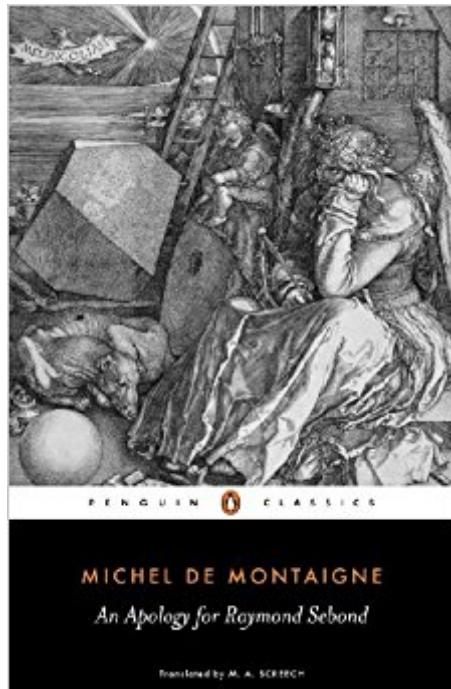


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An Apology For Raymond Sebond (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

An Apology for Raymond Sebond is widely regarded as the greatest of Montaigne's essays: a supremely eloquent expression of Christian scepticism. An impassioned defence of Sebond's fifteenth-century treatise on natural theology, it was inspired by the deep crisis of personal melancholy that followed the death of Montaigne's own father in 1568, and explores contemporary Christianity in prose that is witty and frequently damning. As he searches for the true meaning of faith, Montaigne is heavily critical of the arrogant tendency of mankind to create God in its own image, and offers his personal reflections on the true role of man, the need to eschew personal arrogance, and the vital importance of faith if we are to understand our place in the universe. Wise, perceptive and remarkably informed, this is one of the true masterpieces of the essay form.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Apology which Montaigne wrote for the work of Raymond Sebond arose from his understanding of a book, *Theologia Naturalis*, written in an obscure form of Spanish, which Montaigne's father ("in the 'last days' of his life") requested that Montaigne translate into French for the benefit of those who were engaged in the struggles of the Reformation, "a period of intellectual ferment and of religious and political disarray." (p. ix). Montaigne finished and dedicated his translation on the day of his father's death, 18 June 1568, when Montaigne was 35, married, and engaged in a legal position. The Apology does not identify which of its ideas were original with Sebond. There is no

index, so I am unsure of how often the name Sebond appears in the text The Introduction on pages ix to xxxiii explains the circumstances and theology of the book philosophically, as understood at All Souls College, Oxford, on Easter 1986. The dedication and "Montaigne's translation and adaptation of the Prologus of Raymond Sebond" appear on pages xl to xliv. Those who have a complete edition of the ESSAYS OF MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE should be able to find the material in this book at II:12, though this book is clear in which portions appeared in 1580, 1582, 1588, or from the "text of the manuscript edition being prepared by Montaigne when he died, interpreted in the light of the posthumous editions." (p. xxxv). On the doom or dumber question, we can find, "Philosophy in general agrees that there is an ultimate remedy to be prescribed for every kind of trouble: namely, ending our life if we find it intolerable." (p. 62). This is associated with, "As the Greeks said at their banquets: 'Let him drink or be off! (Aut bibat, aut abeat!)

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