

THE MEANING OF REPENTANCE
QUOTES FROM THE ANCIENTS, LEXICONS, AND THEOLOGIANS

A Paper

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“True repentance is an inward act of the soul, ‘a change of mind,’ as in later writings Luther so often reminded his adversaries, as he from time to time led them back to the meaning of the Greek word.”¹

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Special thanks to Dr. Charlie Bing of GraceLife Ministries for giving me the idea to write this article, and for his thoughts and insights to make it better. I think the following statement from my correspondence with him sums up my thoughts the best: “Doing this research, I kind of feel like I'm going through the Reformation in real-time, or a second Reformation. I think a lot of these statements [on repentance] have been lost to time and forgotten. I feel like I'm going through another Renaissance! I believe that God is blessing this work. Thank you for suggesting it to me. It has been a wonderful study.”

EDITOR'S PREFACE

The quotes presented in this article describe and explain repentance is its true Scriptural signification & meaning, as a change of mind and heart. This is the testimony of both the Old and New Testaments, and of Jesus and the Apostles, viz., *“then God laid it to heart [“repented” KJV] that he had made man upon the earth, and he pondered it deeply”* (Gen. 6:7 [6:6], Brenton LXX; cf. Augustine’s versions of Genesis, which say the same thing in the old Latin). *“Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool’”* (Isa. 1:18). *“Let the wicked man forsake his own way [of salvation] and the unrighteous man his own thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion, and to our God, for He will freely pardon”* (Isa. 55:7; cf. Prov. 14:12, 16:25; Jn. 14:6). *“But what do you think?”* (Mt. 21:28). *“Think*

¹ David H. Bauslin, *The Lutheran Movement of the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1919), p. 101.

ye...? (Lk. 13:2). “Or do you suppose...? (Lk. 13:4). “If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things? (Jn. 3:12). “Finally he came to his senses” (Lk. 15:17).

In the context in which Jesus and the apostles used the word in the New Testament, repentance (Gr. *metanoia*) is a change of mind and heart about sin, salvation, and the Savior—as Robert Lightner has so eloquently stated in his book by that title. It is not sorrow, although sorrow may, and oftentimes does, lead to and accompany biblical repentance (cf. 2 Cor. 7:9-10).

Let me just say a few words to preempt those who might dismiss this article out of hand, either by ridicule or otherwise. A. T. Pierson has rightly said, “ridicule is not argument, and leads to no safe conclusion. It is easy to appear to overthrow truth by ridicule.” So for those who might dismiss or deride this paper as nothing more than “Repentance according to internet comments” (or some similar genetic fallacy/“fallacy of origins”), I share the following thoughts. The vast amount of information contained in this article has taken me literally hundreds of hours of intense research to compile (and it stands on its own merits based on whether it is truth or error). For example, Erasmus’ *Annotation* on Matthew 3:2 was originally only in Latin—there were no English translations to be found! It took me over two-hundred hours to translate it word-by-word and phrase-by-phrase from the Latin into English. (For more information on that research, see my blog post titled “THE ANNOTATIONS OF ERASMUS ON MATTHEW 3:2”.) In addition to translating the statement by Erasmus, I also more recently found a statement by Luther on *metanoia* that was also only in Latin. To my knowledge it has never before been translated into English. Translating this statement by Luther from Latin into English was also very time-consuming. All this to say that compiling the many quotes contained in this article has taken hundreds of hours of intense research! I tediously sifted through information and meticulously poured over old books page-by-page and word-by-word. I painstakingly collated and typed out my findings, constantly editing and re-editing, slowly putting it all together into chronological order and distilling it down into a 70-page paper of quotations spanning some

2,000 years of church history! I could not have done this (or at least it would have taken much, *much* longer) without the aid of modern technology, as the Bible says, “in the last days knowledge will increase”. I thank the Lord for giving me the time and ability to do this important research. Ultimately, a biblical understanding of repentance is based upon what the Bible says, and that is why in the following quotes from Bible scholars, they set forth the meaning of the New Testament word for repentance, which is the Greek word *metanoia*. It is the meaning of this word with which we are concerned, and with which these quotes have to do.

Finally, let me just say a few things about the spelling and punctuation of some of the older quotes that are presented in this article. I have endeavored to retain as much as possible the spelling and punctuation of the original statements. In some of the older quotes, from the 16th and 17th centuries, for example, the words are often archaic (e.g. bade, betokeneth, doth, ye, *etc.*) and the spelling can be somewhat different from the way that we spell those same words today (e.g. “hart” for heart, “minde” for mind, “agayn” for again, “beleeve” for believe, “eternall” for eternal, *etc.*). Please take this into consideration when reading the quotes. These words are probably not misspelled; it’s just old English.

As you read this article, I hope you enjoy this trip through time in regards to *The Meaning of Repentance*!

QUOTES FROM THE ANCIENTS:

Flavius Josephus (37 - 100 A.D.):

Antiquities of the Jews:

Commenting on Exodus 14:5, Josephus writes: “But the Egyptians soon repented [*metenooun/metanooun*] that the Hebrews were gone; and the king also was mightily concerned that this had been procured by the magic arts of Moses; so they resolved to go after them.” (Josephus, translated by William Whiston, *Antiquities of the Jews*, book 2, chapter 15, section 3.) In other words, Pharaoh and his officials “changed their minds” about them (see Exodus 14:5 in the NIV, NLT, ESV, HCSB, CSB, *etc.*).

The Life of Flavius Josephus:

“And now I perceived innovations were already begun, and that there were a great many very much elevated in hopes of a revolt from the Romans. I therefore endeavored to put a stop to these tumultuous persons, and persuaded them to change their minds [*metanoein*]; and laid before their eyes against whom it was that they were going to fight....But I could not persuade them....” (Josephus, translated by William Whiston, *Life of Flavius Josephus*, section 4.)

Wars of the Jews:

“And thus did Vespasian march with his army, and came to the bounds of Galilee, where he pitched his camp and restrained his soldiers, who were eager for war; he also showed his army to the enemy, in order to affright them, and to afford them a season for repentance [*metanoias*], to see whether they would change their minds [*metabalointo*; cf. Acts 28:6] before it came to a battle, and at the same time he got things ready for besieging their strong holds. And indeed this sight of the general brought many to repent [*metanoian*] of their revolt....” (Josephus, translated by William Whiston, *The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus, Wars of the Jews*, book 3, chapter 6, section 3.)

Shepherd of Hermas (c. 140 A.D.):

Vision 3, Chapter 7 (Lightfoot translation):

“But the others, which are near the waters and yet cannot roll into the water, wouldest thou know who are they? These are they that heard the word, and would be baptized unto the name of the Lord. Then, when they call to their remembrance the purity of the truth, they change their minds [*metanoēō*], and go back again after their evil desires.” (*Shepherd of Hermas*, Vision 3, Chapter 7, translated by J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* [London: 1898], p. 415.)

Vision 3, Chapter 7 (Crombie translation):

“Do you wish to know who are the others which fell near the waters, but could not be rolled into them? These are they who have heard the word, and wish to be baptized in the name of the Lord; but when the chastity demanded by the truth comes into their recollection, they draw back [*metanoēō*], and again walk after their own wicked desires.” (*Shepherd of Hermas*, Vision 3, Chapter 7, translated by Rev. F. Crombie, Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down To A.D. 325* [Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1870], Vol. 1, pp. 338-339, emphasis added.) In a footnote (*Ibid.*, p. 339, footnote 1) after the words “draw back,” the translator writes: “The words ‘draw back’ are represented in Greek by the word elsewhere translated ‘repent;’ *metanoēin* is thus used for a change of mind, either from evil to good, or good to evil.” (*Ibid.*, p. 339.)

Mandate 11 (Lightfoot translation):

“So many therefore as are strong in the faith of the Lord, clothed with the truth, cleave not to such spirits, but hold aloof from them; but as many as are doubters and frequently change their minds [*metanoēō*], practice soothsaying like the Gentiles, and bring upon themselves greater sin by their idolatries. For he that consulteth a false prophet on any matter is an idolater and emptied of the truth, and senseless.” (*Shepherd of Hermas*, Mandate 11, translated by J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* [London: MacMillan and Co., 1912], p. 434.)

Polycarp (69 - 155 A.D.):

Letter of the Church at Smyrna, Concerning the Martyrdom of Polycarp (various translations):

“The Proconsul said unto him [Polycarp], ‘I have wild beasts ready; to those I will cast thee, unless thou repent.’ He answered, ‘Call for them, then: for we Christians are fixed in our minds, not to change [i.e. not to repent] from good to evil. But it will be good for me to be changed from my grievous (sufferings) to their just reward. The Proconsul added, ‘Seeing thou despises the wild beasts, I will cause thee to be devoured with fire, unless thou shalt repent.’ Polycarp answered, ‘Thou threatenest me with fire, which burns for an hour, and in a little while is extinguished: for thou knowest not the fire of the future judgment, and of that eternal punishment, which is reserved for the ungodly. But why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt.” (Chevallier, *A Translation of the Epistles of Clement of Rome, Polycarp, and Ignatius* [Cambridge: 1833], pp. 156-157.)

“Whereupon the proconsul said [to Polycarp]; ‘I have wild beasts here and I will throw thee to them, except thou repent.’ But he said, ‘Call for them: for the repentance [*metanoia*] from better to worse is a change not permitted to us; but it is a noble thing to change from untowardness to righteousness.’ Then he said to him again, ‘I will cause thee to be consumed by fire, if thou despisest the wild beasts, unless thou repent.’ But Polycarp said; ‘Thou threatenest that fire which burneth for a season and after a little while is quenched: for thou art ignorant of the fire of the future judgment and eternal punishment, which is reserved for the ungodly. But why delayest thou? Come, do what thou wilt.” (J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* [London: 1889], 3 Vols., Vol. 3, p. 481.)

“The Proconsul said, ‘I have wild beast; if thou wilt not change thy mind I will throw thee to them.’ Then he said, ‘Bid them be brought: change of mind from better to worse is not a change that we are allowed; but to change from wrong to right is good.’ Then again said the Proconsul to him, ‘As thou despisest the beasts, unless thou change thy mind, I make thee to be destroyed by fire.’ Then Polycarp: ‘Thou threatenest the fire that burns for a season, and after a little while is quenched; for thou art ignorant of the fire of the judgment to come, and of everlasting punishment reserved for the ungodly. But for what art thou waiting? Bring what

thou wilt.” (Blomfield Jackson, *St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna* [London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1898], pp. 61-62.)

Tertullian (c. 155 – c. 220 A.D.):

Against Marcion:

“Now in Greek the word for repentance (*metanoia*) is formed, not from the confession of a sin, but from a change of mind, which in God we have shown to be regulated by the occurrence of varying circumstances.” (“CHAP. XXIV.--Instances of God's repentance, and notably in the case of the Ninevites, accounted for and ably vindicated by Tertullian.” *Tertullian Against Marcion*, ANTE-NICENE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY: TRANSLATIONS OF THE WRITINGS OF THE FATHERS DOWN TO A.D. 325., 24 Volumes, Vol. 7. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Translated by Peter Holmes [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1868], p. 107.)

Tertullian affirms that the meaning of *metanoia* is “a change of mind” and what that change of mind is about, or what it is in reference to, can vary depending on the circumstances given in the context of the passage. Furthermore, Tertullian points out that in the Bible even God repents! Thus it is obvious that the meaning of the word repentance does not inherently convey being sorry for sin, because of course God has no sin to be sorry for! The word repentance (*metanoia*) simply means a change of mind, and what that change of mind is about must be determined by the context.

Lactantius (c. 240 – c. 320 A.D.):

Divine Institutes:

“For he who repents of that which he has done, understands his former error; and on this account the Greeks better and more significantly speak of ‘*metanoia*,’ which we may speak of in Latin as a return to a right understanding.” (Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, chapter 24: “Of Repentance, of Pardon, and the Commands of God”. See Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Editors, *The Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871], 25 Vols., Vol. 21, p. 416.)

Athanasius (4th – 5th century A.D.):

De Parables, Question 133

“...the author of the questions ascribed to Athanasius, explains *metanoein*, by *ton metatithesthai ton noun apo tou kakou pros to agathon*; ‘the changing of the mind from bad to good.’” (William Beveridge, *The Works of the Right Rev. William Beveridge*, Edited by Thomas Hartwell Horne [London: 1824], 9 Vols., Vol. 4, p. 507. Note: I have transcribed the Greek letters into English.)

“Athanasius says, ‘*Dia touto legetai, metanoia hoti metatithēsi ton noun apo tou kakou pros to agathon*’—for this cause it is called *metanoia*, because it transfers the mind from evil to good.” (Joseph Browne, *Ten Lectures on Ward’s Errata of the Protestant Authorised Translation of the Bible* [Dublin: 1859], p. 311. Note: I have transcribed the Greek letters into English.)

“Athanasius explains the word [repentance] by *metatithesthai ton noun apo tou kakou pros to agathon*, a change of the mind from evil to good”. (David Clarkson, *The Practical Works of David Clarkson* [Edinburgh: 1865], Vol. 2, p. 388. Note: I have transcribed the Greek letters into English.)

FROM THE LEXICONS:

Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon (1859):

“*Metanoēō, ō, (meta, noeō) like metagignōskō, to perceive or come to a conviction afterwards, opp. to pronoein, Epich. p. 82.—2. to change one's mind or purpose, Plat. Euthyd. 279 C; m[etanoēō] mē ou...ē, to change one's opinion and think that it is not..., Xen. Cyr. 1, 1, 3; cf. metagignōskō.—3. to repent, Antipho 120, 28.*”

“*Metanoia, as, ē, after-thought: a change of mind on reflection: hence repentance, Thuc. 3, 36, Polyb. 4, 66, 7, N. T., etc.*”

(H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, American Edition, Henry Drisler, Editor [New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1859], p. 918, bold added. Cf. Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Fourth Edition [Oxford: University Press, 1855], p. 871. Note: In the above quotations I have transcribed the Greek letters into English.)

Cremer's Lexicon (1892):

The *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1892) by the German Protestant theologian Hermann Cremer (1834-1903) gives the following definitions for *metanoēō* and *metanoia*.

Concerning the verb *metanoēō*, Cremer writes: “*Μετανοέω*, the opposite of *προνοεῖν* [to consider in advance, i.e. to perceive beforehand], a word not often occurring in profane Greek, combines two meanings of the preposition, *to think differently after....* But usually to change one's mind, or opinion.... In the N.T., especially by St. Luke and in the Revelation, it denotes a change of moral thought and reflection.... without addition [i.e. without any prepositions modifying it] = to repent in a moral and religious sense” (pp. 440-441).

Concerning the noun *metanoia*, Cremer gives this definition: “*μετάνοια, ἡ*, change of mind, repentance.... In the N.T., and especially in Luke, corresponding with *μετανοεῖν* [to repent], it is = repentance, with reference to *νοῦς* [mind, intellect, thought] as the faculty of moral reflection” (p. 441).

George Ricker Berry's Lexicon (1897):

"*Metanoēō, ō, ēso*, to change one's views and purpose, to repent, as Mat. lli. 2; Ac. Viii. 22."

"*Metanoia, as, ē*, change of mind, repentance, as Mat. iii. 8, 11."

(Berry, *A New Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament* [New York: 1897], pp. 139-40.)

Souter's Lexicon (1917):

The Scottish Bible scholar Alexander Souter (1873-1949) gives the following definitions for *metanoēō* (repent) and *metanoia* (repentance) in his reference work *A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*. Souter writes: "*metanoēō, I change my mind, I change the inner man* (particularly with reference to acceptance of the will of God by the *nous* (mind) instead of rejection)". Concerning the noun repentance, Souter writes: "*metanoia, a change of mind, a change in the inner man*". (Alexander Souter, *A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* [London: Oxford University Press, 1917], p. 157.)

Abbot-Smith's Lexicon (1922):

George Abbot-Smith (1864-1947), formerly professor of Hellenistic Greek at McGill University, gives the following definitions for *metanoēō* and *metanoia* in his reference work *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*. Abbot-Smith writes: "*metanoēō...to change one's mind or purpose, hence, to repent; in NT (exc. Lk 17³, ⁴), of repentance from sin [fundamentally *unbelief*, Jn. 16:8-9], involving amendment [i.e. a change of heart for the better]*". Concerning the noun *metanoia*, Abbot-Smith writes: "*metanoia...after-thought, change of mind, repentance*". (George Abbot-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* [London: T. & T. Clark, 1922], p. 287.)

Bauer's Lexicon (2000):

Bauer in his lexicon affirms that *metanoēō* in the two examples cited above from *The Shepherd of Hermas* (which Bauer abbreviates as "Hv 3 7 3; m 11:4") means "*change one's mind*" (see page 640 in Bauer's lexicon under definition 1 for *μετανοεω*).

Furthermore, in the lexical entry for the noun *metanoia*, Bauer includes the verb *metanoēō* together with the noun and classifies them both as having the meaning of “primarily a change of mind”! Here is the actual statement in Bauer’s lexicon (I transcribed the Greek letters into English):

“metanoia, as, ē (metanoēō) prim. ‘a change of mind’ (Thu. 3, 36, 4; Polyb. 4, 66, 7;...[etc.]),...repentance, turning about, conversion; as a turning away metanoia apo nekrōn ergōn turning away from dead works Hb 6:1. Mostly of the positive side of repentance, as the beginning of a new relationship with God: ē eis theou m[etanoian]. repentance that leads to God Ac 20:21. axia tēs metanoias erga deeds that are consistent with repentance 26:20. Also katon axion tēs m[etanoias]. [fruit worthy of repentance] Mt 3:8; cp. Lk 3:8.” etc. (Walter Bauer, Frederick William Danker, Editor, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000], Third Edition [BDAG], p. 640.)

Proponents of non-Free Grace theology sometimes misrepresent Bauer’s statement here concerning the meaning of *metanoia*. For example, William D. Mounce writes, “BDAG [i.e. Bauer’s lexicon] lists a meaning of *metanoēō* as, ‘change one’s mind,’ but wisely does not list any biblical examples.” (Mounce, *Greek For The Rest of Us*, see pp. 58-59, under the heading “Etymological Fallacy”.) What Mounce fails to mention is that in Bauer’s lexicon the verb *metanoēō* is also listed in parenthesis after the noun *metanoia*, and here Bauer does in fact list biblical examples pertaining to *both* words! Mounce goes on to say, “The noun *metanoia* also has a meaning, ‘a change of mind,’ but all biblical references are under the gloss, ‘with the nuance of ‘remorse,’” (Ibid., p. 59). What Mounce fails to mention here is that if you look closely at Bauer’s lexicon on page 640 regarding the various gloss explanations of *metanoia*, there are absolutely *no biblical references* listed directly under the gloss explanation meaning “‘a change of mind’...with the nuance of ‘remorse’ (as regret for shortcomings and errors: ...)”! Instead, all the Biblical references appear under the *next* gloss explanation, and the two gloss explanations are separated with a semi-colon! So rather than coming under the gloss explanation meaning “‘a change of mind’...with nuance of ‘remorse’” — all the Biblical references actually appear under the following gloss explanation: “‘a change of mind’...in our

literature with focus on the need of change in view of responsibility to deity...**repentance, turning about, conversion**" (see p. 640). Under this gloss, Bauer lists *many* Biblical examples, such as: "**Hb 6:1...Ac 20:21...26:20...Mt 3:8; cp. Lk. 3:8...Mt 3:11...Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3; cp. Ac 13:24; 19:4...Lk 15:7...24:47...Hb 12:17...Ac 5:31; 11:18; 2 Ti 2:25...Lk 5:32...Mt 9:13...Mk 2:17...Ro 2:4...Hb 6:6...2 Pt 3:9...2 Cor 7:9,...10**" (see pp. 640-641 in Bauer's lexicon).

Wayne Grudem is another proponent of non-Free Grace theology who has misrepresented Bauer's lexicon regarding *metanoia* and the meaning of repentance. I have already written about it in some detail in my blog post titled "'Free Grace' Theology: 6 Ways Grudem Misrepresents Biblical Repentance" (posted Dec. 14, 2019). See that article for more information.

FROM THEOLOGIANS:

Desiderus Erasmus (1466 - 1536):

Erasmus' Annotation on Matthew 3:2:

"*Metanoete* [in Greek]. Which is usually translated [in the Latin Vulgate], *Do penance*. I imagine that *Poenitete* [*Repent*], or *Poenitemini* [*Be repentant*], seemed insufficient Latin [to Jerome the translator of the Latin Vulgate]: although it changes elsewhere. But our common people consider *do penance* to be a prescribed punishment which somehow atones for faults that have been committed, because concerning Christians, those who had sinned publicly, having been cast out of the fellowship, they were openly afflicted. And that satisfaction, or punishment, began to be called *penance*. Indeed with reference to these circumstances, [there was] a not small error by some theologians, because of something Augustine said about repentance, that is, public satisfaction, he wrote [in *City of God*, book 21, chapter 9], spiritual pain, which they call *contrition*, they distort [this]. In any case *metanoia* is derived from *metanoein*, that is, from perceiving afterwards: when someone having made a mistake, finally after the fact, recognizes his error. Which according to a proverb of Homer, *The wisdom of fools*. Also look at another proverb [Hippolytus, 436], *Second thoughts are better*. And hence we read, *I repent having made man*, Augustine, *City of God*, book 15, chapter 24, instead of *repented* read *reflected upon* [or *thought over*], according to the reliable oldest codex. It is similarly called *metameleia* [in Greek]: when we are heedless in taking action, we become aware too late, now admonished by our own suffering. Of the Greek word [for repentance] Tertullian elegantly commented in *Against Marcion* book II: *Now in Greek, he says, the word for repentance (metanoia) is formed, not from the confession of a sin, but from a change of mind*. In my judgment it [*Metanoete*] can be properly translated *Recover your senses*, or *Return to a right mind*. For indeed he comes to his senses, whose former life is displeasing to him. But [the Latin Vulgate says] *to do penance*, instead of *to be led to repentance*, I refuse to pronounce a barbarous solecism, and not remember to read the writings of good authors. *Act of repentance*, instead of *touched by repentance*, [occurs only] once in Suetonius. And Pliny [the Younger] in his Letters [7.10], *repent of its former repentance*, is found, not to mention an

additional case from his uncle [Pliny the Elder]. Thus to say, *to do penance*, instead of *to repent*: [is similar to] how we say, *to conduct your life a certain way*, instead of [simply] *to live*. Valerius Maximus put it perfectly in the chapter *Wise Words and Deeds*: *[Socrates] responded, whichever you choose, you will repent*, and from these statements which immediately precede, it is easily seen, what repentance is. Just as when we say, I have married the woman, but repent. Fabius [Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory*], book 9 [chapter 3.12], indicates that Sallust wrote, *not intending to repent*, for *not intending to do penance*. Moreover, I am not very favorable to periphrasis [such as], *Repent of your former life*, or *Repent of your failings*. And yet erring men both pious and erudite, prefer rather to twist [things], indeed they falsely accuse, as these are now the customs and times [in which we live], [they command] penance by which the Gospel has been ruined. Although it was not this way at the very outset and thus [by this custom of doing penance] the wholesome satisfaction is destroyed, which accompanies a return to a right understanding, and puts an end to pious tears [and] ceremonial duties, & which [it is thought] somehow pay for the offense, but if the Greek word, [is] not derived from *punishment*, as it seems to some, [who translate it] *penance*, whereas more likely it would be derived from *comprehending afterwards*, and indeed by *coming to one's senses*, it is described as *a change of mind*." (Erasmus, *Annotation on Matthew 3:2*. Translated from the Latin.)

Martin Luther (1483 - 1546):

From Luther's letter to John von Staupitz, May 30, 1518, accompanying Luther's Resolutions to his Ninety-Five Theses (quoted by Dr. Barnas Sears):

"Formerly there was in all the Bible scarcely a more bitter word to me; now none sounds more sweetly or agreeably to my ears than the word repentance. [The word Luther uses here for 'repentance' is the Latin word *poenitentia*.] At a later time, I learned, by the aid of those scholars who made us acquainted with the Greek and Hebrew, that the Greek word for repentance signified 'thinking of a fault after it was done,' . . . and, as I proceeded further in the knowledge of the Greek tongue, I perceived that it also signified 'a change of mind.'" (Barnas

Sears, *Luther: His Mental and Spiritual History, with Special Reference to Its Earlier Periods and the Opening Scenes of the Reformation* [London: 1857], pp. 185-186, ellipsis his.)

From Luther's letter to John von Staupitz, May 30, 1518, accompanying Luther's Resolutions to his Ninety-Five Theses (Henry E. Jacobs translation):

"Afterwards, by the favor of the learned, who are so zealously transmitting to us the Greek and Hebrew, I learned that the same word [*poenitentia*] in Greek is *metanoia*, so that repentance or *metanoia* is 'a change of mind.' This corresponded so aptly with the Pauline Theology, that, in my judgment, scarcely anything can more aptly illustrate Paul." (Martin Luther, quoted by Henry Eyster Jacobs, *Elements of Religion* [Philadelphia: The Board of Publication of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran church in North America, 1913], p. 281.)

Luther to John von Staupitz, May 30, 1518, accompanying Luther's Resolutions to his Ninety-Five Theses (Gottfried G. Krodel translation):

"I learned - thanks to the work and talent of the most learned men who teach us Greek and Hebrew with such great devotion ["Luther is thinking mainly of Erasmus, who published the Greek text of the New Testament with notes in 1516" *LW* 48, 66] - that the word *poenitentia* means *metanoia* in Greek; it is derived from *meta* and *noun*, that is, from 'afterward' and 'mind.' *Poenitentia* or *metanoia*, therefore, means coming to one's right mind and a comprehension of one's own evil after one has accepted the damage and recognized the error. . . . Such transition of the mind, that is, the most true *poenitentia*, is found very frequently in Holy Scripture: the old Passover foreshadowed it, and Christ made it a reality; it was also long before that time prefigured in Abraham, when (according to the learned exegesis of Paul of Burgos) he began to be called 'he who passes over,' that is, a 'Hebrew,' evidently because he had come across into Mesopotamia." ("To John von Staupitz, Wittenberg, May 30, 1518," Martin Luther, Edited and Translated by Gottfried G. Krodel, *Luther's Works* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963], 55 Volumes, Vol. 48., pp. 66-67. Another English translation, which is in some ways clearer, can be viewed at the following link: "Letter of John Staupitz Accompanying the 'Resolutions' to the XCV Theses" by Dr. Martin Luther, 1518, *Works*

of Martin Luther, Adolph Spaeth, L.D. Reed, Henry Eyster Jacobs, et al., Translators and Editors [Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1915], Volume 1, pp. 39-43.)

From Luther's letter to Pope Leo X, May 30, 1518, accompanying Luther's Resolutions to his Ninety-Five Theses (Henry E. Jacobs translation):

"I prove this, first, from the Greek word, *metanoieite*, which can be translated most literally by *transmentamini*, i.e. 'assume another mind and disposition,' 'make a change of mind and a passover of spirit,' so as to be wise now in heavenly, as you formerly were in earthly things, as Paul says, Rom. 12:2: 'Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.'" (Ibid., pp. 281-282.)

Excerpted from Luther's Resolutions to his Ninety-Five Theses:

"*Metanoia*, which the old interpreter [i.e. Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate] expresses as *poenitentiam* [repentance], it is called *resipiscentia* ['a change of mind'] or *transmentatio* ['a change of mind, thought, or intention']: just as also Erasmus notes about chapter 3 of the gospel according to Matthew. *Metanoieitae*, it is *transmentamini* [in Latin], that is, assume a different mind & perception, recover your senses, make a transition of mind & a Passover of spirit, so as to now be wise in heavenly things, instead of thus far you have been wise in earthly things. Also Lactantius [in] book 6 of his *Institutes* informs, that *poenitentia* [repentance] in Greek is called *Metanoia*, that is *resipiscentia*. By no means therefore from use in sacred Scripture is repentance called sorrow, but a change of mind and judgment [so as to use better judgment], and to repent is to be wise after an error, and to install a mind for right living." (Ruaro Tapper, *Explicationis Articulorum Venerandae Facultatis Sacrae Theologiae* [Lovanii/Leuven, 1555], 2 Vols., Vol. 1, pp. 181-182. Translated from the Latin. Note: This quote appears in a section of Tapper's book titled "Responsio Ad Argumenta Lutheri" which translated means "Response to Luther's Arguments". This statement by Luther is also cited by Melchor Cano [1509-1560] in his book *Melchioris Cani Episcopi Canariensis*, Vol. 2, p. 446. For more information see Appendix 1: "LUTHER ON METANOIA".)

John Calvin (1509 - 1564):

The Institution of the Christian Religion (Thomas Norton translation):

“The name of repentance in Hebrew is derived of converting or returning, in Greek of changing of the mind or purpose, and the thing itself doth not ill agree with either derivations, whereof the sum is, that we departing from ourselves should turn unto God, and putting off our old mind, should put on a new.” (Calvin, translated by Thomas Norton, *The Institution of the Christian Religion* [1762], Book III, Chap. III: “That we are regenerate by faith. Wherein is treated of repentance.”, p. 277.)

Institutes of Christian Religion, Book 3, Chapter 3, “On Repentance” (John Allen translation):

“The Hebrew word for repentance, denotes conversion or return. The Greek word signifies change of mind or intention.” (Calvin, translated by John Allen, *Institutes of Christian Religion* [London: 1844], 2 Vols., Vol. 1, Book 3, p. 476.)

Institutes of Christian Religion, Book 3, Chapter 3, “On Repentance” (Beveridge translation):

“The term repentance is derived in the Hebrew from conversion, or turning again; and in the Greek from a change of mind and purpose; nor is the thing meant inappropriate to both derivations, for it is substantially this, that withdrawing from ourselves we turn to God, and laying aside the old, put on a new mind.” (Calvin, translated by Henry Beveridge, *Institutes of Christian Religion* [Edinburgh, The Calvin Translation Society, 1845], Vol. 2, Book 3, p. 156.)

Calvin’s Commentary on A Harmony of the Evangelists:

Commenting on Matthew 27:3, Calvin says that “*metanoia*...is a true conversion of the soul to God.” (Calvin, translated by Rev. William Pringle, *Commentary on A Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke* [Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1846], Vol. 3, p. 268.)

Calvin’s Commentaries on The Book of the Prophet Daniel:

Calvin explains that “repentance is voluntary, and those only are said to repent who willingly return by a change of mind to the God from whom they had revolted”. (Calvin, translated by

Thomas Myers, *Commentaries on The Book of the Prophet Daniel* [Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1852], Vol. 1, p. 255.)

Calvin's Commentaries on Daniel:

“If inquiry is made concerning the nature of repentance, it is the conversion of man towards God, from whom he had been alienated. Is this conversion then only in the hands, and feet, and tongue? Does it not rather begin in the mind and the heart, and then pass on to outward works? . . . Besides this, works are the only testimonies to real repentance; for it is a thing too excellent to allow its root to appear to human observation. By our fruits therefore we must testify our repentance.” (Calvin, Translated by Thomas Myers, *Commentaries on The Book of the Prophet Daniel* [Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1852], Vol. 1, p. 279.)

The Protestant Reformers (16th century):

The Protestant theologian and church historian Philip Schaff writes: “The Reformers went back to the original idea of repentance as ‘a transmutation of the mind and affections’ (*transmutation mentis et affectus* — Luther)....Calvin did not differ from Luther, although he failed to emphasize the pangs for sin committed as much as he.” (Philip Schaff, Editor, *A Religious Encyclopedia: or Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1884], Vol. 3, p. 2031, see entry for “REPENTANCE”.)

In an article titled “Repentance and Salvation, Part 1: The Doctrine of Repentance in Church History,” and under the heading “Repentance (*Metanoia*) Defined as a Change of Mind,” Robert Wilkin of the Grace Evangelical Society (GES) similarly affirms:

“In contrast to the Church’s definition of *metanoia* as involving contrition, confession, and the performance of acts of penance, Calvin and Luther concluded that it retained its classical sense of ‘a change of mind.’ Salvific repentance according to Calvin and Luther was a change of mind whereby one recognized his own sinfulness and need of forgiveness and then turned in faith to God to provide that forgiveness in Christ. In essence, then, Luther and Calvin viewed salvific repentance as an essential part of saving faith.” (Wilkin, “Repentance and Salvation, Part 1: The Doctrine of Repentance in Church History,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, Autumn 1988, Vol. 1:1.)

William Tyndale (1494 - 1536):

From Tyndale’s New Testament, “The Prologue upon the Gospell of S. Mathew” (in 16th century English):

“Concerning this word repentance, or (as they used) penaunce, the Hebrew hath in the Old Testament generally (*sub*) turne, or be converted. For which the translation that we take for S. Jerome, hath most part (*converti*) to turne, to be converted, and sometime (*agere paenitentiam*) and the Greeke in the New Testament hath perpetually (*Metanoeo*) to turne in the hart, and minde, and to come to the right knowledge, and to a mans right wit agayn. For which (*Metanoeo*) S. Jeromes translation hath sometime (*ago paenitentiam*) I do repent:

sometime (*paeniteo*) I repent, sometime (*Paeniteor*) I am repentant: sometime (*Habeo paenitentiam*) I have repentance: sometime (*Paenitetme*) it repenteth me. And Erasmus useth much this worde (*Resipisco*) I come to my selfe, or to my right mynde againe.” (William Tyndale, “The Prologue upon the Gospell of S. Mathew,” *The Whole Works of W. Tyndall, John Frith, and Doct. Barnes* [London: 1573], p. 37, spelling and italics his. See under the heading “Repentaunce.”)

From Tyndale’s New Testament, “W. T. unto the Reader” (in Modern-day English):

“Concerning this word repentance or (as they used) penance, the Hebrew hath in the Old Testament generally *Sub* [*shub*] turn or be converted. For which the translation that we take for saint Jerome’s hath most part *converiti* to turn or be converted, and sometime yet *agere penitentiam*. And the Greek in the New Testament hath perpetually *metanoeo* to turn in the heart and mind, and to come to the right knowledge, and to a man’s right wit again. For which *metanoeo* S. Jerome’s translation hath: sometime *ago penitentiam* I do repent: sometime *peniteo* I repent: sometime *peniteor* I am repentant: sometime *habeo penitentiam* I have repentance: sometime *penitent me* it repenteth me. And Erasmus useth much this word *resipisco* I come to myself or to my right mind again.” (William Tyndale, “W. T. unto the Reader,” *Tyndale’s New Testament: Translated by William Tyndale, Translated from the Greeke by William Tyndale in 1534, In a modern-spelling edition and with an introduction by David Daniell* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995], p. 9.)

Geneva Bible (1576, 1599):

Marginal note for the word “Repent” in Matthew 3:2:

"The word in the Greek tongue signifieth a changing of our minds and hearts from evil to better." (*Geneva Bible*, marginal note for the word “Repent” in Matthew 3:2.)

Unfortunately, earlier editions of the Geneva Bible are not so clear on the meaning of repentance. They do not go back to the Greek to define the word *repent*. For example, in the 1560 edition of the Geneva Bible, the marginal note for the word “Repent” in Matthew 3:2 says “Or, be sorry for your past faults, and amend.”

John King, Bishop of London (1594):

“And who was ever a better expounder of repentance than he who went before the face of the Lord, and both preached the doctrine with his lips, and with his hands administered the baptism of repentance? Albeit the text that he used unto them were *Metanoieite*, which signifieth a change of the mind and the inward powers thereof, yet he added by way of explication, Mat. iii., ‘Bring forth fruits worthy of amendment of life.’” (John King, *Lectures Upon Jonah*. Delivered at York, In the Year of Our Lord 1594 [Edinburgh: 1864]. LECTURE XXXVII, pp. 237-238.)

George Downname (1566 – 1634):

“*Let the unrighteous, saith the Prophet, forsake his owne imaginations, and returne unto the Lord: For therefore is repentance called metanoia, because it is a changing of the mind.*”

(George Downname, *Lectures on the XV Psalme* [London: 1604], p. 119.)

Lucas Brugensis (1548 - 1619):

“The word rendered repent, is to change one’s mind and to lay aside false opinions, which they had drunken in, whether from the Pharisees, concerning the righteousness of works, tradition, worship, &c or from the Sadducees, concerning the resurrection, &c.” (Lucas Brugensis, quoted in *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, chapter 2, section 3. Cf. Lucas Brugensis, *In sacrosancta quatuor Jesu Christi Evangelia commentarii* [1606], commentary on Matthew 3:2.)

John Arndt (1555 - 1621):

“Jesus says to you: *Repent*. This command, advice, or exhortation, merits all attention. *Repent*, or change your mind....When, therefore, God thus speaks to sinners, ‘Repent; be converted:’ he has a wise, gracious, manifold view in it. He means to shew the sinner what must be done; and in what it consists, not in the putting away of some outward things, but in a change of the mind and heart....we arise and come to Jesus, and through Jesus to the Father...He gives to the sinner repentance, and the forgiveness of sins. He gives him power to become a child of God. He gives him the Spirit of Adoption, by which he cries, ‘Abba, Father!’ Then the proper change of mind

(*metanoia*) fully takes place.” (John Arndt, “Sermon on Revelation II. 4, 5”, *The Methodist Magazine for the Year 1810*, Vol. 32, pp. 221-223.)

Andrew Willet (1562 - 1621):

“That this word (*metanoia*) used in the new Testament, is more fitly translated *repentance*, to signifie a change of the minde, then by them [the Roman Catholics], *penance*, to betoken some outward penal satisfactorie act, thus it is proved.

Arg. 1. The Greek word every where used, is *metanoia*, which signifieth as *Laurentius Valla* noteth, *emendationem mentis*, the change or amendment of the minde; and no such outward satisfactorie Penance as they [the Roman Catholics] pretend.

“...The ancient writers of the Greeke Church take repentance for a change of the minde, not for any externall penal worke: as *Justinus Martyr* saith (in his *Second Apology*), that God will rather have repentance, than punishment, that is penance: And again (in *Dialog with Trypho*), speaking of the repentance of the Ninivites, he calleth it, *true repentance from the heart*. So also *Tertullian* defineth, *Poenitentiam animi passionem*, repentance to be a passion of the mind....*Athanasius* saith (in *Libr. De penitent*, question 162), therefore penance is called repentance, *Quod mentem a malo ad bonum transferat*, because it turneth the minde from evil to good.” (Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* [London: 1614], p. 712, spelling and emphasis his.)

English Annotations, done by English scholars (1645):

“V. 2. *Repent ye*] So our Saviour begins his preaching, Chap. 4. 17. And confirms John’s doctrine. John taught other things also, Luke 3. But this he begun withal, and this was the main scope of his doctrine. The word in the originall signifies, *the change of our minds from false ways to the right, and of our hearts, from evil to good*. He shews them, what they should do, not what they could do of themselves.” (John Downname, Editor, *Annotations Upon All The Books of the Old And New Testament* [London: 1645], 2 Volumes, Vol. 2, annotation on Matthew 3:2, spelling and emphasis original.)

Salomon Glassius (1593 - 1656):

“*metanoian*, seu mutatio mentis (uti vox Graeca proprie sonat)....” (Glassius, *Philologiae Sacrae* [1686], Vol. 5, Book 3: Sacred Grammar, p. 515, comment on Heb. 12:17. Note: The 5-volume *Philologia Sacra* was first published between the years 1623-1636.)

I spent some time translating Glassius’ statement from Latin into English. Here is how it reads in English:

“*metanoian*, or change of mind (as the Greek word is properly expressed)....”

The Marrow of Modern Divinity (1646):

“*Nom.* [*Nomista*, a Legalist.] But sir, as I conceive the Scripture holds forth, that the Lord hath appointed repentance to goe before faith, for is it not said, *Mar.* 1.15. Repent, and Beleeve the Gospel?

Evan. [*Evangelista*, a Minister of the Gospel]. To the intent that you may have a true and satisfactory answer, to this your objection, I would pray you to consider two things.

First, that the word repent, in the original, signifies a change of our minds from false waies to the right, and of our hearts from evil to good; as that son in the Gospel, said he would not go work in his father’s vineyard, yet afterwards saith the Teacher, *he repented* and went (Mat. 21. 29), that is, he changed his mind and went.

Secondly, that in those days when John the *Baptist*, and our Saviour preached, the hearers were most of them erroneous in their minds and judgements, for they believed in the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadduces, of the which our Saviour bade the Disciples to take heed and beware (Mat. 16.6, 12); The most of them were of opinion, that the Messiah whom they looked for, should bee some great & mighty Monarch who should deliver them from their temporall bondage, as I shewed before, and many of them were of the opinion of the Pharisees, who held that as an outward conformity to the letter of the Law was sufficient to gaine favor and estimation from men, so was it sufficient for their justification, and acceptation before God, and so consequently to bring them to heaven and eternall happiness; And therefore for these

ends they were very diligent in fasting and prayer (Mat. 23.14), And were very careful to pay Tythes of *Mint*, and *Annise*, and *Cummen* (Luk. 18.12, Mat. 23.23), and yet did omit the weightier matter of the law; as judgment, mercy, faith and the love of God (Luk. 11.42), and so as our Saviour told them, they made cleane the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they were full of extortion and excesse (Mat. 23.25). And divers of them were of the opinion of the Sadduces (Act. 23.8), who held that there was no resurrection, neither Angell nor Spirit, and so had all their hopes and comfort in the things of this life, not believing any other. Now our Saviour preaching to these people said, *the time is fulfilled and the Kingdome of God is at hand, repent ye and believe the Gospel*; As if he had said, the time set by the prophets for the manifestation of the Messiah is fully come, and his kingdome which is a spiritual and heavenly kingdom is at hand therefore change your minds from false ways to right, and your hearts from evill to good, and do not any longer imagine that the *Messiah* you looke for, shall bee one that shall save and deliver you from your temporall enimies but from your spirituall, that is from your sins and from the wrath of God, and from eternal damnation; and therefore put your confidence no longer in your own righteousness, though you walke never so exactly according to the letter of the Law, but believe the glad tidings that is now brought unto you, to wit, that this *Messiah* shall save you from sinne, wrath, death, the devil, and hell, and bring you to eternall life and glory: neither let any of you any longer imagine that there is to be no Resurrection of the dead, and so have your hopes only in this life; but believe these glad tidings that are now brought unto you concerning the *Messiah*, and he shall raise you up at the last day, and give you an eternall life. Now with submission to better judgements, I do conceive that if there bee in the booke of God any repentance exhorted unto, before faith in Christ, or if any repentance goe either in order of nature or time, before faith in Christ, it is onely such a like Repentance as this." (Edward Fisher, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* [London: 1647], fifth Edition, pp. 135-138, spelling and italics his.)

John Lightfoot (1602 - 1675):

Commenting on the words of Jesus in Matthew 4:17 and Mark 1:15, Lightfoot writes the following:

“...worth our consideration in this our Saviours doctrine, is the word by which he calleth for repentance. What Syriack word he used speaking that language it is uncertain (the Syriack translator useth *Return* or *be converted*) but the word which the Holy Ghost hath left us in the Original Greek *metanoeite* is exceeding significant and pertinent to that doctrine and occasion. The word is frequently used in the Septuagint, concerning God, when he is said to repent or not repent, as 1 *Sam.* 15.29. *Jer.* 3.9. *Amos* 7.3.6. &c. but the use of it applied to man is not so frequent in them, as of the word *epistraphēte* [*be converted*], & *epistrepate apo kakias* [*turn from evil*] as *Ezek.* 18.30. because that word doth most Grammatically and *verbatim* translate the word [*shub*], which is the word most commonly used in the Hebrew, for *Repenting*, and yet do the Septuagint sometimes use *metanoein* for mans repentance, as *Jer.* 8.6. &c.

The word doth first signifie a reviewing or considering of a mans own self and condition, as *Lam.* 3.40. and so *Brucioli* doth render it in the *Italian*, *Ravedete vi* [*Repent ye*], view yourselves, or take yourselves into consideration. Secondly, it betokeneth a growing wise, or coming to ones self again, as *Luk.* 15.17. and thereupon it is well rendered by our Protestant Divines, *Resipicite*, *Be wise again*, for so the word were to be construed in its strict propriety. And thirdly it signifieth a change of mind, from one temper to another.” (Lightfoot, *The Works of the Reverend and Learned John Lightfoot*, George Bright, Editor [London: 1684], 2 Vols., Vol. 1, p. 629, spelling and italics his. Note: I transcribed the Hebrew and Greek letters into English.)

John Bunyan (1628 - 1688):

“‘And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at the heart.’ Repentance is in us, *a Change of the Mind*; but in God, *a Change of his Dispensations*; for otherwise he repenteth not; neither can he; because it standeth not with the Perfection of his Nature: in him is *no variableness*, nor *shadow of turning*. [Ja. 1.17.]” (John Bunyan, “*Ten First Chapters of GENESIS.*” *The Works Of that Eminent Servant of Christ, Mr. John Bunyan* [London: 1692], Vol. 1, p. 41. See Bunyan’s commentary on Genesis 6:6.)

“Repentance is a turning the heart to God in Christ: a turning of it from sin [fundamentally *unbelief*, Jn. 16:8-9], and the devil, and darkness; to the goodness, and grace, and holiness that is in him.” (John Bunyan “*Of Repentance*.” George Offor, Editor, *The Whole Works of John Bunyan* [London: 1862], Vol. 2, p. 600.)

William Beveridge (1637 - 1708):

“In the first place, to consider the word [in Mark 1:15] which our blessed Saviour expresses this duty [to ‘repent’] by, which...in the Greek, wherein his sayings are infallibly conveyed to us, it is *metanoete*, which word, according to its proper etymology and notation, as well as the common use of it in both sacred and profane writers, doth properly signify the change of the mind, and that usually from worse to better; and thus the author of the questions ascribed to Athanasius, explains *to metanoein*, by *metatithesthai ton noun apo tou kakou pros to agathon*, ‘the changing of the mind from bad to good.’ And therefore Lactantius, and others after him, do rightly expound the Greek *metanoia*, by the Latin *resipiscentia*; which properly signifies, the recovering one’s self from some error which we were overtaken with: for he that repenteth of his error, *resipiscit*, is of another mind; that is, as the aforesaid father interprets it, *Mentem suam quaque ab insania recipit*, ‘he recovers his mind, as it were out of his former madness.’

Thus our Saviour expresses the repentance of the prodigal son by coming to himself (Luke 15:17), implying, that before that he had been besides himself, not in his right mind; but now he came to himself, and to the right use of his sense and reason, so as to be quite another thing, and of another and better mind that he was before.”

(Beveridge, “Repentance and Faith, the Two Great Branches of the Evangelical Covenant.” SERMON LXXXVIII. Mark 1:15. *The Theological Works of William Beveridge* [Oxford: 1844], Vol. 4, p. 189.)

Matthew Henry (1662 - 1714):

“John Baptist’s business was to call men to repent of their sins; *metanoete*, bethink yourselves, admit a second thought to correct the errors of the first, an after thought: consider your ways, change your minds; you have thought amiss, think again, and think aright.” (Matthew

Henry, *An Exposition of the Old and New Testament* [Edinburgh, 1791], 6 Vols., Vol. 5, p. 28, comment on Matthew 3:2.)

Philip Doddridge (1702 - 1751):

Doddridge expresses the right view of 2 Corinthians 7:9, “Ye sorrowed to repentance,” he paraphrases, “ye grieved to such a happy purpose, and were by that means brought to true repentance, to a change of mind.” (Doddridge, *The Family Expositor, The Works of the Rev. P. Doddridge, D.D.* [Leeds: 1805], Vol. 9, p. 178. Adapted from the citation by John Bowes, the Plymouth Brethren writer, in the Preface of his book *The New Testament: Translated from the Purest Greek* [Dundee, 1870].)

Jonathan Edwards (1703 - 1758):

“This is what the word *repentance* properly signifies; which in the original of the New Testament, is *metanoia*, which signifies *a change of mind*, or which is the same thing, the turning or the conversion of the mind.” (Edwards, *The Works of President Edwards* [New York: 1852], 4 Vols., Vol. 4, pp. 117-118.)

“The word in the New Testament which is most frequently translated repentance, most properly signifies a change of mind.” (Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* [Boston: 1854], 2 Vols., Vol. 2, p. 396.)

John Brown of Haddington (1722 - 1787):

“...in that expression, *Repent and believe the gospel*, the sense may be Change your carnal notions of the Messiah and his kingdom, and believe the truths and offers of the gospel, Mark 1.15.” (Brown, *Dictionary of the Holy Bible* [London: 1813], p. 572. See under the entry for the word “REPENT”.)

Richard Elliot, formerly of Bennet College, Cambridge (1727 - 1788):

“By Penance the *Romish* Church understands *Satisfaction for Sin*, made by the *Sinner* unto the *Justice* of God by Means of the good Works which himself does, such as *Fastings, Prayers, Tears, Suffering Corporal Punishment*, &c. which she requires as *previously necessary* to the

Pardon of Sin.---Mr. *Dodd* by *Penitence* (if his Words express his Thoughts) means barely *Grief* or *Sorrow*; for the Word properly denotes any Kind of Sorrow, arising from a Sense of Pain, or Fear of Punishment.

But the *true Repentance* spoken of in Scripture widely differs from both; it neither means *Satisfaction* for Sin, nor *Sorrow* of Heart.

You cannot, *Sir*, be ignorant that Penitence, from the *Latin, Penitentia*, is far from expressing the Sense of the *Greek metanoia*, which strictly means, a *Change of Mind or Heart*" (pp. 6-7).

"Upon the whole, then, we may safely conclude, that *metanoia*, which the *Protestants* translate Repentance, and the *Papists* Penance, does by no means signifie, nor give the Reader any *Idea* of *Confession* of Sin, or *Sorrow* for it; but is designed to express *that Change* of the Mind which is wrought in a Man by the Spirit of God, when *he turneth* him *from Self-righteousness, legal, and carnal* Hopes and Dependencies, which is the *Trust* and Support of every Man *by Nature*; that being changed *from* trusting in the *Flesh*, in *himself* and his own Righteousness, he *may believe in*, and *rest upon*, Jesus Christ *for* Righteousness and Life, as he is *revealed* and *preached* unto him in the Gospel; and when the Mind is *so changed*, as to be turned *from trusting* in *Morality, Duties, and Self*, to trust *alone in Christ for Salvation*, this is what the Scripture calls *Repentance unto Life*." (p. 11)

Elliot goes on to emphasize the distinction between repentance and the fruits of repentance:

"The *Distinction* which we have already noticed between *Repentance*, or a Change of the Mind; and *its Fruits* or Effects; is not *contrary* to Scripture, but *according* to it: *John the Baptist* has declared it in these Words, *bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Repentance* [Mat. 3:8]: And *Paul*, also, in his *Doctrine* maintains the *same Distinction*, who went every where preaching that Men *should repent and turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance* [Acts 26:20]: In both these Scriptures 'tis sufficiently clear, that Repentance means a Change of the Mind, and no more, which Change was to be *discovered*, and made manifest by the Fruits which it brought forth in the Life and Conversation." (p. 13)

(R. Elliot, *St. Paul no Antinomian: or, A Vindication of that Apostle's Doctrine from the Gross Charge of Heresy, Fanaticism, and Licentiousness, in a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Dodd* [1760], pp. 6-7, 11, 13.)

Archibald Mclean (1733 – 1812):

“I can admit that when faith first takes place in the mind, it imports repentance, or a *change of mind*, as the word *metanoia* signifies. It is a change from darkness to light; from blindness, prejudice and unbelief, to a spiritual perception and conviction of the truth; and it is by convincing men of the truth concerning Jesus, that the Spirit convinceth them of sin, because they believe not in him. See John 16. 9 compared with Acts 2. 36, 37.” (McLean, *A Reply to Mr. Fuller's Appendix To His Book on The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* [Edinburgh: 1802], p. 38. Note: The Bible verse reference numbers in the original quotation were written in Roman numerals, which I have updated to the current format. Also, the word *metanoia* in the original quotation was written in Greek, which I have transcribed into English.)

Thomas Scott (1747 - 1821):

“The word rendered ‘repentance,’ implies a total revolution in the mind, a change in the judgment, dispositions, and affections, another and better bias to the soul.” (Thomas Scott, *The Old and New Testaments, According to the Authorized Version; with Explanatory Notes, Practical Observations, and Copious Marginal References* [London: 1861], Vol. 5, p. 8, comment on Matthew 3:2.)

“Repent ye.] *Metanoete. Post factum sapere; quasi resapere.* Beza. *Mutare mentem in melius.* ‘After a thing has been done, to understand, and notice the error, and then at length to be wise.’ ‘To return to a sound mind.’” (Ibid., p. 8.)

Adam Clarke (1762 - 1832):

“As the word *metanoia* which we translate *repentance* signifies literally *a change of mind*, it may here be referred to a change of religious views, &c.” (Adam Clarke's *Commentary and Critical Notes on the New Testament* [New York: 1835], p. 378, comment on Acts 11:18.)

Christian Gottlieb Kuinoel (1768 - 1841):

“Metanoia proprie significat consilii mutationem, et metanoein consilium mutare, Hebr. 12, 17. ubi v. nos, Xen. Cyr. 1, 1, 3.” (Christinus Theophilus Kuinoel, *Euangelium Matthaei* [Lipsiae, 1837], p. 52, comment on Matthew 3:2.)

I spent some time translating Kuinoel’s statement from Latin into English. Here is how it reads in English:

“Metanoia properly signifies a change of judgment, and metanoein to change a decision, Hebrews 12:17. Cf. Xenophon’s Cyropaedia, book 1, chapter 1, section 3: ‘Thus, as we meditated on this analogy, we were inclined to conclude that for man, as he is constituted, it is easier to rule over any and all other creatures than to rule over men. But when we reflected that there was one Cyrus, the Persian, who reduced to obedience a vast number of men and cities and nations, we were then compelled to change our opinion [metanoein] and decide that to rule men might be a task neither impossible nor even difficult, if one should only go about it in an intelligent manner.’”

John Campbell of London (1795 - 1867):

“What is the general import of the term ‘repentance’ in the Scriptures? It’s general import is, that entire change of mind which takes place on a sinner’s conversion to God.” (John Campbell, *Theology for Youth*, part 3, section 6. Cited by John Bowes in the Preface to his *New Testament: Translated from the Purest Greek* (Dundee: 1870). Cf. William O’Neill, *Biblical and Theological Gleanings* [London: Ward and Co., 1854], p. 742.)

Hermann Olshausen (1796 - 1839):

“Metanoia, repentance, change of mind, denotes here [in Matthew 3:2] the result of the law in its effect on the mind. By its form of inflexible requirement, it rouses to a sense of weakness, and to a longing for a power sufficient to satisfy it. It is therefore, in fact, a change of mind (nous) in its deepest vital principle. Considered in itself, indeed, it is something merely negative, which stands in need of a positive element to complete it; and this is the Spirit, whom Christ obtained, and whom men receive by faith. This is conveyed in the additional clause in Luke iii. 3,

and Mark i. 4, *eis aphesin hamartiōn, for the remission of sins*. John's preaching was not itself to effect the remission, but to prepare for that remission, which was to be accomplished by Christ." (Olshausen, *Biblical Commentary on the New Testament* [New York: 1857], Vol. 1, p. 260, emphasis his.)

Charles Hodge (1797 - 1878):

"In the Bible, the distinction is generally preserved; *metanoia*, repentance, change of mind, turning to God, *i.e.*, conversion, is what man is called upon to do; *anagennēsis*, regeneration, is the act of God." (Hodge, *Systematic Theology* [New York: 1887], 3 Vols., Vol. 3, p. 4.)

John Peter Lange (1802 - 1884):

"The expression, '*Repent ye*,' [in Matthew 3:2] is not equivalent with '*Do penance*.' The original means, *Change your minds*, your mode of thinking and of viewing things,—not *in order* that the kingdom of heaven may come, but *because* it is coming or approaching (for the kingdom of heaven is at hand). This change of mind could only spring from a sense of the free mercy of God in manifesting the kingdom of heaven, and from the revelation of Christ in His grace and truth. Nor can it ever be otherwise; for without repentance, change of mind, conversion, regeneration (John iii.), it is impossible to enter the kingdom of heaven." (Lange, Philip Schaff, Editor, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* [New York: 1865], Vol. 1, p. 73, emphasis his.)

Gustav Billroth (1808 - 1836):

"*Metanoia* is not exactly equivalent to our *penitence*, or the Latin *poenitentia*, but rather presents the notion of a change, or *renewal of mind*." (Billroth, *The Biblical Cabinet* [Edinburgh: 1838], p. 265, comment on 1 Cor. 7:9.)

"Godly sorrow produces a change of mind to a salvation, of which no one repents". (Billroth, *The Biblical Cabinet* [Edinburgh: 1838], p. 267, comment on 1 Cor. 7:10.)

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (1815 - 1881):

Commenting on 2 Corinthians 7:9, Dean Stanley writes, "*eis metanoian* [unto repentance]. This passage show how inadequate is our word '*repentance*.' *Metanoia*. 'Ye were grieved so as to

change your mind. ‘Your repentance amounted to a revolution of mind.’” (Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians* [London: 1865], p. 457, emphasis his.)

Alfred Edersheim (1825 - 1889):

“[John the Baptist] called them to repentance—a ‘change of mind’—with all that this implied; and, on the other, pointed them to the Christ, in the exaltation of His Person and Office. Or rather, the two combined might be summed up in the call: ‘Change your mind’—repent, which implies, not only a turning from the past, but a turning to the Christ in newness of mind.” (Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* [London: 1883], 2 Vols., Vol. 1, p. 270. In a footnote [n. 7, p. 270], Edersheim writes: “The term ‘repentance’ includes faith in Christ, as in St. Luke xxiv. 47; Acts v. 31.”)

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown (1883):

“Repent—The word denotes *change of mind*, and here includes the reception of the Gospel as the proper issue of that revolution of mind which they were then undergoing.” (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *A Commentary: Critical, Practical and Explanatory* [Toledo: 1883], p. 474, comment on Acts 2:38.)

Horatius Bonar (1808 - 1889):

“The word repentance signifies in the Greek, ‘change of mind;’ and this change the Holy Spirit produces in connection with the gospel, *not the law*. ‘Repent and believe the gospel’ (Mark i. 15), does not mean ‘get repentance by the law, and then believe the gospel;’ but ‘let this good news about the kingdom which I am preaching, lead you to change your views and receive the gospel.’ Repentance being put before faith here, simply implies, that there must be a turning from what is false in order to the reception of what is true. If I would turn my face to the north, I must turn it from the south; yet I should not think of calling the one of these preparatory to the other. They must, in the nature of things, go together. Repentance, then, is not, in any sense, a preliminary qualification for faith,—least of all in the sense of sorrow for sin.” (Bonar, *God’s Way of Peace* [New York: 1878], p. 162, emphasis his.)

J. Oswald Jackson (1820 - 1901):

The Reverend J. Oswald Jackson, in his critical dissertation on the Greek word *metanoia* titled *REPENTANCE: OR THE CHANGE OF MIND NECESSARY FOR SALVATION CONSIDERED*, clearly demonstrates that this understanding of *metanoia* as being “a change of mind” does not stand on questionable or even new ground, but is instead the Scriptural doctrine and correct understanding of the word repentance as well as the testimony of biblical critics and scholars alike, so much so that the author can confidently say: “I may remark that all the critics and commentators that I have been able to examine, give the same signification to *μετάνοια*, *metanoia*, rendered *repentance*, with unanimous voice declaring that it signifies *change of mind*.” (J. Oswald Jackson, *REPENTANCE: OR THE CHANGE OF MIND NECESSARY FOR SALVATION CONSIDERED* [London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1845], pp. 22-23.)

Henry Alford (1810 - 1871):

Commenting on Acts 2:38, Dean Alford writes: “Well then, what was the answer which the Apostle Peter gave to them? ‘*Change your mind*’—‘*Repent*’. It is well, sometimes, to express words with their simple derivative force. ‘*Change your minds*’—not, do penance: there is no outward act implied in the word further than the inward state of mind will necessarily and naturally bring about.” (Alford, *Homilies on the Former Part of the Acts of the Apostles, Chap. 1 – 10* [London: 1858], p. 107.)

Commenting on Romans 2:4-5, Dean Alford writes: “impenitent] i.e. not admitting that *repentance*, that *change of mind* (for this is the meaning of the word) to which God is leading thee.” (Henry Alford, *The New Testament for English Readers* [London: 1865], 2 Vols., Vol. 2, p. 165.)

Philip Schaff (1819 - 1893):

“The Greek term *metanoia*, which is uniformly translated *repentance* in the English Bible, signifies properly a *change of mind* or *of heart*, and corresponds to what we generally mean by *conversion*.” (Schaff, *A Catechism for Sunday Schools and Families* [New York: Evangelical Knowledge Society, 1871], p. 120, emphasis his.)

Brooke Foss Westcott (1825 - 1901):

Commenting on Hebrews 6:1, Westcott writes, “‘Repentance *from* dead works’ expresses that complete change of mind—of spiritual attitude—which leads the believer to abandon these works [as a way of salvation] and seek some other support for life.” (B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 146.)

Commenting on Hebrews 12:17, Westcott says, “‘A place of repentance’ is an opportunity for changing a former decision so that the consequences which would have followed from it if persisted in follow no longer.” (B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 411.)

Dwight L. Moody (1837 - 1899):

“Repentance is a change of mind.” (D. L. Moody, *The Gospel Awakening* [Chicago: F. H. Revell, 1883], p. 315.)

“Repentance, a change of mind, a new mind about God.” (D. L. Moody, *Pleasure and Profit in Bible Study* [Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1895], p. 100.)

“A changed mind. Repentance.” (D. L. Moody, *Notes From My Bible* [Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1895], p. 230.)

“*Repentance*: a change of mind; a new opinion about God.” (T. J. Shanks, *D. L. Moody at Home* [Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1886], p. 188.)

“Because [Moody] spoke of repentance as a ‘change of mind,’ this suggests that he knew that the Greek word for that phrase, *metanoia*, was the term used in the New Testament to designate repentance.” (James F. Findlay, Jr., *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist* [Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2007], p. 240. Previously published by The University of Chicago Press, 1969.)

The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (1897):

“It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the Greek word translated repentance (*penance*, Wiclif and the Rhemish Version) contains neither the idea of sorrow nor of penitential discipline. The word means *change of mind or purpose*. Sorrow may or may not accompany it.”

(J. J. Lias, *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* [Cambridge: The University Press, 1897], p. 84, commentary on 2 Corinthians 7:9.)

B. H. Carroll (1843 - 1914):

“[The word] *metamelomai* [‘regret’] does not express the full idea of New Testament repentance. For example, Judas repented and went and hanged himself, but ‘repentance is unto life,’ and it is worldly sorrow that worketh death. Second, because there is another term always employed in expressing New Testament repentance. That other term is the noun, *metanoia*, from the verb, *metanoeo*. I cite for the benefit of the reader every New Testament use of the verb, and ask him to look at each reference and note its application to our doctrine. Matthew uses the term five times, as follows: 3:2; 4:17; 11:20-21; 12:41. Mark twice: 1:15; 6:12. Luke ten times in his Gospel: 10:13; 11:32; 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; 16:30; 17:3-4, 30. In Acts five times more: 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20. Paul once: 2 Corinthians 12:21. John eleven times: Revelation 2:5, 16, 21-22; 3:3, 19; 9: 20-21; 16:9, 11. Thirty-four times in all. Matthew uses the noun three times: 3:8, 11; 9:13. Mark twice: 1:14; 2:17. Luke five times in his Gospel: 3:3, 8; 5:32; 15:7; 24:47. Six times in Acts: 5:31; 11:18; 13:24; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20. Paul seven times: Romans 11:4; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:25; Hebrews 6:1, 6; 12:17. Peter once: 2 Peter 3:9. In all, twenty-four. We thus observe that this term, as a noun or verb, is employed fifty-eight times in the New Testament, occurring in books by Matthew eight times; Mark four times; Luke twenty-six times; John eleven times; Peter one time; Paul eight times; and in every instance refers unmistakably to the New Testament doctrine of repentance, and to nothing else. It should be noted also carefully that repentance is declared to be the product of godly sorrow, *lupe kata theon*; and that it always ends in salvation, eternal life (Acts 11:18; 2 Cor. 7:7-10). Hence it follows that repentance is always *ametameletos*, ‘not regrettable.’ This adjective is compounded from the verb *melein* and the preposition, *meta*, and the primitive particle *a*. We advance in our knowledge of *metanoeo*, to repent, and *metanoia*, repentance, by considering that there is a Greek noun, *nous*, the mind. There is also a Greek verb which tells what the mind does – *noeo*, to think, perceive, understand. Then there is the preposition, *meta*, which, in composition with *noeo*, expresses the idea of change, transition, sequence. Therefore, we may say that *metanoeo* always means ‘to think back, to change the mind,’ while the

noun, *metanoia*, always means afterthought, as opposed to forethought, *change of mind*. We may, therefore, give as the one invariable definition of New Testament repentance that it is a change of mind, from which it is evident that its domain is limited. It is necessarily internal, not external.” (Excerpted from B. H. Carroll’s 17-volume commentary *An Interpretation of the English Bible*. See volume 10: “The Four Gospels,” section 13: “The Nature, Necessity, Importance and Definition of Repentance”.)

C. I. Scofield (1843 - 1921):

In *The Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1917), the Rev. C. I. Scofield gives the following note on the word “repent” in Acts 17:30. Scofield writes: “Repentance is the trans. of a Gr. word (*metanoia*—*metanoeo*) meaning ‘to have another mind,’ ‘to change the mind,’ and is used in the N.T. to indicate a change of mind in respect of sin, of God, and of self. This change of mind may, especially in the case of Christians who have fallen into sin, be preceded by sorrow (2 Cor. 7. 8-11), but sorrow for sin, though it may ‘work’ repentance, is not repentance. The son in Mt. 21. 28, 29 illustrates true repentance. Saving faith...includes and implies that change of mind which is called repentance.” (Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1909, 1917, 1937, 1945], p. 1174, note 2.)

Richard Francis Weymouth (1822 - 1902):

The *Weymouth New Testament* with notes has a footnote for the word “Repent” in Matthew 3:2 that supports the traditional (or classic) Free Grace view of repentance as *a change of mind and heart*. The footnote for the word “Repent” in Matthew 3:2 reads as follows: “5. *repent*] Or ‘change your minds.’” This understanding of repentance as *a change of mind* is borne out in the text of the Weymouth NT in several places. For instance, Matthew 3:8 (“Therefore produce fruit consistent with repentance;” NASB) in the WNT reads: “Therefore let your lives prove your change of heart” (Matt. 3:8, WNT). The parallel passage in Luke 3:8 reads similarly: “Live lives which shall prove your change of heart” (Lk. 3:8, WNT). This is the proper order, first change your minds and hearts (*repent*), and then as a result of your repentance, “let your lives prove your change of heart”. (*Weymouth New Testament* [London: 1915], p. 7, see note 5 on “Repent” in Matthew 3:2.)

James M. Gray (1851 - 1935):

“Repentance means a ‘change of mind,’ and the moment one takes Jesus by faith to be his personal Savior, that moment he has experienced and manifested that change of mind. I am now speaking, of course, of the initial act of salvation.” (Gray, *Bible Problems Explained* [New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1913], pp. 61.)

Commenting on Acts 2:37-40, Gray makes it a point to say, “observe that ‘repent’ means ‘change your mind,’ i.e., about Jesus Christ and your sin in regards to Him, and let that change of mind exhibit itself in being baptized in His name.” (Gray, “The First Christian Sermon,” *The Christian Workers Magazine* [Sept. 1915, Vol. 16, No. 1], p. 381.)

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (1915):

Under the heading “NT Terms...Repent, ‘to Change the Mind’” the author writes: “The word *μετάνοεω*, *metanoēō*, expresses the true NT idea of the spiritual change implied in a sinner’s return to God. The term signifies ‘to have another mind,’ to change the opinion or purpose with regard to sin. It is equivalent to the OT word ‘turn.’ Thus it is employed by John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles (Mt 3 2; Mk 1 15; Acts 2 38).” (Byron H. DeMent, James Orr, Editor, “REPENTANCE” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* [Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915], 5 Vols, Vol. 4, p. 2558.)

A.T. Robertson (1863 - 1934):

“Repent (*metanoēite*). Broadus used to say that this is the worst translation in the New Testament. The trouble is that the English word ‘repent’ means ‘to be sorry again’ from the Latin *repenitet* (impersonal). John [the Baptist] did not call on the people to be sorry, but to change (think afterwards) their mental attitudes (*metanoēite*) and conduct. The Vulgate has it ‘do penance’ and Wycliff has followed that. The Old Syriac has it better: ‘Turn ye.’ The French (Geneva) has it “*Amendez vous*.” This is John’s great word (Bruce) and it has been hopelessly mistranslated. The tragedy of it is that we have no one English word that reproduces exactly the meaning and atmosphere of the Greek word.” (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament*, comment on Matthew 3:2.)

“Certainly the word for repentance [*metanoia*] is more than a mere ‘after-thought.’ It is a ‘change of mind’ that leads to and is shown by a change of life, ‘fruits worthy of repentance’ (Luke 3:8).” (Robertson, *The Minister And His Greek New Testament* [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923], p. 54.) Robertson's statement here is consistent with how classic Free Grace theology has traditionally understood the relationship between faith and works, justification and sanctification. For example, Charles Ryrie in his book *So Great Salvation* (p. 45) writes: “Every Christian will bear spiritual fruit. Somewhere, sometime, somehow. Otherwise the person is not a believer. Every born-again individual will be fruitful. Not to be fruitful is to be faithless, without faith, and therefore without salvation.”

“It is a linguistic and theological tragedy that we have to go on using ‘repentance’ for *metanoia*. But observe that the ‘sorrow’ has led to ‘repentance’ and was not itself the repentance.” (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, comment on 2 Corinthians 7:9.)

G. Campbell Morgan (1863 - 1945):

“I want to speak about the simplest meaning of the word ‘repent,’ for as we know what this word really means, we shall understand the message of our Lord [when He said, ‘Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand’].

In the New Testament there are two Greek words translated ‘repent.’ They have quite different meanings. One of these words [*metamelomai*] means to sorrow for or regret a deed. The other word [*metanoia*] means very simply and very literally to change the mind.

Around these two words a great conflict was waged between the Reformers and the Roman Catholic theologians. The Reformers maintained that the second word, which means a change of mind, was used of the change which is necessary to salvation; while the former word, which indicates sorrow after an event, was in some cases indicative of a change of mind, and in other cases it was not so. Such was the contention, in brief, of the Reformers. On the other hand, the Roman theologians maintained that the words were used interchangeably, that the elements of each were present in both, and they taught that the prevailing value was that of sorrow. The whole battle was waged around two Latin words, *poenitentia*, which means the sense of sorrow, and *recipiscentia*, which means the recovery of the senses. The Reformers maintained

that the essential repentance demanded by Christ and His Apostles, as well as by prophets, was a change of the senses, or a change of mind. The Roman theologians, on the other hand, maintained that the prime elements indicated by the word 'repent' was sorrow, and from that Roman theology we have gained our word 'repent' and the associated idea that sorrow is the prime element in repentance.

I have the profoundest conviction that the Reformers were right, and that the Roman theologians were wrong. A careful examination of the New Testament use of these two words will show that the essential quality that Christ called for was not sorrow, but a change of mind. Now do not understand me to say that the change of mind will not be followed by sorrow. My experience is that the sorrow grows with the Christian life, and is not part of its initiation. . . . The repentance that Christ preached, and His Apostles preached, the repentance which is demanded of every man is always indicated by the use of the word that means a change of mind.

When Christ used that word, and when, as I have no doubt in the hearing of the men who listened to Him, it had exactly that meaning of change of mind, He had passed beyond the outer circumference of things into the inner center of a man's life. He began by declaring to men that their thought was wrong, that their conception of life was wrong. Now we say to a man, alas, too often, Change your conduct. Jesus never begins by telling a man to change his conduct. That is to begin in the externalities of human life. He comes to a man, and says, Change your mind, and by that word He means that men hold wrong views at the very center of their being. The word 'repent' passes into the fundamental realm, the thought of a man's life. We are not accustomed to think about this deepest fact, and even in preaching we are too often more occupied with conduct than with creed. I use the word 'creed' very carefully; I am not referring to the creed prepared for us to recite, I am referring to the creed of our life, to the deepest conception of it, to the underlying and overmastering thing that we absolutely believe.

We all believe something, and it is the something which a man believes that makes his conduct and finally makes his character. 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he,' and when Jesus came and began His preaching, instead of starting a society to correct the conduct of

men, He faced men, and He said: Change your mind, repent, get right at the center of things.” (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Westminster Pulpit* [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011], 10 Vols., Vol. 6, pp. 158-160, ellipsis added. Excerpted from Chapter 12, “The First Message of Jesus”. Note: Previously published by Fleming H. Revell, Co., 1954.)

H. A. Ironside (1876 - 1951):

“What then is repentance? So far as possible I desire to avoid the use of all abstruse or pedantic terms, for I am writing not simply for scholars, but for those Lincoln had in mind when he said, ‘God must have thought a lot of the common people, for He made so many of them.’ Therefore I wish, so far as possible, to avoid citing Greek or Hebrew words. But here it seems necessary to say that it is the Greek word, *μετάνοια*, *metanoia*, which is translated ‘repentance’ in our English Bibles, and literally means a change of mind. This is not simply the acceptance of new ideas in place of old notions. But it actually implies a complete reversal of one’s inward attitude.” (Ironside, *Except Ye Repent* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1937], pp. 14-15.)

“What then is meant by ‘repentance from dead works’ [Heb. 6:1]? It is a complete change of mind, whereby the convicted sinner gives up all thought of being able to propitiate God by effort of his own and acknowledges that he is as bad as the Word has declared him to be. He turns right about face. Instead of relying on his own fancied merits he turns to the Lord for deliverance and seeks for mercy through the Saviour God has provided.” (Ibid., p. 83.)

William R. Newell (1868 - 1956):

“The very first gospel announcement to the Hebrews would be something entirely new—repentance, an entire change of mind, as to ‘works’ securing salvation—the announcement that such ‘works’ were ‘dead,’ as regards obtaining eternal life, and were no longer to be trusted in, but wholly *left* as a ground of hope. There was to be repentance from dead works. Their conscience was to be cleansed, by Christ’s blood, from dead works (Ch. 9.14).”

“‘Dead works’ present the essential character of the works in themselves: ‘works of law’—present them in relation to an ideal, unattainable, standard! It follows therefore that

repentance from dead works expresses that complete change of mind—of spiritual attitude—which leads the believer to abandon these works and seek some other support for life.” – Westcott.” (Newell, *Hebrews Verse-By-Verse*, p. 179, commentary on Hebrews 6:1.)

William Pettingill (1866 - 1950):

“What place has repentance in salvation? Should we tell people to repent of their sins to be saved? The Gospel of John is the Holy Spirit's Gospel Tract, written that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing they might have life through His name (20:31). And it does not mention the word ‘repentance’. But that is only because repentance is a necessary part of saving faith. Strictly speaking, the word repentance means a ‘change of mind’. It is by no means the same thing as sorrow (II Corinthians 7:10). Since it is not possible to an unbeliever to become a believer without changing his mind, it is therefore unnecessary to say anything about it. The only thing for a man to do in order to be saved is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ: and to believe on Him is the same thing as receiving Him (John 1:11-13).” (Pettingill, *Bible Questions Answered*, pp. 215-216.)

Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871 - 1952):

“The word *metanoia* is in every instance translated *repentance*. The word means *a change of mind*. The common practice of reading into this word the thought of sorrow or heart anguish is responsible for much confusion in the field of Soteriology. There is no reason why sorrow should not accompany repentance or lead on to repentance, but the sorrow, whatever it may be, is not repentance. In 2 Corinthians 7:10, it is said that ‘godly sorrow worketh repentance,’ that is, it leads on to repentance; but the sorrow is not to be mistaken for the change of mind which it may serve to produce. The son cited by Christ as reported in Matthew 21:28-29 who first said ‘I will not go,’ and afterward repented and went, is a true example of the precise meaning of the word. The New Testament call to repentance is not an urge to self-condemnation, but is a call to a change of mind which promotes a change in the course being pursued. This definition of this word as it is used in the New Testament is fundamental. Little or no progress can be made in a right induction of the Word of God on this theme, unless the true

and accurate meaning of the word is discovered and defended throughout.” (Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, p. 372-373.)

“Too often, when it is asserted—as it is here—that repentance is not to be added to belief as a separate requirement for salvation, it is assumed that by so much the claim has been set up that repentance is *not* necessary to salvation. Therefore, it is as dogmatically stated as language can declare, that repentance is essential to salvation and that none could be saved apart from repentance, but it is included in believing and could not be separated from it.” (Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, p. 373.)

“To believe on Christ is one act, regardless of the manifold results which it secures. It is not turning from something to something; but rather turning to something from something. If this terminology seems a mere play on words, it will be discovered, by more careful investigation, that this is a vital distinction. To turn from evil may easily be a complete act in itself, since the action can be terminated at that point. To turn to Christ is a solitary act, also, and the joining of these two separate acts corresponds to the notion that two acts—repentance and faith—are required for salvation. On the other hand, turning to Christ from all other confidences is one act, and in that one act repentance, which is a change of mind, is included. The Apostle stresses this distinction in accurate terms when he says to the Thessalonians, ‘Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God’ (1 Thess. 1:9). This text provides no comfort for those who contend that people must first, in real contrition, turn from idols—which might terminate at that point—and afterwards, as a second and separate act, turn to God. The text recognizes but one act—‘Ye turned to God from idols’—and that is an act of faith alone.” (Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, pp. 374-375.)

“The true meaning of the word shows that it is a change of mind and although there may be nothing to preclude that change being accompanied by grief, the sorrow itself is not repentance.” (Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 7, p. 265.)

Giovanni Papini (1881 - 1956):

“In fact Jesus adds: ‘Repent ye!’ Here again the true and splendid meaning of the word has been distorted. The word Mark uses, *Metanoeite*, is badly rendered by *poenitemini* or *repent*

ye. Its true meaning is *mutatio mentis*, which signifies the changing of the heart, the transformation of the soul. *Metamorphosis* means a change of form—*metanoia*, a change of spirit. The sense would be rendered better by *conversion*, which means the renewal of the inner man; but the idea conveyed by ‘repentance’ and ‘penance’ is already an application of the words of Jesus, a commentary upon them.” (Papini, *The Story of Christ* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923], p. 60. Note: I have transcribed the Greek letters in the original statement into English.)

John R. Rice (1895 - 1980):

“...the Greek word *metanoeo*, meaning change of mind or heart, used repeatedly in the New Testament for the repentance which brings salvation.” (John R. Rice, *The King of the Jews, A Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew* [Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1955], p. 462.)

“‘Then Peter said unto them, Repent....’ This is not a different plan of salvation from the plan to ‘believe on the Lord Jesus Christ’ as the Philippian jailer was instructed and as otherwise given often in the Gospels (John 1:12; John 3:14-16; John 3:18; John 5:24; John 6:40; John 6:47; Acts 13:38, 39). The saving Gospel as to how men are to be saved is once described as ‘repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Acts 20:21). But usually where one is mentioned as the way of salvation, the other is implied, not mentioned. Actually saving repentance and saving faith are simply two ways of saying the same thing. The Greek word for repentance is metanoia, meaning literally a change of mind. That is, a change of heart attitude. But the change is from unbelief to faith. To repent means to turn from sin [fundamentally *unbelief*, Jn. 16:9]. Saving faith means to turn to Christ, relying on Him for salvation.” (John R. Rice, *Acts: Filled With the Spirit, A Verse-by-Verse Commentary on Acts of the Apostles* [Murfreesboro: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1963], pp. 93-94, commentary on Acts 2:37-40.)

Peake’s Commentary on the Bible (1962):

“The Gr. word translated ‘repent’ [in Matthew 4:17] (*metanoieite*, lit. ‘change your mind’) is in NT times and especially in eschatological literature equivalent not to ‘grieve for one’s sins’ (*niham*) but to ‘turn around, return’ (*shubh*)....It is the appropriate attitude in the time when

the Kingdom is at hand.” (Krister Stendahl, Matthew Black, Editor, *Peake’s Commentary on the Bible* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1962, 1982], p. 774.)

Julius R. Mantey (1890 - 1981):

The Greek scholar Dr. Julius R. Mantey gives the following definition of repentance under the heading “*Meaning of Repentance and Conversion in the New Testament.*” Mantey writes: “*Metanoeo (metanoia, noun)* is regularly used to express the requisite state of mind necessary for the forgiveness of sin. It means to think differently or to have a different attitude toward sin and God, etc.” (Julius R. Mantey, “Repentance and Conversion,” *Christianity Today*, March 2, 1962, italics his.)

Manford Gutzke (1964):

“When thinking of the word *repent* or *repentance*, there are at least two general ideas that are not repentance. *Repentance* does not mean to be sorry for some wrong I have done....Some may think repentance is promising to do good. I do not want to seem to be too harsh, but how much good is it going to do for anyone to promise to do good?Repentance is primarily a judgment about myself. The expression so often used, which has an awkward translation into English, is, ‘repenting of our sins.’ Actually this is not a sound idea. The reason it is so awkward to say is that man does not ‘repent his sins’ nor does he ‘repent of his sins’; he repents himself. Repentance is judgment upon myself whereby I admit that I am not good....Repentance is a very important matter. Because it is not until I am willing to acknowledge before God that I am nothing in myself that I will believe the Gospel.” (Gutzke, *Plain Talk About Christian Words*, pp. 122-123. This statement by Gutzke is quoted by Dr. Hank Lindstrom in his article titled “The Incompatibility of False Teaching on Repentance with the Gospel of Grace”.)

J. Dwight Pentecost (1965):

“It is our purpose to discuss the Scriptural doctrine of repentance. It is important because so many minds have been confused concerning the simplicity of salvation by the perversion of the Scriptural teaching of this important doctrine....The doctrine has suffered tremendously from

an erroneous concept held by most men, for when the word 'repent' is used, it brings to mind of the average individual the thought of sorrow for sin....And this sorrow for sin is usually called 'repentance.' But there could be nothing further from the concept of the Word of God than the idea that repentance means sorrow for sins. From the Word of God we discover that the word translated 'repent' means 'a change of mind.' It means, literally, 'a turning about'; not so much a physical turning about as a mental turning around, a change of course, a change of direction, a change of attitude. This is the concept of the word. Now, such as change of mind as the Scripture enjoins when it speaks of repentance may produce a sorrow for sin, but it will be the result after one has seen his sin in the light of holiness of God and has changed his attitude toward it." (Pentecost, *Things Which Become Sound Doctrine* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1965], pp. 61-62. Originally published: Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965.)

John Walvoord (1966):

"The second aspect of his exhortation [in Revelation 2:5] is embodied in the word *repent* (Gr., *metanoeson*, meaning 'to change the mind')." (Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* [Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1966], p. 57.)

Roger Post (1972):

"For the unregenerate man, repentance is the change of mind whereby he turns from unbelief to faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ." (Roger Post, "The Meanings of the Words Translated 'Repent' and 'Repentance' in the New Testament," Master's Thesis, Wheaton College, June 1972, p. 80. This statement by Roger Post is quoted by Dr. Hank Lindstrom in his article titled "The Incompatibility of the Lordship Gospel with the Gospel of Grace".)

Hal Lindsey (1974):

"Repentance, as it relates to Christ, means to change our minds about Him, who He is and what He's done to provide forgiveness, and deliverance from our sins. When we place faith in Jesus as having taken our place personally on the cross and borne the penalty due our sins, then we're automatically repenting, because we couldn't accept Him in this way without having had

to change our minds in some way concerning Him.” (Lindsey, *The Liberation of Planet Earth* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974], p. 137.)

J. Vernon McGee (1904 - 1988):

Commenting on Matthew 3:1-2, McGee says, “‘Repent’ is an expression that always has been given to God’s people as a challenge to turn around. ‘Repent’ in the original Greek is *metanoia*, meaning ‘to change your mind.’ You are going in one direction; turn around [mentally] and go in another direction. Repentance is primarily, I think, for saved people, that is, for God’s people in any age. They are the ones who, when they become cold and indifferent, are to turn. That was the message to the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 2 and 3, and it was the message of the Lord Jesus Himself. Someone may ask whether the unsaved man is supposed to repent. The unsaved man is told that he is to *believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ. That was the message of Paul to the jailer at Philippi (see Acts 16:31). That old rascal needed to do some repenting; but when an unsaved man believes in Jesus, he is repenting. Faith means to turn to Christ, and when you turn to Christ, you must also turn from something [i.e. you must turn from whatever you were trusting in to get you to heaven and trust in Christ alone for salvation]. If you don’t turn from something, then you aren’t really turning to Christ. So repentance is really a part of believing, but the primary message that should be given to the lost today is that they should *believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ. We like to see folk come forward in a service to receive Christ or sign a card signifying that they have made that decision, but the important thing is to *trust* Christ as your Savior, and if you really turn *to* Him, you turn *from* something else [i.e. you turn from unbelief in Christ to believe in Christ alone for salvation].” (McGee, *Matthew: Chapters 1-13* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1991], p. 47.)

Commenting on 2 Corinthians 7:10, McGee says, “Here we find God’s definition of repentance—real repentance. Repentance is a change of mind. As far as I can tell, the only repentance God asks of the lost is in the word *believe*. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ! What happens when one believes? There is a change of mind. There is a turning from something to Someone. Listen to what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: ‘...how ye turned to God from idols...’ (1 Thess. 1:9)—that was a change of mind. How did it come about? They first turned to Christ.

When Paul had come to them, he hadn't preached against idolatry, he had preached Christ to them. And they turned to Christ. But they were idolaters. So when they turned to Christ in faith, what else happened? They turned *from* the idols, and that turning from idols was repentance. That is the repentance of the unsaved; it is the repentance to salvation. I don't know if God wants us to emphasize repentance to the unsaved; He does want us to emphasize Christ. When they respond to Christ, there will be a turning from their old unbelief to Christ." (McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary Series, Second Corinthians* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1991], p. 94. See McGee's commentary on 2 Corinthians 7:10.)

Commenting on Revelation 2:16, McGee says: "'Repent.' In other words, the only cure was repentance (*metanoēson*, 'a change of mind')." (McGee, *Revelation: Chapters 1-5* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1991], p. 83.)

George Eldon Ladd (1911 - 1982):

"'Repentance' suggests primarily sorrow for sin; *metanoia* suggests a change of mind'.

(George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993], p. 36.)

Charles Ryrie (1925 - 2016):

"The word *repent* means, of course, to change one's mind about something. But what that something is is all-important to the meaning of repentance in any given context....The content of repentance which brings eternal life, and that which Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, is a change of mind about Jesus Christ. Whereas the people who heard him on that day formerly thought of Jesus as a mere man, they were asked to accept Him as Lord (Deity) and Christ (promised Messiah). To do this would bring salvation." (Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1969], pp. 175-176.)

"Often the idea of believing is expressed by the word, repent (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20)....The word means to change one's mind, and by its usage in the Book of Acts it means to change one's mind about Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah. This involves no longer thinking of Him as merely the carpenter's son of Nazareth, an imposter, but now

receiving Him as both Lord (Jehovah) and Messiah. Thus, repentance as preached by the apostles was not a prerequisite to nor a consequence of salvation, but was actually the act of faith in Jesus which brought salvation to the one who repented.” (Ryrie, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 116-117. This statement by Ryrie is quoted by Dr. Hank Lindstrom in his article titled “REPENTANCE”).)

“In both the New and Old Testaments, repentance means ‘to change one’s mind.’ But the question must be asked, about what do you change your mind? Answering that question will focus the basic meaning on the particular change involved....The change of mind, however, must be genuine and not superficial. Biblical repentance also involves changing one’s mind in a way that affects some change in the person. Repentance is not merely an intellectual assent to something; it also includes a resultant change, usually in actions.” (Ryrie, *So Great Salvation* [Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989], p. 92.)

“Belief in Christ, as an expression of a change of mind, focuses on the new direction that change about God must take, namely, trusting in Christ, God's Son, as personal Savior. Jews needed to change their minds about Jesus and realize that He is their true Messiah” (Ryrie, *So Great Salvation* [Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989], p. 98).

“To repent is to change your mind. However, this only defines the word, not the concept, for you need to ask, Change your mind about what? Depending on how you answer that question, repentance might be a synonymous concept to believing in Christ or it might become an additional requirement for salvation. If repentance is understood to mean changing your mind about your sin—being sorry for your sin—this will not necessarily save....People can be sorry for their sins without wanting to accept the forgiveness of a Saviour. But if repentance means changing your mind about the particular sin of rejecting Christ, then that kind of repentance saves, and of course it is the same as faith in Christ. This is what Peter asked the crowd to do on the day of Pentecost [in Acts chapter 2]. They were to change their minds about Jesus of Nazareth. Formerly they had considered Him to be only a blasphemous human being claiming to be God; now they changed their minds and saw Him as the God-man Saviour whom they would trust for salvation. That kind of repentance saves, and everyone who is saved has

repented in that sense.” (Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine* [Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1972], p. 139.)

G. Michael Cocoris (1984, 1989, 2010):

“Repentance is basically a change of mind. *Metanoia*, the Greek word translated ‘repent,’ is a compound made up of two definite Greek words. The first is *meta*, ‘after,’ and the second is *noēma*, ‘mind.’ Thus, the two together mean ‘afterthought,’ or ‘change of mind.’ The word describes an inward change of thinking or attitude.” (Cocoris, *Evangelism: A Biblical Approach* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1984], p. 66.)

“The word translated ‘repent’ that is used in soteriological passages simply describes an inward change of thinking or attitude. Mantey of Greek grammar fame said, ‘It means to think differently or to have a different attitude toward sin and God, etc.’ (*Basic Christian Doctrine*, p. 193). Westcott, the famous Greek scholar, said, ‘It follows, therefore, that ‘repentance from dead works’ expresses that complete change of mind—of spiritual attitudes—which leads the believer to abandon these works and seek other support for life’ (*The Epistles to The Hebrews*, Brooke Foss Westcott, p. 144). Plummer calls repentance a ‘change of mind’ (*The Gospel According to St. Luke*, Alfred Plummer, p. 86). Actually Geerhardus Vos, the author quoted by MacArthur, agrees on this particular point. He defines the one word translated ‘repent’ in salvation verses as ‘reversal of the entire mental attitude’ (cf. p. 163 [in the first edition of MacArthur’s book *The Gospel According To Jesus*]). In my book on evangelism, I summed it up this way, ‘When someone changes his mind, there may be emotions—and there may not be. And when someone changes his mind, a change in the course of his action is expected, but both of these things are *results* of repentance and not the nature of repentance’ (*Evangelism: A Biblical Approach*, p. 66). Later in that chapter, I pointed out that Berkhof said, ‘According to Scripture, repentance is wholly an inward act and should not be confounded with a change of life that proceeds from it. Confession of sin and reparation of wrongs are *fruits* of repentance’ (*Systematic Theology*, p. 487). Berkhof is right. It is obvious that repentance is *not* a change in behavior because the Scripture says repent and bear fruit worthy of repentance (cf. Lk. 3:8, Acts 26:20). Therefore, a repentance by definition is not a change of behavior. Repentance is the

root, change of behavior is the fruit. (For a more detailed discussion of the subject of repentance, see ‘What is Repentance’ in *Evangelism: A Biblical Approach*, p. 65-72).” (G. Michael Cocoris, JOHN MacARTHUR, JR’S SYSTEM OF SALVATION: An Evaluation of the Book, *The Gospel According to Jesus* [1989], p. 18.)

“Repentance is a change of mind—period. A change of mind should result in a change of behavior, but the word *repent* looks at the change of belief, not the change in behavior. Repentance is the root; change in behavior is the fruit.” (Cocoris, *Repentance: The Most Misunderstood Word in the Bible* [Milwaukee: Grace Gospel Press, 2010], p. 20. This quote appears in a book review by Dr. Roy B. Zuck titled “Repentance: The Most Misunderstood Word in the Bible”. *DTS Voice*, October 1, 2011. <https://voice.dts.edu/review/g-michael-cocoris-repentance/>)

R. T. Kendall (1985):

“As we said earlier, repentance is the translation of the Greek word *metanoia*, which means ‘change of mind.’...Repentance is a vital ingredient in saving faith....If one asks, which comes first, faith or repentance, it depends how one defines repentance. If one sticks with its biblical meaning—‘change of mind’—then one can only say that they come together. But if one defines repentance, as ‘turning from every known sin’ (as some Puritans were inclined to do), one can see the endless confusion that will emerge if such ‘repentance’ is demanded prior to faith. The result has been doom and gloom, being never quite sure they are saved, owing to a fear they have not repented enough.” (R. T. Kendall, *One Saved, Always Saved* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1985], pp. 193-194.)

Curtis Hutson (1986):

“The problem is not preaching repentance; it is giving a wrong definition to the word. Down through the centuries ‘repent’ has come to mean a far different thing than when it was spoken by John the Baptist, the Apostle Paul, the Apostle John, and Jesus Christ Himself....If you look up the Greek word translated ‘repent’ in the King James Bible and used by Jesus, Paul, John and others in the New Testament, you will find that the [Greek] word *metanoeo* [which is simply the verb of the noun *metanoia*] means to think differently or afterwards, that is, to change the

mind.” (Curtis Hutson, *Repentance: What Does the Bible Teach?* [Murfreesboro: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1986], pp. 3-4.)

Roy B. Zuck (1989):

“Repentance is included in believing. Faith and repentance are like two sides of a coin. Genuine faith includes repentance, and genuine repentance includes faith. The Greek word for repentance (*metanoia*) means to change one's mind. But to change one's mind about what? About sin, about one's adequacy to save himself, about Christ as the only way of salvation, the only One who can make a person righteous.” (“Kindred Spirit,” a quarterly publication of Dallas Seminary, Summer 1989, p. 5. Cited by J. Hampton Keathley III in his book *ABCs for Christian Growth* [Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1996-2002], p. 450. Also cited by the bible.org website in the article: “Is repentance necessary for salvation?” [January 1, 2001].)

Robert Wilkin (1989):

“The pre-Christian meaning of *metanoia* as a change of mind is its basic NT sense as well....*Metanoia* is used in the NT in a number of different ways, all of which have the idea of a change of mind at the root. In a few contexts it is used via metonymy as a synonym for eternal salvation. When it is used in contexts dealing with temporal salvation from life's difficulties, a change of mind about one's sinful ways (i.e., repentance) is given as the condition. However, when used in contexts dealing with eternal salvation from hell, a change of mind about oneself and Christ (or, in one passage, regarding idols and God) is given as the condition. In such contexts *metanoia* is used as a synonym for faith.”

Wilkin concludes by saying that “in the NT it [*metanoia*] retains its pre-Christian meaning of a change of mind. The English reader thus generally needs to read “change of mind”—not turn from sins—when he sees the word ‘repent’ in the NT. The context must be consulted to determine the object of a person's change of mind.”

(Robert Wilkin, “Repentance and Salvation, Part 3: New Testament Repentance: Lexical Considerations,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, Autumn 1989, Vol. 2:2; cf. Robert Wilkin, “Repentance as a Condition for Salvation in the New Testament,” An Unpublished

Doctoral Dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1985. A condensed version of the dissertation appears in the first six issues of the *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*. Note: Wilkin has since renounced this view of repentance.)

Robert P. Lightner (1991):

“The word *repentance* means a change of mind....There is no question about it: repentance is necessary for salvation. However, Scripture views repentance as included in believing and not as an additional and separate condition to faith. All who have trusted Christ as Savior have changed their minds regarding Him and their sin.” (Lightner, *Sin, The Savior, and Salvation* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1991], p. 167.)

“Repentance in Scripture has to do with a change of mind. Evangelicals [for the most part] agree no one can be saved who does not change his mind about himself and his need, his sin which separates him from God, and about Christ as the only Savior.” (Lightner, *Sin, The Savior, and Salvation* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1991], p. 212.)

“But someone may say, ‘What about repentance? Must not man repent of his sin to be born again?’ In the Bible the word ‘repent’ means to change the mind. It involves an about-face. No one believes in Christ alone as Saviour without repenting, for he has changed his mind from self-sufficiency to faith in Christ. And all who truly repent, who truly change their minds about themselves and the Saviour, do believe in Him alone for salvation. Repentance and faith are two sides of the same truth (Acts 20:21).” (Lightner, *Truth for the Good Life in the Postmodern World* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005], p. 108. Previously published with the title *Truth for the Good Life* by Accent Books, 1978.)

Charles Bing (1991, 1997, 2010, 2015):

“The English word ‘repent’ is used to translate the Greek word *metanoeō*. . . . The basic meaning of the Greek word *metanoeō* is ‘to change the mind.’ . . . Thus it is concluded that the word *metanoeō* denotes basically a change of mind.” (Charles Bing, *Lordship Salvation, A Biblical Evaluation and Response*, 2nd GraceLife edition [Xulon Press, 2010], pp. 67, 69. Cf.

Charles Bing, *Lordship Salvation: A Biblical Evaluation and Response* [Ph.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1991], GraceLife edition, [Burleson, TX: GraceLife Ministries, 1997].)

“It is unfortunate that [the Greek word] *metanoēō* is translated ‘repent’ in the English Bible, for the English etymology denotes more the idea of penitence as sorrow, or worse, the [Roman] Catholic doctrine of penance, than it does the more accurate ‘change of mind.’” (Charles Bing, *Lordship Salvation: A Biblical Evaluation and Response* [Xulon Press, 2010], p. 69. Cf. Charles Bing, *Lordship Salvation: A Biblical Evaluation and Response* [Ph.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1991], GraceLife edition, [Burleson, TX: GraceLife Ministries, 1997].)

“...it is also accurate to translate the word repentance as a *change of heart*.” (Charles Bing, *Grace, Salvation, and Discipleship* [Grace Theology Press, 2015], p. 51, emphasis his. Cited by Wayne Grudem in his book “‘Free Grace’ Theology: 5 Ways It Diminishes the [Lordship] Gospel [Wheaton: Crossway Publishers, 2016], p. 56, see footnote 13.)

“Many or most Free Grace people believe that repentance means a change of heart or mind. Believing in Jesus Christ as Savior implies a change of heart or mind about something (e.g., one’s need, who Christ is, what Christ did, what Christ promised).” (Charles Bing, *GraceNotes*, Number 90, “Answering Common Objections to Free Grace, Part 1”. See under Objection #3. Cf. Charles Bing, *Grace, Salvation, and Discipleship: How To Understand Some Difficult Bible Passages* [Grace Theology Press, 2015], p. 280.)

J. Hampton Keathley III (1996):

“Since our English word [*repentance*] is a translation of the Greek of the New Testament, we need to look at the original language. ‘There are two New Testament Greek words which are translated *repentance* in the modern English translations: *metanoia* (and its verbal counterpart *metanoēō*) and *metamelomai*. The former term is so translated fifty-eight times in the New Testament; the latter only six times.’ [Bob Wilkin, “Repentance and Salvation,” Part 3, *The Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Autumn 89, p. 13.] This study will be concerned primarily with *metanoia*.

Metamelomai means 'to regret, change the mind' and may connote the idea of sorrow, but not necessarily. It is translated by 'regret, change the mind, and feel remorse' in the NASB and NIV, and in all but one of the passages where it is used, the primary idea is a change of mind (cf. Matt. 21:29, 32; 27:3; 2 Cor. 7:8; Heb. 7:21).

Metanoia, the primary word, without question, means 'a change of mind.' It refers to the thinking of people who thought one thing or made one decision and then, based on further evidence or input, changed their minds. So, the basic sense is '**a change of mind.**' This is its meaning and use outside the New Testament and in the New Testament. It is a change of mind that leads to a different course of action, but that course of action must be determined by the context. In a context that deals with forgiveness of sin or receiving eternal life as a gift from God, the course of action is a change of trust because one now sees Jesus as the only means of salvation from sin. Ryrie writes:

Sorrow may well be involved in a repentance, but the biblical meaning of repentance is to change one's mind, not to be sorry. And yet that change of mind must not be superficial, but genuine. The presence or absence of sorrow does not necessarily prove or disprove the genuineness of the repentance. [Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation* (Victor Books, Wheaton, 1989), p. 92.]

That sorrow does not necessarily prove or disprove the genuineness of repentance is clear from 2 Corinthians 7:9-10. Sorrow may lead to a genuine change of mind, or as in the case of Judas, it may not. The point being that **sorrow and repentance are not the same thing.**

But again, the nature of the change and what is changed must be determined by the context."

(J. Hampton Keathley III, *ABCs for Christian Growth* [Biblical Studies Press, 1996-2002], Fifth Edition, p. 449, emphasis his.)

R. Larry Moyer (1997):

"From the above study of the concept of repentance in the Old and New Testaments....Repentance clearly means to change the mind....When used in a soteriological context, 'repentance' means *to change your mind about whatever is keeping you from trusting*

*Christ and trust Him alone to save you.” (Moyer, *Free and Clear* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1997], pp. 92, 95, italics his.)*

The Theological Wordbook (2000):

“The primary New Testament word for repentance is *metanoia*, ‘to change one’s mind.’ The context determines the purpose for the change. One other word, *metamelomai*, ‘to regret, to be sorry’ (2 Cor. 7:8-10), adds little to the understanding of the doctrine of repentance. As stated above, the early occurrences of the term *repentance* pertained to the approaching kingdom (Matt. 3:2) and the forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3). ‘Forgiveness’ and ‘kingdom’ were well-known subjects to the Israelites, but with the coming of Christ some distinctions became apparent and the people needed to change their thinking about these issues.

The King James Version translates two Old Testament words by the word ‘repentance.’ *Nāham*, ‘to regret, to be sorry, to be comforted,’ reflects the emotions involved in change. Normally this Hebrew word was used when the Scriptures described God’s attitude about change (Exod. 32:14; Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:11). In each of these verses the New International Version translators selected different English words to express the meaning of the word. The primary Hebrew word that describes change, and which is translated ‘repentance’ in some instances, is, ‘to turn, return,’ used well over a thousand times. The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) usually translated *sub* [*shub*] by the Greek word *epistrephō*, ‘to turn about.’ This means that the Greek term *metanoia*, normally rendered ‘repentance,’ was not identical with either of the two Hebrew words. Thus the use of *metanoia* in the New Testament signaled an emphasis not integral to the Hebrew words. In addition, the English word *repentance* derives from the Latin and does not express the exact meaning of *metanoia*. With the presence of Christ in the world people needed to understand who He was and why He had come and this demanded a change in their thinking. So the word *metanoia* accurately expresses how Israel was to respond to Christ and His message.” (Wendell G. Johnston, Charles R. Swindoll, General Editor, Roy B. Zuck, Managing Editor, *The Theological Wordbook* [Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000], p. 297, emphasis his.)

Ron Rhodes (2006):

“Is Repentance a Condition for Salvation? To be sure, a child of God is repentant, but the term must be carefully defined. The biblical word translated *repent* literally means ‘a change of mind toward something or someone.’

Repentance as it relates to Jesus Christ, for example, means to change our mind about Him—who He is and what He’s done to provide forgiveness and deliverance from our sins. Repentance in this sense refers to changing our mind about the particular sin of rejecting Christ.

In the book of Acts, Peter preaches to Jews who had rejected Jesus as the Messiah. So when he admonishes them to repent and believe in Jesus (Acts 2:38; 3:19), they were actually being admonished to change their minds about Jesus and believe in Him as the Messiah/Savior so their sins could be forgiven.” (Ron Rhodes, *Christianity According to the Bible* [Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2006], p. 137. Cf. Ron Rhodes, *The Heart of Christianity*, p. 93.)

Charles Stanley (2008):

“What does repentance mean for the unbeliever? Repentance for those outside Christ means a change of mind. The unbeliever is to change his mind about what he believes concerning Jesus Christ. He moves from unbelief to belief that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for his sin. An unsaved person admits that she cannot save herself. She trusts Christ instead of her goodness for eternal life. She changes her mind about God and His payment for our sin. It is important to understand repentance for the unbeliever is not referring to cleaning up his life. If he can earn forgiveness of sin and a home in heaven by changing his life through self-effort, there is no need for the cross.

Peter proclaimed the need for repentance: ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 2:38). Peter was compelling them to believe that Jesus was more than a man from Nazareth. He was [and is] the resurrected Lord and Christ. He was [and is] the Messiah they had longed for. They needed to change their minds from believing that Jesus was just a man to accepting His deity. Peter said the evidence pointing to His deity was miracles, wonders, and

signs, but most of all, God raised Him from the dead. He challenged them to think of Jesus as more than a local person who was a good teacher. Peter was instructing the Jewish people to change their beliefs about Jesus (Acts 2:22-36).

Repentance and belief are so intertwined that they are almost synonymous. You cannot have one without the other. They are two sides of the same coin. Jesus used *repentance* as synonymous with *belief* when He said, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the 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 to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem' (Luke 24:46-47). Someone may say, 'But doesn't Acts 20:21 teach that repentance and belief are not the same?' The verse states, 'I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus' (NIV).

I like the way Charles Ryrie explains this passage:

'Summarizing his ministry in Ephesus, Paul said he testified to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. Does this not show that faith and repentance are not synonymous? Or at least that repentance is a precondition to faith? No, because the two words, repentance and faith, are joined by one article which indicates that the two are inseparable, though each focuses on a facet of the single requirement for salvation. Repentance focuses on changing one's mind about his former conception of God and disbelief in God and Christ; while faith in Christ, of course, focuses on receiving Him as personal Savior.'

After you receive Christ, you will continue to repent as you grow in Christian faith and character. This repentance is a change of mind that leads to change of behavior."

(Charles F. Stanley, *Handbook for Christian Living: Biblical Answers to Life's Tough Questions* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008], pp. 226-227, italics his.)

James A. Scudder (2010):

“The word ‘repentance’ is not the best translation [of *metanoia*]. A better translation would have been ‘to change your mind.’” (James A. Scudder, *Forever With God* [Lake Zurich: Victory in Grace Ministries, 2010], p. 40.)

Anthony Bottoms (2019):

Sir Anthony Bottoms of Cambridge University writes:

“A characterisation of repentance as ‘turning around’ is certainly not the only interpretation available within the Christian tradition; but, equally, it is not an eccentric understanding within the tradition. To illustrate this point, consider the Greek words *metanoēō* (a verb) and *metanoia* (a noun), which in English versions of the New Testament are usually translated ‘to repent’ and ‘repentance’. There is a consensus in modern scholarship that the core meaning of *metanoia* is simply ‘a change of mind or purpose’. To take a prominent example of how the word is used, in the Gospel of Mark the first words attributed to Jesus at the beginning of his ministry are: ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent [*metanoēite*], and believe the good news’. As the context suggests, the main action for which this statement calls is a change of mind or purpose in response to the radically new situation described.” (Anthony E. Bottoms, “REPENTANCE AS ‘TURNING AROUND’,” Antje du Bois-Pedain, and Anthony E. Bottoms, Editors, *Penal Censure* [Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2019], p. 126, spelling and italics his.)

In a footnote (Ibid., p. 126, f.n. 86), the author cites the following Greek-English lexicons in support of his statements above: “A modern edition of a classical Greek-English Lexicon offers definitions as follows: *metanoia*: ‘change of mind or heart’, ‘repentance’, ‘regret’, and possibly ‘afterthought’; *metanoēō*: ‘to perceive afterwards or too late’, ‘to change one’s mind or purpose’ and ‘to repent [of]’: H G Liddell, R Scott and H S Jones (eds) *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edn (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968) at 1115. See also the definitions in FW Danker (ed), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Early Christian Literature*, 3rd edn (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2000) at 640: *metanoia*: primarily ‘a change of mind’, also

‘repentance, turning around, conversion’; *metanoēō*: (i) change one's mind, (ii) feel remorse, repent, be converted.”

Chuck Swindoll (2020):

“The essence of genuine repentance is that the mind does a turnaround. The Greek word is *metanoia*, meaning, literally, ‘to change one’s mind.’” (Swindoll, “A Quick Turnaround,” June 11, 2020. *Insight for Today*, A Daily Devotional by Pastor Chuck Swindoll.)

APPENDIX 1:

LUTHER ON METANOIA

“*Metanoia*, which the old interpreter [i.e. Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate] expresses as *poenitentiam* [repentance], it is called *resipiscentia* [‘a change of mind’] or *transmentatio* [‘a change of mind, thought, or intention’]: just as also Erasmus notes about chapter 3 of the gospel according to Matthew. *Metanoieitae*, it is *transmentamini* [in Latin], that is, assume a different mind & perception, recover your senses, make a transition of mind & a Passover of spirit, so as to now be wise in heavenly things, instead of thus far you have been wise in earthly things. Also Lactantius [in] book 6 of his *Institutes* informs, that *poenitentia* [repentance] in Greek is called *Metanoia*, that is *resipiscentia*. By no means therefore from use in sacred Scripture is repentance called sorrow, but a change of mind and judgment [so as to use better judgment], and to repent is to be wise after an error, and to install a mind for right living.”

(Ruaro Tapper, *Explicationis Articulorum Venerandae Facultatis Sacrae Theologiae* [Lovanii/Leuven, 1555], 2 Vols., Vol. 1, pp. 181-182. Note: This quotation of Luther’s understanding of *metanoia* appears in a section of Tapper’s book titled “Responsio Ad Argumenta Lutheri” which translated means “Response to Luther’s Arguments”. Ruaro Tapper [1487-1559] was a Dutch 16th century Roman Catholic theologian who argued against Luther’s “change of mind” view of repentance.)

A LINE-BY-LINE TRANSLATION WITH NOTES.

“Metanoia, inquit, quam vetus interpres reddit poenitentiam,

“Metanoia, which the old interpreter [i.e. Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate] expresses as repentance,

NOTES:

Metanoia: This is a Greek word, not Latin. *Metanoia* is commonly translated “repentance,” although more literally the Greek word means *a change of mind* or, in other words, *a change of heart*.

inquit: he/it says,

quam: how, how much, than, which, as, and

vetus: old, former, previous, ancient, long-standing

interpres: translator, interpreter

reddit: renders, expresses

poenitentiam: repentance

dicitur resipiscentia sive transmentatio: quemadmodum etiam annotate Erasmus circa 3. cap. evangelii secundum Matth.

it is called *resipiscentia* or *transmentatio*: just as also Erasmus notes about chapter 3 of the gospel according to Matthew.

NOTES:

resipiscentia: “to recover one’s senses, come to one’s self again” (*A Latin Dictionary*. Founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary. revised, enlarged, and in

great part rewritten by. Charlton T. Lewis, Ph.D. and. Charles Short, LL.D. Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1879. See the entry “resipisco”).

sive: or

transmentatio: Under the heading “*Transmentatio*” in his lexicon, Goclenius writes: “*Mutatio mentis, metanoia*”. (Rodolphi Goclenii [Rudolph Goclenius], *Lexicon Philosophicum Graecum* [1615], p. 340.) This can be translated, “a change, alteration, or transformation of the mind, thought, intention, *metanoia*”.

quemadmodum: how, as, just as, in what way, as for instance

etiam: and, and also, also, indeed, even, even so, yes, likewise

annotate: notes, comments, remarks, writes, “to put a note to something, to write down something, to note down, remark, comment on”. (A Latin Dictionary, Charlton T. Lewis, Ph.D. and. Charles Short, LL.D. Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1879.)

circa: about, around, near, concerning, regarding

evangelii: (genitive singular of *evangelium*), *evangelii* can be translated “of the gospel”

secundum: according to

Metanoeitas, hoc est transmentamini, id est, mente & sensum alium induite, resipiscite,

Metanoeitas, it is *transmentamini* [in Latin], that is, put on a different mind & perception, recover your senses,

NOTES:

In the book *Elements of Religion*, Henry E. Jacobs translates Luther’s statement as follows: “...the Greek word, *metanoite*, which can be translated most literally by *transmentamini*, i.e., ‘assume another mind and disposition,’ ‘make a change of mind and a Passover of spirit,’ so as to be wise now in heavenly, as you formerly were in earthly things, as Paul says, Rom. 12:2: ‘Be ye transformed by the renewing of your

mind.’” (Jacobs, *Elements of Religion* [Philadelphia: The Board of Publication of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America, 1913], pp. 281-282.)

hoc est: that is

id est: it is, that is, that is (to say), that means, which means, namely

mente: mind

sensum: sense, perception, thought, opinion, view, notion, habit of mind, mode of thinking, feeling, i.e. “Mental *feeling, sense, disposition, sentiment, manner of thinking or feeling.*” (Peter Bullions, *A Copius and Critical Latin-English Dictionary* [New York: 1882], p. 862. See entry for the word “sensus”. Cf. Charlton T. Lewis, *An Elementary Latin Dictionary* [New York: 1890], p. 769. See entry for the word “sensus”.)

induite: from the word *induo*, “to put on (like an article of dress or an ornament), assume”

aliud: “another, other, different” (Charlton T. Lewis, *An Elementary Latin Dictionary*, p. 48. See entry for “alius”)., alter, alternate, else

resipiscite: “to recover one’s senses, come to one’s self again” (*A Latin Dictionary*. Founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary. revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten by. Charlton T. Lewis, Ph.D. and. Charles Short, LL.D. Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1879. See the entry “resipisco”).

transitum mentis & phase spiritus facite, ut scilicet nunc caelestia sapiatis, qui hucusque terrena sapuistis.

make a transition of mind & a Passover of spirit, so as to now be wise in heavenly things, instead of thus far you have been wise in earthly things [cf. Jn. 3:12].

NOTES:

transitum: from transeo (I traverse, go across, go over, pass over), meaning traverse, go across, go over, pass over, “*transeo...to go over or across, to cross over, pass over, pass by, pass* (synonym *transgredior*).” (Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*)

mentis: genitive singular of *mens*, meaning *mind, intellect, reason, reasoning, heart, conscience, disposition*

phase: “*Phase*, n. indecl., 1. *the Passover*, a Jewish feast commemorative of the rescue of the first-born among the Jews from the destruction which visited the Egyptians: ‘*est enim Phase (id est transitus) Domini*,’ Vulg. Exod. 12, 11: ‘*factum est Phase*,’ id. 4 Reg. 23, 22.” (Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*. See entry for “*Phase*”.)

spiritus: genitive singular

facite: (second-person plural, present, active, imperative of *facio*), the Latin word *facite* means “make”

ut: as, when

scilicet: Properly, “you may understand or know”, and serving to imply that a statement is in itself obviously true, and is not overlooked by the speaker. Literally, “it is permitted to know”. The word *scilicet* can mean: that is to say, surely, of course, naturally, namely, to wit, evidently, certainly, undoubtedly, it is evident, clear, plain, or manifest. In the post-Augustinian period, sometimes it is used as an explanatory particle, *namely, to wit, that is to say*.

nunc: now, today, at present

caelestia: *celestial, of or in the heavens, heavenly, figuratively divine*

sapiatis: (verb, second-person plural present active subjunctive of *sapiō*), you should be wise, have sense, be knowledgeable or understanding of things, be discerning, have good taste

qui: relative or indefinite pronoun. As a relative pronoun it means: *who, that, which, what*. As an indefinite pronoun it means: *anyone, anything, any, someone, something*. It can also mean: *in order that, to, instead of, to, as, because seeing that, since*

hucusque: thus far, to this point, up to this time, up to now, so far, to such an extent, to such a degree, until now, until then

terrena: earthly

sapientis: intelligence, good sense,

Et Lactantius lib. 6. Institutionum docet, quod poenitentia graece dicitur Metanoia, hoc est resipiscentia.

Also Lactantius [in] book 6 of his *Institutes* informs, that *poenitentia* [repentance] in Greek is called *Metanoia*, that is *resipiscentia*.

NOTES:

Et: and, also, even

lib. is an abbreviation for the Latin word *liber*, meaning book.

docet: he/she/it teaches, informs, instructs

quod: which, that, because,

poenitentia: This is the Latin word which in English is translated *repentance*.

graece: in Greek

Metanoia: This is the Greek word which in English is translated *repentance*.

dicitur: it is named, it is called, it means, it refers to

hoc: that

est: is

resipiscentia: “Latin *resipiscentia*, from *resipiscere* to recover one's senses, from Latin *sapere* to know” (*Collins English Dictionary*, under the entry for “resipiscence”). This is the Latin word which Lactantius (and others such as Luther and Beza) say is a better translation for the Greek word *metanoia*. Since some readers may be unaware that Luther preferred the word *resipiscentia* to *poenitentia*, following are several affirmations of this fact. A 19th century clergyman of the Church of England affirms: “at the same time it [the phrase ‘to repent’ from the Latin word *poenitentiam*] is not sufficient to express the value of the Greek *metanoiein*. Lactantius (I. vi. C. 24), Beza, and Luther prefer *resipiscere*”. (*The Circulation of Roman Catholic Versions of the Bible by the British and Foreign Bible Society* [London: 1868], p. 25.) Another author, writing under the name “CLERICUS,” A.M., similarly writes that Luther “by his diligent study of the Hebrew and Greek originals, points out the errors of the [Latin] Vulgate, and the true meaning of *metanoia* to be not *poenitentia*, but *resipiscentia*”. (“CLERICUS,” A.M., *The Supremacy of Truth: Reasons and Suggestions for Providing Each Nation with a Version of The Holy Scriptures, Faithfully Translated from the Hebrew and Greek Originals* [London: 1851], p. 19, emphasis his.) Likewise, John Hales writes: “Luther declared that ‘*poenitentia*’ and ‘*poenitentiam agere*’ conveyed, in his day, a totally incorrect idea of the true sense of ‘meta-noia’ and ‘meta-noein,’ and suggests ‘*resipiscentia*’ and ‘*resipiscere*’ as more faithfully representing the force of the original Greek.” (J. D. Hales, *Romish Versions of the Bible: Facts and Arguments for the Consideration of Bible Societies* [London: 1856], p. 19.)

Non ergo in usu Scripturae sacrae poenitentia dolor dicitur, sed mutatio mentis & consilii,

By no means therefore from use in sacred Scripture is repentance called sorrow, but a change of mind and opinion/decision/judgment,

NOTES:

This statement by Luther is also quoted by another Roman Catholic apologist who writes, under the heading “*Variae inter nostram, Lutheri que sententiam differentiae*”:

“Denique circa primam conclusionem resolutionum suarum scribit iterum: *non ergo in usu sacra scripturae poenitentia DOLOR definitur, sed mutation mentis & consilii.*” (Francois Farvacques, *Apologia Pro Xenio Dilectionis* [Lovanii, 1669], p. 7.) Another Roman Catholic also references this statement by Luther. See Melchior Cano, *R. D. Melchioris Cani, Ordinis Praedicatorum, Episcopi Canariensis* [1605], p. 806.

non: by no means, not

ergo: therefore, then

in usu: from use in, use, of, from, away from, concerning, by, to, with

Scripturae: Scriptures

sacrae: sacred, holy

dolor: pain, anguish, grief, sorrow, suffering

dicitur: it is said, it is called, it is named

sed: but, but in fact

mutatio: change, alteration

mentis: (genitive singular of *mens*) “of mind”, intellect, reason, heart, disposition

consilii: (genitive singular of *consilium*, a synonym of the Latin word *sentential*—*a decided opinion*), “As a mental quality, *understanding, judgment, wisdom, sense*” (Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*). Cf. The following statement by Cicero: “*Nemo doctus unquam mutationem consilii inconstantiam dixit esse.*” That is to say, “No well-informed person has ever said changing one's opinion was fickleness.” Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum*. Bk. XVI. 8.

ac poenitere est sapere post erratum, animumque ad recte vivendum instituere.”

and to repent is to be wise after an error, and a mind for right living to install.”

NOTES:

Another Latin translation of this part of Luther's statement reads slightly different. Instead of "*animumque ad recte vivendum instituere*" ("and a mind for right living to install"), it reads "*instituereque animum ad vivendum recte*" ("and to install a mind for living right"). See Melchor Cano, *Melchioris Cani Episcopi Canariensis* [1774], Vol. 2, p. 446. Melchor Cano (1509-1560) was a Roman Catholic bishop and theologian.

ac: and, and also, and even

poenitere: (present, active, infinitive of *poeniteo*) "to repent"

est: it is, is

sapere: (present, active, infinitive of *sapio*) "to be wise", knowledgeable, sensible, discerning

post: after

erratum: error, mistake

animumque: "the mind as thinking, feeling, willing, the intellect, the sensibility, and the will," heart, soul

ad: to, unto, leading to, towards, for (*ad* is the antithesis, or direct opposite, of *ab* which means by, from, after); thus Luther is saying, "...and to install a mind *for* right living." It could be translated in various ways, such as, "*towards* right living", "*to* right living", "*unto* right living", "*leading to* right living", "*for* right living". The Latin word *ad* basically means "to, towards, for". As noted, the Latin word *ad* is the exact opposite of *ab*, meaning "from". This is significant, in that Luther does *not* say to put on a different mind "by right living"! But rather he says to put on a different mind "*for* right living." It reminds me of Ephesians 2:8-10, particularly verse 10 which says, "for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *for* good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." The fact that Luther says "for right living" and not "by right living" or "from right living" indicates that he saw a distinction between

repentance and right living. To Luther, “right living” is the natural outflow of repentance, the next step after repentance; the fruit, not the root (cf. Acts 26:20; Rom. 12:2).

recte: right, correct, true

vivendum: “living” or “live”

instituire: to put or place, to institute, to install, to establish, to found, to set up