us! (Heb 6:1)

The devil wants us to believe that we are to tell sinners to do nothing, so then all evangelism is abruptly halted! If sinners are not responsible to do anything, then evangelists and preachers will not tell sinners, as John Baptist publicly cried – as Jesus Christ publicly yelled – and as the Apostles publicly declared, “Repent ye and believe the gospel!” (Mark 1:15) We are not suppose to go everywhere preaching that men are to do nothing, but we are to go everywhere preaching that men are to repent! (Mark 6:12) We are to testify to all, not that they are to do nothing towards God and are to do nothing towards Jesus Christ, but that they are to repent towards God and put their faith in Jesus Christ! (Acts 20:21)

George Otis Jr. said in his book, “God’s Trademarks”, “we are told there is no real cost involved in spiritual conversion. What are we to think when Jesus is presented as our servant rather than our Lord? When ministers highlight all that appeals to our self-interest, is it any surprise that our thoughts center on the question, ‘How do I come out?’ Does not this render salvation itself a purely selfish concept?” Pg 139.

And it's true, Savior hood without Lordship is a selfish gospel; Jesus represented as your servant rather than as your Lord and Sovereign is a heretical and grievous error! Yet it is often represented as a heretical and grievous error the other way around! But we must present the Sovereignty of God in conversion! That is, we must declare the requirement of the Lordship of Christ in salvation!

The brilliant revivalists and theologian of the seventeenth century, John Fletcher, in his classic "Checks to Antinomianism", said in his most sarcastic manner, "But if the Son of God be a heretic for putting the unbelieving Jews upon working... St Paul is undoubtedly an arch-heretic for corroborating it by a strong preposition... he says to the Philippians, work out – and what is most astonishing, 'work out your salvation.' Your own salvation! Why, Paul, this is even worst... Ah! Poor legal apostle, what a pity it is thou didst not live in our evangelical age! Some, by explaining to thee the mystery of a 'finished salvation,' or by 'protesting... against thy dreadful heresy,' might have saved 'the fundamental doctrines of Christianity:' pg 32

Again Fletcher humorously says, "We have received it as a maxim that a man is to do nothing for justification. Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favor with God, should 'cease from evil, and learn to do well.' 'Whoever repents, should do works meet for repentance.' And if this be not in order to find favor, what does he do them for?... The express declarations of God's word: - 'To him that ordereth his conversion aright will I show the salvation of God.' Is 'ordering our conversation aright' doing nothing? 'Repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.' Are 'repentance and conversion' nothing? 'Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' I will justify you. Is 'coming' doing nothing? 'Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Come now, let us reason together, and though your sins be read as crimson they shall be white as snow' you shall be justified. Is 'ceasing to do evil and learning to do well' doing nothing? 'Seek the Lord while he may be found, call 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.' Is 'seeking, calling, forsaking one's way, and returning to the Lord,' a mere nothing? 'Ask, and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock, and it will be open unto you.' Be 'violent, take even the kingdom by force.' Is 'seeking, asking, knocking, and taking by force' doing absolutely nothing? Please to answer these questions; and when you have done, I will throw one or two hundred more of the like kind your way." Pg 35

## **WHAT MUST SINNERS DO TO BE SAVED?**

"What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Matt 19:16, Mark 10:17, Luke 3:10, Luke 3:12, Luke 3:14, Luke 10:25, Luke 18:18, John 6:28-29, Acts 2:37, Acts 16:30)

When Jesus was asked, "what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Matt 19:16, Mark 10:17, Luke 10:25, Luke 18:18) Did Jesus respond by saying, "Nothing! You cannot do anything good to be saved!" No! In the multiple of times that Jesus was

asked this eternally important question that was never His answer. Jesus responded with, “thou shalt not... thou shalt not... thou shalt not...” (Matt 19:18-19, Mark 10:19, Luke 10:26, Luke 18:20) “Do this and ye shall live.” (Luke 10:28) Jesus did not say, “do nothing” but rather said “do this”!

And this is the crux or the core of the problem that God our Sovereign has with fallen mankind! They have rejected His Sovereign decrees of “thou shalt not”! Sinners do not want the Sovereign Lord to reign over them (Luke 19:14, Luke 19:27), they reject the eternal counsel of God for their own salvation! (Luke 7:30, Luke 13:34) And this problem must be remedied before pardon can be extended.

“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 55:7

But the answer of our perfect Lord, as to what a sinner “must do” in order to be saved, is the essence of true repentance! Repentance is to turn away from sin, to cease from sinning, to no longer do what God has declared “thou shalt not” do. Repentance is to “Forsake” and to “return”. That is repentance, and that is what Jesus told a sinner he “must do” if he wanted to live. Because unless a man repents, the blood of Jesus Christ cannot cover him! (Heb 10:26-31) If “thou shalt not” does not teach the essence of true repentance then it doesn’t teach anything at all!

Jesus was asked, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” What did He say? “Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” (John 6:28-29) Without men doing this work, this work of believing upon the Son that God sent, men cannot be saved! (John 3:18) No man can be justified without the work of repenting and believing. (James 2:21-25) These works do not merit or earn salvation, so we are not saved “by them”, since nobody is saved by works (1Tim 1:9, Titus 3:5), but these works are necessary and are required for salvation, so that we are not saved “without them”. Nobody can be saved who does not keep God’s commandments, “and this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.” (1John 3:23)

When John the Baptist preached hell-fire, men cried out, “what shall we do” (Luke 3:10, Luke 3:12, Luke 3:14) he told them to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance! He did not say, “You must not do anything!” But rather John the Baptist preached, “Every tree therefore that does not bring forth good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire!” (Luke 3:9) He told sinners exactly what they need to do! (Luke 3:9-14)

When Peter was asked, “what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37) Peter did not say “Make sure that you do nothing!” Rather, Peter said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” (Acts 2:38) And he continued to exhort them to, “Save yourselves from this perverse generation!” (Acts 2:40) This is a far cry from a passive “easy-believism”, or a “do-nothing-to-get-saved” type message.

When Paul was asked, “what must I do to be saved” (Acts 16:30) did Paul respond with, “You cannot do anything to be saved! It’s heresy to assume you must do something to be saved. Make sure that you do nothing!” That is not what the inspired Apostle said. Paul said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou will be saved.” (Acts 16:31) He did not say believe on the Savior Jesus Christ, but the Lord Jesus Christ!

God tells us that not everyone who declares Jesus as Lord will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but those who actually do the will of the Sovereign! (Matthew 7:21-22, Luke 6:46) Christ’s family consists of those who “hear the Word of God, and do it.” (Luke 8:21) God requires that we be “hearers of the word” and also “a doer” of it! (James 1:23) It is only “he that does the will of God” that “abides forever” (1John 2:17) “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that does righteousness is born of him” (1John 2:29) And again we are warned to “let no” preacher or theologian “deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.” (1John 3:7)

Why was John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the Apostle Peter, and the Apostle Paul so successful in winning souls? Because they told sinners what they needed to do in order to be saved. And why were men like George Fox, John Wesley, William Booth, Charles Finney, and other giants of the faith such amazing soul winners? Because they knew the true gospel and the true God! And they told sinners what they needed to do in order to be saved! And why were so many other Christians and “theologians” so pathetic when it came to soul winning? Why did sinners not do anything under their sermons? Because their sermons told them to do nothing! If you tell sinners to do nothing, don’t be surprised if they do nothing!

## **THE GROUND OF CONDITIONAL SALVATION**

The ground of salvation is the reason for salvation, which is God’s mercy and grace made possible through the loving sacrifice of Christ’s blood. (Eph 2:8-9) But the conditions for salvation are the terms of salvation, without which salvation cannot occur; which conditions consist of repentance (Luke 13:3), faith (Heb 11:6), and perseverance (Mark 13:13). Nobody is saved because they repent, believe, and persevere (as though these were the ground or reason for justification) but rather those that are saved are saved by God’s gracious mercy and not their own running or willing (Rom 9:16). But none can be saved who do not repent, believe, and persevere; for God’s gracious mercy is extended only to the faithful and repentant, to those who meet the terms and conditions. Repentance and faith are the undeniable conditions of salvation – salvation cannot occur “without” these; but these are not the ground of salvation – salvation does not occur “because of” these.

While running does not save you (Rom 9:16), nobody can be saved who does not run lawfully. (1Cor 9:24-27) God saves (elects, chooses) only those who repent and believe, and finally saves (elects, chooses) only those who persevere unto the end.

Sinners cannot save themselves, i.e. through their own works or goodness; but men must do something, i.e. repent and believe, in order for Jesus to be able to save them!! Sinners

can never earn, merit, or deserve salvation; but all sinners must receive salvation in order to be saved! It is not our own works that pardon us, nor our own wills that pardon us, but it is God's grace and mercy that pardons us. It is God who justifies (Rom 8:33) but who does He justify? Those who repent and believe! Sinners cannot pardon their own crimes, only God can. But criminals in God's government must first meet the conditions of pardon before God is willing or able to extend pardon to all of their past crimes, before God is willing to choose to forgive them and restore them.

So the ground of the conditional salvation that God offers is His grace and mercy through the cross, but the conditions of that salvation is repentance, faith, and perseverance.

Without Jesus Christ nobody can be saved or have forgiveness. (John 14:6, 1John 5:12) And it is our sin that separates us from God. (Isaiah 59:2) Therefore the one who has come to Jesus Christ, who is now reconciled unto God, must have left his sin behind! Jesus saves us from sin, not merely from the guilt of sin and the consequence of sin, but from the sin itself! (Matt 1:21) And nobody can come to God accept through Christ! (1John 1:5) All those who are forgiven – pardoned – justified – or saved, those who are reconciled, are those who have repented and believed, for God only forgives – pardons – justifies – or saves those who repent and believe.

Without repentance there can be no reconciliation, for it is the sin that causes the separation. You cannot have separation and reconciliation at the same time. If sin causes the separation, in order for reconciliation to come then the sin needs to go! Men need to choose either the Savior or their sin; they need to choose separation through sin or reconciliation through Christ, for they cannot have both!

### **THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION WITHOUT REPENTANCE!**

Repentance from sin must come prior to justification (Luke 13:3), or else God justifies the wicked! But he that justifies the wicked is an abomination! (Prov 17:15). Such a god, who justifies without repentance, is an abomination; but our Holy and Just God only justifies the repentant! The impenitent are never justified while in a state of impenitence, but are rather storing up wrath because of their utter refusal to come to Jesus, because of their voluntary hardness and willful impenitence! (Rom 2:5)

In his 1886 edition of, "Bible Salvation and Popular Religion Contrasted," the Methodist Rev. A. Sims wrote, "True repentance implies a knowledge of sin – sorrow for sin, and confession of it. But its chief characteristic is a turning from sin – from all sin – a turning to God. The person who truly repents, forsakes sin with abhorrence. Every darling idol is cast aside – unsaved associates, bad habits, the cup, the pipe, dishonest dealing, swearing, joking, Sabbath breaking, deceptive language, and the fashions of the world – all are given up. Yes, gospel repentance stops a man from sinning." Pg 98

Again he wrote, "The conditions of salvation are plainly stated to be, 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.'...Repentance is... necessary to pardon. This is a fact logically, scripturally, and morally...Because, as faith is absolutely indispensable to

pardon, and as faith cannot be exercised without repentance, he therefore, who does not repent, cannot be forgiven.” Pg 99

“Godly sorrow” leads to “repentance to salvation”. (2Cor 7:10) And this godly sorrow that leads to repentance unto salvation is marked by definite characteristics: “carefulness”, a “clearing of yourselves”, “indignation”, “fear”, “vehement desire”, “zeal” and “revenge!” (2Cor 7:11) This and only this proves true sorrow and true repentance.

In his 1924 edition of, “The Plan of Salvation”, the Baptist minister Austin Couch said, “The two conditions of salvation are internal and not external acts or performances. The two conditions are repentance and faith...These are the two conditions, and there is nothing else. Well have they been called inseparable graces. If one repents toward God, he will surely exercise faith towards Jesus Christ. If one has exercised faith in Jesus Christ, then it is true that he has also repented of his sins.” Pg 74-75

Repentance requires faith, and faith requires repentances, so that one can never exist without the other! Justification without repentance is just as much a fable dream as justification without faith, for both are a vain fantasy, a delusional dream, that will never come to fruition. And these empty dreams leave many spiritually empty, without the blessed salvation of God, without the precious forgiveness of sins!

In her “Papers on Godliness” 1881 edition, Catherine Booth said that “repentance” is an “indispensable condition of salvation” pg 92. To clarify this condition Catherine said, “What is repentance? Repentance is simply renouncing sin - turning round from darkness to light - from the power of Satan unto God. This is giving up sin in your heart, in purpose, in intention, in desire, resolving that you will give up every evil thing, and do it now” pg 94-95

Infallible Inspiration tells us that it is not hearers of the law, but the doers of the law that shall be justified! (Romans 2:13) That is to say, only those who repent can be justified by God’s grace through faith in Christ’s blood, being justified by working faith or by a faith that repents! (James 2:20-24) Faith requires repentances and repentances require faith. Repentance without faith is not repentance; faith without repentance is not faith; there is an interdependent relationship which is inseparable between true faith and true repentance.

True faith never results in being overcome by the world, being left in sin, but in overcoming the world, having victory over sin! “For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1John 5:4-5) Where there is no overcoming victory there is no faith, but where there is faith there must be overcoming victory.

We are commanded to “add to your faith virtue” (2Pet 1:5) with “diligence” (2Pet 1:10). And “if ye do” this (2Pet 1:10) you “make your calling and election sure”. (1Pet 1:10)

For God only elects, or chooses to save those who repent, believe, and persevere unto the end.

We are to never cease in “labors of love” and in “works of faith” (1Thes 1:3, Heb 6:10). Love and faith must accompany one another! (Eph 6:23, 1Tim 1:14, 2Tim 1:13) Faith in the Lord must result in love towards others! (Eph 1:15, Eph 3:17, Col 1:4, Phm 1:5) And if we love one another, we will not sin against one another, (Rom 13:11) for love is the fulfillment of the law. (Rom 13:8, Gal 6:14, James 2:8, 1Tim 1:5) We must be “perfect in love” (1John 4:17-18) and if we are not then we cannot have “boldness in the Day of Judgment.” (1John 4:17) The one who has a “perfect heart (1Kings 8:61, 1Kings 11:4, 1Kings 15:3, 1Kings 15:14, 2Kings 20:3, 1Chron 12:38, 1Chron 28:9, 1Chron 29:9, 2Chron 15:17, 2Chron 16:9, 2Chron 19:9, 2Chron 25:2, Ps 101:2, Isaiah 38:3) is one who has no intention to sin, no plans on sinning, but has been perfected in love. It is only those who are “pure in heart” that “shall see God” and will “ascend the hill of the Lord”. (Ps 24:3-5, Matt 5:8)

### **WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE?**

God wants everyone to be saved. (Eze 33:11, 2Pet 3:9) And Jesus Christ died on the cross for all, so that everyone could have the possibility of being saved (John 1:29, John 3:16, Rom 5:18, 2Cor 5:19, Heb 2:9, Col 1:20, 2Tim 2:4-6, 1John 2:22, 1John 4:15, 1Tim 4:10). What was God’s intention and purpose in the atonement? “The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” (1John 4:14) But man must repent and believe in order to be saved. The only thing that keeps men back from being saved is their own impenitence and unbelief, their own unwillingness! (Luke 13:34, John 5:40) God wants everyone to be saved, but He only saves those who meet the terms and conditions. God elects only those who repent and believe, for God cannot choose to forgive the unbelieving and the impenitent. God wills the salvation of all, but they must not reject God’s will for their own salvation! (Luke 7:30) It is their own unwillingness that hinders God from saving them and the blood from covering them, though God is willing and able to save. (Isaiah 59:1-2)

Sin and impenitence is not God’s fault, its man’s fault, for God wants all men to stop their sinning and rebellion and to be reconciled and forgiven. God wills is never that men should sin, but always that men should turn from sin, so that He can forgive their sin. Sin is always contrary to God’s will, always contrary to God’s Sovereign plan, and so sin and impenitence is always the fault of man’s free will, and never the fault of God’s Sovereign decrees, since His Sovereign decrees respecting sin consist in “thou shalt not”.

So then what is the difference between those who are saved and those who are damned? It is not the cross of Jesus Christ, for Jesus died for them all. And it is not the will of God, for God wants everyone to be saved. What then is the difference? Their difference is what they actually do, how they actually respond. The difference is that the former surrender their will to God, the latter rebel in their hearts against God! The former accept the terms and conditions of salvation, the latter refuse to submit and surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. The defining difference between the lost and the saved is that one “obeys the

gospel” from the heart; the other “obeys not the gospel” at all. (Rom 2:8, Rom 6:17, Rom 10:16, Gal 3:1, Gal 5:7, 2Thes 1:8, Phil 2:12, 1Pet 1:22, 1Pet 4:17) And so salvation is not grounded upon mans heart obedience to the gospel, but salvation is conditioned upon mans heart obedience to the gospel, and it is only their disobedience to the gospel – their voluntary impenitence, which hinders them from being saved and prevents their sins from being forgiven.

In his 1896 edition of, “The Gospel Preacher”, B. Franklin wrote, “Men must do something to be saved... The difference between the wise and the foolish was not that one class heard while the other did not, nor that one class believed while the other did not, but that one class did what was required in the teachings of Jesus, while the other did not. The whole matter turned on doing and not doing what the Lord commanded. The matter...turned on...doing or not doing the commandments of God... The Lord requires man to do something in order to be saved...Any theory that leads men and women to disobey God is wrong. Any theory that leads men and women to do nothing, when God has commanded them to do something, is sinful.” Pg 103-104, 106

God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). God does not command all men everywhere to do nothing, but commands all men everywhere to repent! And this is the message that we must preach, any other message is wrong and sinful.

## **THE FINISHED ATONEMENT OF CHRIST**

The finished work of Christ (John 17:4, John 19:30) has made it possible for the whole world to be saved, if the whole world repents, believes, and perseveres unto the end. Christ has finished His work in making salvation possible for every sinner that is in a state of probation; but now sinners must do their part by repenting, believing, and persevering unto the end. (Rev 22:17) The finished work of Christ saves only those who voluntarily repent, believe, and persevere unto the end, and cannot save anyone who does not. The finished work of Christ makes it possible for God to conditionally forgive all men; but the finished work of Christ does not make salvation automatic or unconditional for any man. The finished work of Christ only secures the salvation of those who repent, believe, and persevere.

In her 1887 edition of “Popular Christianity”, Catherine Booth said, “It is to be feared that thousands are looking to Him to save them from consequences of sin – that is, hell – who continue to commit sin; they utterly misunderstand the aim and work of the Christ of God. They do not see that He came not merely to bring men to heaven, but to bring them back into harmony with His Father; they look upon the atonement as a sort of make-shift plan by which they are to enter heaven, leaving their characters unchanged on earth. They forget that sin is a far greater evil in the Divine estimation than hell; they do not see that sin is the primal evil. If there were no sin there need be no hell. God only proposes to save people from the consequences of sin by saving them from sin itself; and this is the great distinguishing work of Christ – to save His people from their sins!” pg 22

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him.” (Titus 1:16)

The finished work of Christ makes it possible for repented sins to be forgiven; only repented sins are forgivable sins. Pardon of sin without repentance from sin is a license to sin, a license which our true and Holy God will never give, but only the preaching of a false and filthy god promises such a license.

So the finished work of Christ makes salvation possible to everyone, but without repentance and faith salvation is actual for none. Evangelism is vitally important after the cross, because while the possibility of salvation through the cross is finished, the actual salvation through the cross is not finished until sinners repent and believe. Salvation can now be offered to all because of the finished atonement, but salvation is not granted to any until they first turn from sin and trust in Christ.

### **THIS HEREDICAL DAY OF DARKNESS AND ERROR**

But this dark day of error and heresy was foretold, when false prophets and lying theologians would deny the Sovereignty or Lordship of Christ:

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their destructive ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” 2Pet 2:1-2

“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 1:4

Dying the Lordship of Christ is a “damnable heresy”! False prophets and lying theologians do not deny the “Savior that bought them” or “the only Savior God, and our Savior Jesus Christ”, but they deny the “Lord that bought them” and “the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. And “many” will follow this “destructive way” which will result with “the way of truth” being “evil spoken of”.

This is a deception, rooted in the sinful wills of men, that has made many preachers popular and wealthy, but keeps the souls of whoever believes such a false doctrine in condemnation. No sinner has ever been saved who did not first repent or turn away from all sin, ceasing the commission of transgression; neither scripture nor history can be used to show the justification of the wicked, but only the justification of the repentant. Impenitent men are always unsaved men, and can never become saved men, until they become repentant men. The white flag of surrender must first be waved by the rebels before the war between God and man can be ended. And the prisoners that the Lord takes captive become “servants of righteousness” (Rom 6:16-20), being “dead to sin” (Rom 6:2, 6:11); for true Christians are “free from sin” (Rom 6:18, Rom 6:20, Rom 6:22, Rom 8:2). “Jesus answered them, verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abides not in the house forever: but the Son abides

forever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:34-36)

Charles Kingsley wrote, in his 1897 edition of “True Repentance”, “You need neither book nor sermon to teach you those Ten Commandments which hang here over the communion table; all that books and tracts and sermons can do is to teach you how to keep those Commandments in spirit and in truth; but I am sure I have seen people read books, and run about to sermons, in order to enable them to forget those Ten Commandments; in order to find excuses for not keeping them and to find doctrines which tell them that, because Christ has done all, they need do nothing... Do you think your sins are washed away in Christ’s blood, when they are still, and you are committing them? Would they be there, and you doing them, if they were put away? Do you think that your sins can be put away out of God’s sight, if they are not even put out of your own sight? If you are doing wrong, and do you think that God will treat you as if you are doing right? Cannot God see in you what you see in yourselves? Do you think a man can be clothed in Christ’s righteousness at the very same time that he is clothed in his own unrighteousness? ... Be not deceived. God is not mocked. What a man sows, that shall he reap. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as Christ is righteous, and no one else.” Pg 9-11

Again Kingsley wrote, “There is full, free, and perfect forgiveness for every sin when we give it up. As soon as a man turns around, and, instead of doing wrong, tries to do right, he need be under no manner of fear or terror any more...But as long as a man does not give up his sins, the dark score does stand against him in God’s books; and no praying, or reading, or devoutness of any kind, will wipe it out; and as long as he sins he is still in his sins, and his sins will be his ruin. Whosoever tells him that they are whipped out, he, too, lies, and contradicts flatly God’s holy Word.” Pg 12

The great revivalists and theologian Charles Finney, in his 1868 edition of “Lectures on Revivals of Religion” wrote, “Tell the sinner to repent... Sinners should be told to believe the gospel... Tell the sinner to give his heart to God... Submit to God... confess and forsake your sins... Another proper direction would be ‘choose you this day whom you shall serve;” pg 488, 491, 492, 493, 494, 496.

Modern Christianity needs to receive this simple and sound advice, from a soul winner who had converted hundreds of thousands of souls; the vast majority of which converts persevered to the end of their lives. (True converts are not measured by how many people do nothing, but by how many people actually turn to God and stay saved)

Finney also said, in his 1851 edition of, “Lectures on Systematic Theology” that, “Repentance is... a condition of justification. Observe, I here also use the term condition, in the sense of a ‘not without which’ and not in the sense of a ‘that for the sake of which’ the sinner is justified. It must be certain that the government of God cannot pardon sin without repentance. This is as truly a doctrine of natural as well as revealed religion. It is self-evident that, until the sinner breaks off from sins by repentance or turning to God, he cannot be justified in any sense. This is everywhere assumed, implied, and taught in the

bible. No reader of the bible can call this into question.” Pg 466

Men must accept Jesus Christ in order to be justified and saved. To as many as first receive Christ - to them He gives the privilege to become the sons of God. (John 1:12) Receiving Christ is a prerequisite to become a child of God, to be transferred out of the family of the devil and into the family of God; but to receive Christ is to receive all of Christ – as both Savior and Lord. You cannot accept Jesus Christ in pieces. You must accept Jesus Christ in all of His offices! Christ must be accepted as Savior and Lord or else He cannot and will not save and forgive the sins of anyone.

The saintly A. W. Tozer said, in the 1969 “Gems from Tozer” publication, “Christ’s savior hood is forever united to His lordship. Christ must be Lord or He will not be Savior. To teach that Christ will use His sacred power to further our worldly interests is to wrong our Lord and injure our own souls. We modern evangelicals need to learn the truths of the sovereignty of God and the lordship of Christ. God will not play along with Adam; Christ will not be used by any of Adam’s selfish brood. We had better learn these things fast if this generation of young Christians is to be spared the supreme tragedy of following a Christ who is merely a Christ of convenience and not the true Lord of glory after all.” Pg 12

Again Tozer wrote, “Faith and morals are the two sides of the same coin. Indeed the very essence of faith is moral. Any professed faith in Christ as personal Savior that does not bring the life under plenary obedience to Christ as Lord is inadequate and must betray its victim at the last. The man that believes will obey. God gives faith to the obedient heart only. Where real repentance is, there is obedience. To escape the error of salvation by works we have fallen into the opposite error of salvation without obedience.” Pg 25

It is just as heretical to subtract repentance from the gospel as it is heretical to subtract works from faith. Just as faith without works cannot save a single soul (James 2:14), neither can a gospel without repentance save anybody. Faith without works is a dead faith, and a gospel without repentance is a deadly gospel! Take the new birth out of the gospel, and you have no gospel to preach, and your listeners will surely perish!

In his classic, “Alarm to Unconverted Sinners” Joseph Alleine said, “All of Christ is accepted by the sincere convert: he loves not only the wages, but the work of Christ; not only the benefits, but the burden of Christ; he is willing not only to tread out the corn, but to draw under the yoke; he takes up the commands of Christ, yea, the cross of Christ. The unsound convert takes only half of Christ: he is all for the salvation of Christ, but he is not for the sanctification; he is for the privileges, but appropriates not the person of Christ; he divides his offices and benefits of Christ.” Pg 46-47

Again Alleine says, “Should he take men as they are, from the mire of their filthiness to the glory of heaven, the world would think that God was at no such great distance from sin, nor had any such dislike to it as we are told he hath; they would be ready to conclude that God was altogether such a one as themselves” pg 70. And again, “Regeneration and remission are never separated; the unsanctified are unjustified and unpardoned” pg 114.

And again, “thou canst not be married to Christ except divorced from sin” Pg 138.

And so repentance must be complete and total, sanctification is a radical crisis experience, a complete renunciation of all sin that must be diligently maintained. Repentance, or sanctification, is not a slow process, but a radical complete and total decision to forsake all sin and to serve God; so the bible proclaims that Christians “are sanctified”! (Acts 20:32, Acts 26:18, 1Cor 1:2, 1Cor 6:11, Heb 2:11, Heb 10:10, Heb 10:14, Jude 1:1)

## **WHAT MUST CHRISTIANS DO?**

“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness.” (1John 5:19)

If you want sinners to be damned for their rebellion, to have their souls eternally burned under the fierce wrath of the Sovereign in which they have been at war with, tell them that they are to do nothing at all to be saved. And if you tell them to do nothing, and they believe they are to do nothing, and they actually do nothing, you can rest assure that they will not be saved but will be damned because of you. (Eze 33:6, 33:8)

But if you want sinners to be saved, to be reconciled to the Lord that they have been sinning against, you must tell them to turn away from all their sinning and to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. How simpler could God have put it? Those who turn will live (Eze 18:21, Eze 18:32, Eze 33:19) those who refuse to turn will die. (Eze 33:11, Rom 6:23, Rom 8:13, Jam 1:15) When witnessing to sinners, repentance must be our aim, for repentance is what is required and needed for their salvation; only impenitence can hold back from salvation those for whom God loves and those for whom Christ died. And so God says we are to “warn them from me” (Eze 33:7), our ministry is to be “warning every man” so that every man may be “perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col 1:28)

The elements for their salvation are all in place, except for one. God is already willing to forgive, Christ has already finished dying for all, making salvation possible for all, now the only thing needed is for them to have true faith, a faith that repents; then and only then will their salvation be secured, then and only then will God our Sovereign choose to pardon their previous crimes and elect them unto salvation.

We must take the true and glorious gospel to a lost and dying world. We must call rebels to submit to the Sovereign decrees of the King of Kings, to surrender their hearts to God, by yielding heart obedience to all that He asks; to wave the white flag of surrender, to give up their war against God! We must preach the truth that God only chooses to save those who choose to repent and believe; only those who voluntarily repent and believe are elected of God unto salvation. God chooses and elects nobody in their sin, but only chooses to pardon those who turn from their sin.

Our God of love is longing for all men to repent in order to be saved, and so must we long for the same! We must plead, even unto tears and weeping, with sinners to repent and believe the gospel, crying out – exhorting – and testifying, “save yourselves from this

perverse generation,” (Acts 2:40) “cast away from yourself all of your transgressions” and “make yourself a new heart and a new spirit” (Eze 18:31) We must warn that the wicked must turn from his wickedness in order to save his soul alive. (Eze 18:27) This is what the Holy Spirit is telling men, this is what God requires of men, and so this is what we must preach to men.

Let us follow the perfect example of Jesus Christ, of John the Baptist, of the Apostle Peter, and of the Apostle Paul; let’s tell sinners what they must do in order to be saved!

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**Quotes:**

- George Otis Jr: God’s Trademarks, page 139
- John Fletcher: Checks to Antinomianism, pg 32, 35
- Rev A. Sims: Bible Salvation, pg 98
- Austin Couch: The Plan of Salvation, pg 74-75
- Catherine Booth: Papers on Godliness, pg 92, 94-94
- B. Franklin: The Gospel Preacher, pg 103, 104, 106
- Catherine Booth: Popular Christianity, pg 22
- Charles Kingsley: True Repentance, pg 11-12
- Charles Finney: Lectures on Revivals, pg 488, 491, 492, 493, 494, 496
- Charles Finney: Lectures on Theology, pg 466
- A. W. Tozer: Gems from Tozer, pg 12, 25
- Joseph Alleine: Alarm to Unconverted Sinners, pg 46-47, 70, 114, 138