**÷The Doctrine of Repentance (choice excerpts)**

By Thomas Watson, 1668

CHOICE EXCERPTS  
  
 **If any ingredient is left out**  
  
"Unless you repent, you will also perish." Luk 13:5  
  
Repentance is a grace of God's Spirit, whereby a  
sinner is inwardly humbled and outwardly reformed.  
Repentance is **a spiritual medicine** made up of  
*six special ingredients:*  
1. Sight of sin  
2. Sorrow for sin  
3. Confession of sin  
4. Shame for sin  
5. Hatred for sin  
6. Turning from sin  
**If any ingredient is left out**, it loses its virtue.  
  
"I preached that they should repent and turn to God  
and prove their repentance by their deeds." Act 26:20  
  
  
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**When we are lepers in our own eyes!**   
  
"Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked  
deeds, and *you will loathe yourselves for your sins*  
and detestable practices!" Eze 36:31  
  
A true penitent is a sin-loather. If a man loathes that   
which makes his *stomach* sick, much more will he loathe   
that which makes his *soul* sick! It is greater to *loathe*   
sin—than to *leave* it. The nauseating and loathing of   
sin, argues a *detestation* of it.   
  
Christ is never loved—until sin is loathed.   
  
Heaven is never longed for—until sin is loathed.   
  
When the soul sees its filthiness, he cries out, "Lord,   
when shall I be freed from this body of death! When   
shall I put off these filthy garments of sin—and be  
arrayed in the robe of Your perfect righteousness!   
Let all my self-love be turned into self-loathing!"  
  
We are never more precious in God's eyes—than   
**when we are lepers in our own eyes!   
  
The more bitterness we taste in sin—**  
the more sweetness we shall taste in Christ!  
  
  
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**The damned in hell would be most penitent**  
  
"Unless you repent, you will also perish." Luk 13:5  
  
There are several *counterfeits* of repentance.  
  
A man has gone on long in sin. At last God arrests  
him, shows him what desperate hazard he has run  
—and he is filled with anguish! But after a while,  
the tempest of conscience is blown over, and he is  
quiet. Then he concludes that he is a true penitent  
because he has felt some bitterness in sin.  
  
Do not be deceived! This is not true repentance!  
Both Ahab and Judas had great trouble of mind.  
It is one thing to be a *terrified* sinner—and another  
to be a *repenting* sinner. Sense of guilt is enough  
to breed terror in the conscience. Only infusion of  
divine grace, breeds true repentance. If pain and  
trouble were sufficient to repentance—then **the  
damned in hell would be most penitent**, for  
they are most in anguish.  
  
"Men gnawed their tongues in agony, and cursed  
the God of heaven because of their pains and their  
sores, *but they refused to repent* of what they had  
done!" Rev 16:10-11  
  
  
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**A voyage to hell**  
  
"Who of us can dwell with everlasting burnings!"   
Isa 33:14  
  
Sin is like *oil*, and God's wrath is like *fire*. As long   
as the damned continue *sinning*—so long will the fire  
continue *scorching!* "They cursed the God of heaven   
for their pains and sores. But they refused to repent   
of all their evil deeds!" Rev 16:11  
  
But men question the truth of this, and are like impious   
Devonax who, being threatened with hell for his villainies,   
mocked at it and said, *"I will believe there is a hell when   
I come there—and not before!"* We cannot make hell  
enter into men—until they enter into hell.   
  
If, for all this, men will persist in sin and are resolved   
upon **a voyage to hell**—who can hinder their damnation?   
They have been told what *a soul-damning rock* sin is—but   
if they will voluntarily run upon it and damn themselves—  
their blood is upon their own head!  
  
  
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**Satan warms himself at the fire!**

Sin is a foolish thing. What greater foolishness is  
there, than to gratify an enemy! Sin gratifies Satan.   
When lust or anger burn in the soul—**Satan warms   
himself at the fire!** Men's sins feast the devil.   
  
Samson was called out to amuse the Philistines.   
Likewise the sinner amuses the devil! Nothing   
more satisfies him—than to see men sin. How he  
laughs to see them hazarding their souls for the   
world, as if one would trade diamonds for straws;   
or would fish for gudgeons with golden hooks!   
  
Every wicked man shall be indicted as a fool, at   
the day of judgment. "But God said to him—You   
fool! This very night your life will be demanded   
from you. Then who will get what you have  
prepared for yourself?" Luk 12:20   
  
  
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**Ask him now how he likes his bargain!**   
  
"The *deceitfulness* of sin" Heb 3:13   
  
Sin is a mere cheat. While it pretends to please us,  
it beguiles us! Sin does as Jael did. First she brought   
the milk and butter to Sisera, then she pounded the   
tent peg through his head! (Jdg 5:26). Sin first   
*courts*, and then *kills!* It is first a *fox*—and then a   
*lion*. Whoever sin betrays—it kills!   
  
Those locusts in Revelation are fit emblems of sin:   
"They had gold crowns on their *heads* . . . They   
had *tails* that stung like scorpions, with power to   
torture people" (Rev 9:7-10).   
  
Judas pleased himself with the thirty pieces   
of silver—but they proved deceitful riches. **Ask him now how he likes his bargain!**~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~  
 **Worse than the torments of hell**  
  
Sin is worse than hell. Torment has its epitome  
in hell—yet nothing in hell is as bad as sin.   
  
Hell is of God's making—but sin is not of God's   
making. Sin is the devil's creature.   
  
The torments of hell are a burden only to the   
sinner—but sin is a burden to God.   
  
In the torments of hell, there is something   
which is good, namely, the execution of divine   
justice. There is justice to be found in hell—but   
sin is a piece of the highest injustice. Sin would   
rob God of his glory, Christ of his purchase, the   
soul of its happiness.   
  
Sin is the most hateful thing—for it is **worse   
than the torments of hell**.  
  
  
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**A holy antipathy against sin**  
  
There is no better sign of true repentance—than **a   
holy antipathy against sin**. Sound repentance   
begins in love to God—and ends in the hatred of sin.  
  
How may true hatred of sin be known?   
  
When a man's HEART is set against sin. Not only   
does the *tongue* protest against sin—but the *heart*   
abhors it. However lovely sin is painted—we find it   
odious—just as we abhor the picture of one whom   
we mortally hate, even though it may be well drawn.   
  
Suppose a dish be finely cooked and the sauce good  
—yet if a man has an antipathy against the meat, he   
will not eat it. So **let the devil cook and dress sin**   
with pleasure and profit—yet a true penitent has a   
secret abhorrence of it, is disgusted by it, and will   
not meddle with it.   
  
True hatred of sin is UNIVERSAL. There is a dislike   
of sin not only in the *judgment*—but in the *will* and  *affections*. Many a one is convinced that sin is a vile   
thing, and in his judgment has an aversion to it—yet   
he tastes sweetness in it—and has a secret delight in   
it. Here is a disliking of sin in the *judgment*—and an   
embracing of it in the *affections!* Whereas in true   
repentance, the hatred of sin is in all the faculties,  
not only in the mind—but chiefly in the will: "I do   
the very thing I hate!" (Rom 7:15). Paul was   
not free from sin—yet his will was against it.   
  
He who truly hates one sin—hates all sins. He who   
hates a serpent—hates all serpents. "I hate **every**false way!" (Psa 119:104). Hypocrites will hate   
some sins which mar their credit. But a true convert   
hates all sins—gainful sins, complexion sins, the   
very stirrings of corruption.   
  
A holy heart detests sin for its intrinsic pollution.   
Sin leaves a stain upon the soul. A regenerate   
person abhors sin not only for the *curse*—but for   
the *contagion*. He hates this serpent not only for   
its sting but for its poison. He hates sin not only   
*for* hell—but *as* hell.   
  
Those who have no antipathy against sin, are   
strangers to repentance. Sin is in them—as poison  
in a serpent, which, being natural to it, affords   
delight. How far are they from repentance who,   
instead of *hating* sin*—love* sin! To the godly—sin   
is as a thorn in the eye; to the wicked—sin is as   
a crown on the head! "They actually rejoice in   
doing evil!" (Jer 11:15).   
  
*Loving* of sin is worse than *committing* it. What is   
it, which makes a swine love to tumble in the mire?   
Its love of filth. O how many there are—who love   
the forbidden fruit! They love their sin—and hate   
holiness.  
  
There should be a deadly antipathy between the   
heart and sin. What is there in sin, which may   
make a penitent hate it?   
  
Sin is the accursed thing, the most deformed monster!  
Look upon the origin of sin, from whence it comes. It   
fetches its pedigree from hell: "He who commits sin is   
of the devil!" (1Jn 3:8). Sin is the devil's special   
work. How hateful is it to be doing that which is the   
special work of the devil—indeed, that which makes   
men into devils!  
  
  
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**Powerful orators for mercy**  
  
"Mary knelt behind Him at His feet, weeping.  
Her tears fell on His feet, and she wiped them  
off with her hair. Then she kept kissing His feet  
and putting perfume on them." Luk 7:38   
  
Mary brought two things to Christ—perfume and   
tears. Her tears were better than her perfume.   
Tears are **powerful orators for mercy**. They   
are silent—yet they have a *voice.* "The Lord has   
heard the *voice* of my weeping." Psa 6:8  
  
They say that tears have four qualities: tears are   
hot, moist, salty, and bitter. It is true of repenting   
tears. They are . . .  
**hot**—to warm a frozen conscience;  
**moist**—to soften a hard heart;  
**salty**—to season a soul putrefying in sin;  
**bitter**—to wean us from the love of the world.   
And I will add a fifth. They are **sweet**, in that   
they make the heart inwardly rejoice "Your   
sorrow shall be turned into joy!" Joh 16:20  
  
  
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**The devil has two places he dwells in**  
  
"I love foreign gods, and I must go after them!"  
Jer 2:25   
  
A hard heart is a dwelling for Satan. As **God** has   
two places He dwells in—heaven and a humble   
heart; so **the devil has two places he dwells   
in**—hell and a hard heart.  
  
  
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**Worse than affliction**  
  
Sin is **worse than affliction**. There is more malignity   
in a drop of sin—than in a sea of affliction—for sin is   
the cause of affliction, and the cause is more than   
the effect. The sword of God's justice lies quiet in   
the scabbard—until sin draws it out!   
  
Affliction is good for us: "It is good for me, that   
I have been afflicted" (Psa 119:71).   
  
Affliction causes repentance (2Ch 33:12).  
The viper, being stricken, casts up its poison.   
Just so, when God's rod strikes us with affliction,  
we spit away the poison of sin!   
  
Affliction betters our grace. Gold is purest, and   
juniper sweetest—when in the fire.   
  
Affliction prevents damnation. "We are being   
disciplined—so that we will not be condemned   
with the world." (1Co 11:32).   
  
Thus, affliction is in many ways for our good—but   
there is no good in sin. *Manasseh's affliction* brought   
him to humiliation and repentance—but *Judas' sin*   
brought him to desperation and damnation. Affliction   
only reaches the body—but sin goes further—it   
poisons the mind, disorders the affections. Affliction   
is corrective; sin is destructive. Affliction can but   
take away the *life*; sin takes away the *soul* (Luk 12:20).   
  
  
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**You cannot make a beast blush**  
  
"The wicked know no shame." Zep 3:5  
  
Many have sinned away shame. It is a great shame,  
not to be ashamed. "Are they ashamed of their   
loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all;   
*they do not even know how to blush!"* (Jer 6:15).   
The devil has stolen shame from men. When men   
have hearts of stone and foreheads of brass—it is a   
sign that the devil has taken full possession of them!   
  
There is no creature capable of shame but man. The   
brute beasts are capable of fear and pain—but not of   
shame. **You cannot make a beast blush**. Those   
who cannot blush for sin, do too much resemble the   
beasts. There are some so far from this holy blushing,  
that they are proud of their sins. They are so far from   
being ashamed of sin, that they glory in their sins!  
They look on sin as a piece of gallantry. The swearer   
thinks his speech most graceful when it is interlarded   
with oaths. The drunkard counts it a glory that he is   
mighty to drink. But when men shall be cast into the  
fiery furnace, heated seven times hotter by the breath   
of the Almighty—then let them boast of sin!  
  
  
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**A swine with a man's head**  
  
Sinners are compared . . .  
to foxes (Luk 13:32),  
to wolves (Mat 7:15),  
to donkeys (Job 11:12),  
to swine (2Pe 2:22).   
  
A sinner is **a swine with a man's head**. He who   
was once little less than the angels in dignity—has   
now become like the beasts! The ungodly are, in a   
manner—wholly brutified! They do not act rationally,   
but are carried away by the violence of their lusts   
and passions. Our sins have taken away that noble,   
holy spirit which once we had. The crown has fallen   
from our head. God's image is defaced, reason is   
eclipsed, conscience stupified!  
  
  
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**Sin must drown**  
  
"Unless you repent, you will also perish." Luk 13:5  
  
The two great graces essential to a saint in this  
life, are faith and repentance. These are the two  
wings by which he flies to heaven.  
  
Moist tears of repentance dry up sin—and quench  
the wrath of God. Repentance is the nourisher of  
piety—and the procurer of mercy.  
  
Worldly tears fall to the earth; but godly tears of  
repentance are kept in a bottle. "You keep track  
of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears  
in your bottle. You have recorded each one in  
your book." Psa 56:8.  
  
Either **sin must drown** in the tears of repentance  
—or the soul must burn in hell.   
  
  
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**Lose Christ and heaven**  
  
"How long will you love what is worthless?"   
Psa 4:2  
  
An unbeliever would rather **lose Christ   
and heaven**—than his lusts!   
  
  
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**The cancer of the soul**  
  
"Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep" Pro 19:15  
  
Sloth is **the cancer of the soul**. Men had rather go   
*sleeping* to hell—than *weeping* to heaven! When Satan   
has by his witcheries lulled men asleep in sloth—then   
he destroys them!

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