

THE NATURE OF TRUE REPENTANCE

By C. Lisa Audain



"God be merciful unto me a sinner"

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It is only by true repentance that one can truly know God; become converted and just before Him. Thus the need to understand what repentance truly means and to practice the same in our daily lives is of utmost importance, especially in this time of our earth's history.

We are living in the time of the Investigative Judgment that began in 1844^{ac}, where God with exactness began to blot out the sins of all those who died and accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior. This work began with the faithful who died but it will soon begin on the living, just before Christ's second coming. (Heb 9:27; 1Pet 4:17). Therefore, when our names come up in judgment, if we failed to truly repent and forsake any sins or wrongs in our lives, our names will be blotted out of the Book of Life and we will be lost.

Therefore the gravity of this study must not be taken lightly. Let us examine ourselves as we go through this simple study booklet, with the hope of having an understanding of true repentance. It is the practice and understanding of this truth that will cause us to be truly converted or change within and without. Thus causing us to live sinfree in this sinful world.

I quote from a book called **Steps to Christ** by E. G White pg. 23, 24 before getting into the 'meat' of this study:

"There are many who fail to understand the true nature of repentance. Multitudes sorrow that they have sinned and even make an outward reformation because they fear that their wrongdoing will bring suffering upon themselves. **But this is not repentance in the Bible sense. They lament the suffering rather than the sin.** Such was the grief of Esau when he saw that the birthright was lost to him forever.

Balaam, terrified by the angel standing in his pathway with drawn sword, acknowledged his guilt lest he should lose his life; **but there was no genuine repentance for sin, no conversion of purpose, no abhorrence of evil.** Judas Iscariot, after betraying his Lord, ex-claimed, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." Matthew 27:4.

The confession was forced from his guilty soul by an awful sense of condemnation and a fearful looking for of judgment. The consequences that were the result to him, filled him with terror, **but there was no deep, heartbreaking grief in his soul, that he had betrayed the spotless Son of God and denied the Holy One of Israel.** Pharaoh, when suffering under the judgments of God, acknowledged his sin in order to escape further punishment, but returned to his defiance of Heaven as soon as the plagues were stayed. These all lamented the results of sin, but did not sorrow for the sin itself.”

So from the above quotation, one can see that there is a false and true repentance. A lamentation for the results of wrong rather than an earnest desire to deal with the cause or value in the heart that caused the sin, it the marked contrast between the true and false repentance.

1. But firstly, let us understand the meaning of the word ‘repentance’ and how it is used in scripture:-

The Hebrew words:

- a. ‘naw-kham’ is used for the word repent and it means ‘to be sorry, moved to pity or to have compassion (Gen 6:7; 1Ch 21:15, Job 42:6).
- b. ‘Shoob’ is used to mean to return, turn back, generally to retreat, to withdraw (Jonah 3:9; 1Kg 8:47; Eze 14:6).
- c. ‘Nee-khoom’ means comfort, compassion (Hos 11:8).
- d. ‘No-kham means sorrow (Joel 2:13).

The Greek words:

- a. It is taken from a Gk. word, met-an-o-eh-o – “to change one’s mind for better; to amend with abhorrence of one’s past sins” (Mat 3:2; Acts 17:30).

- b. Metanoyah means “a change of mind in one to appear to repent of a purpose he has formed or of something he has done” (Matt 3:8).
 - c. Met-am-el-lom-ahee - to regret, or repents one’s self (Matt 27:3).
2. Before we see the need to change or could repent we must be convicted of wrongs commit or the sin value in the heart (Jn 16:7, 8).
 3. But why should we repent?
 - a. The bible tells us that we all have sinned are ‘coming short of the Glory of God’. (Rom 3:23; Ps 58:3; Eph 2:1-3).
 - b. We are totally lost without a character/personality traits that are pleasing to God (Jer 17:9; Rom 2:18, 21-24; Rom 3:10-18).
 - c. Therefore we are in need of a Savior in order for us to be saved (Rom 6:23; Eph 2:8; John 10:9).
 - d. We can only receive salvation through repentance (Luk 13:5).
 4. The bible tells us that repentance is a gift that precedes forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31; Mk 1:4; Acts 11:18; Acts 2:37, 38; 2Tim 2:25; Lk 3:3; Act 4:19; Acts 8:22).
 5. It is due or given to us by God’s goodness revealed through the Plan of Salvation (Rom 2:4; John 12:32).

I quote:

“It is true that men sometimes become ashamed of their sinful ways, and give up some of their evil habits, before they are conscious that they are being drawn to Christ. But whenever they make an effort to reform, from a sincere desire to do right, it is the power of Christ that is drawing them. An influence of which they are unconscious works upon the soul, and the

conscience is quickened, and the outward life is amended. And as Christ draws them to look upon His cross, to behold Him whom their sins have pierced, the commandment comes home to the conscience. The wickedness of their life, the deep-seated sin of the soul, is revealed to them. They begin to comprehend something of the righteousness of Christ, and exclaim, "What is sin, that it should require such a sacrifice for the redemption of its victim? Was all this love, all this suffering, all this humiliation, demanded, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life?"

"The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God's dear Son." Ibid pg. 27.

Below is a sequence of what happens before and after true repentance:

Sequence of true Repentance

Conviction of Sin Repentance Believing Confession Forgiveness

6. What are the **outward and inward** results of True Repentance?

- a. Joy in heaven (Lk 15:7, 10).
- b. Humility of heart (Luk 18:9-14; Lk 7:41-50).

I quote:

"God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation, as well as in that of man; but however trifling this or that wrong act may seem in the eyes of men, no sin is small in the sight of God. Man's judgment is partial, imperfect; but God estimates all things as they really are. The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven; while pride, selfishness, and covetousness

too often go unrebuked. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God; for they are contrary to the benevolence of His character, to that unselfish love which is the very atmosphere of the unfallen universe. He who falls into some of the grosser sins may feel a sense of his shame and poverty and his need of the grace of Christ; but pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give. {SC 30.1} The poor publican who prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13), regarded himself as a very wicked man, and others looked upon him in the same light; but he felt his need, and with his burden of guilt and shame he came before God, asking for His mercy. His heart was open for the Spirit of God to do its gracious work and set him free from the power of sin. The Pharisee's boastful, self-righteous prayer showed that his heart was closed against the influence of the Holy Spirit. Because of his distance from God, he had no sense of his own defilement, in contrast with the perfection of the divine holiness. He felt no need, and he received nothing." **ibid** pg. 30.

- c. A maturity of Faith as one goes on to Perfection (Heb 6:1).
- d. A blessing is given of the forgiveness of sin (Ps 32:1, 2).
- e. We confess your faults and seeks reconciliation with others. But you confess your sins to God. (Luk 19:5-9; Jam 5:16).

I quote:

"Those who have not humbled their souls before God in acknowledging their guilt, have not yet fulfilled the first condition of acceptance. If we have not experienced that repentance which is not to be repented of, and have not with true humiliation of soul and brokenness of spirit confessed our sins, abhorring our iniquity, we have never truly sought for the forgiveness of sin; and if we have never sought, we have never found the peace of God. The only reason why we do not have remission of sins that are past is that we are not willing to humble our hearts and comply with the conditions of the word of truth."

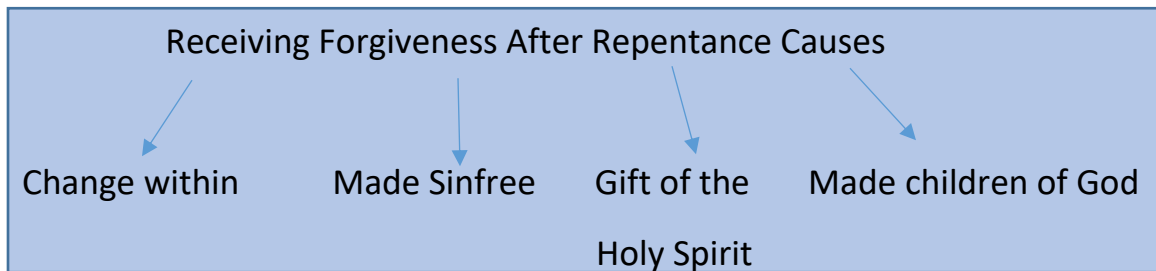
“Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. The work that we have to do on our part is plainly set before us: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Isaiah 1:16, 17. "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die." Ezekiel 33:15. Paul says, speaking of the work of repentance: "Ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." 2 Corinthians 7:11. **Ibid** pg. 38, 39

“Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God. He may have committed his evil deeds in the light of day or in the darkness of night; but they were open and manifest before Him with whom we have to do. Angels of God witnessed each sin and registered it in the unerring records. Sin may be concealed, denied, covered up from father, mother, wife, children, and associates; no one but the guilty actors may cherish the least suspicion of the wrong; but it is laid bare before the intelligences of heaven. The darkness of the darkest night, the secrecy of all deceptive arts, is not sufficient to veil one thought from the knowledge of the Eternal. God has an exact record of every unjust account and every unfair dealing. He is not deceived by appearances of piety. He makes no mistakes in His estimation of character. Men may be deceived by those who are corrupt in heart, but God pierces all disguises and reads the inner life.” E. G White, **The Great Controversy** pg. 414

Inward and outward Results of Repentance

Joy in Heaven Maturity of Faith Humility Blessings Confession

7. On receiving forgiveness of sins it causes a change in us; it is the same as being justified by Faith or being born again. It involves:
 - a. A change within is from a carnal mind to a spiritual mind (Rom 8:6-8; Ps 51:10; Rom 12:2; Joel 2:13).
 - b. We are made Sinfree (Rom 6:6, 7, 16-18, 22; John 8:5-11).
 - c. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37, 38).
 - d. We are made children of God. (Rom 8:12; Gal 4:6).



8. God is willing that all should come to repentance for He is a merciful and just God (Isa 55:7).

I quote:

“Had not Jacob previously repented of his sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud, God would not have heard his prayer and mercifully preserved his life. So, in the time of trouble, if the people of God had unconfessed sins to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be

overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and have been blotted out, and they cannot bring them to remembrance.

Satan leads many to believe that God will overlook their unfaithfulness in the minor affairs of life; but the Lord shows in His dealings with Jacob that He will in no wise sanction or tolerate evil. All who endeavor to excuse or conceal their sins, and permit them to remain upon the books of heaven, unconfessed and unforgiven, will be overcome by Satan. The more exalted their profession and the more honorable the position which they hold, the more grievous is their course in the sight of God and the more sure the triumph of their great adversary. Those who delay a preparation for the day of God cannot obtain it in the time of trouble or at any subsequent time. The case of all such is hopeless.

Those professed Christians who come up to that last fearful conflict unprepared will, in their despair, confess their sins in words of burning anguish, while the wicked exult over their distress. These confessions are of the same character as was that of Esau or of Judas. Those who make them, lament the result of transgression, but not its guilt. They feel no true contrition, no abhorrence of evil. They acknowledge their sin, through fear of punishment; but, like Pharaoh of old, they would return to their defiance of Heaven should the judgments be removed.

Jacob's history is also an assurance that God will not cast off those who have been deceived and tempted and betrayed into sin, but who have returned unto Him with true repentance." **ibid** pg. 526, 527.

Thus we see the importance of true repentance in the Plan of Salvation; a plan instituted to save us from sin. May God add His many blessings to all those in whom has read this study booklet and are convinced that the importance of true repentance in our lives. AMEN.