

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

REPENTANCE

One of the most beautiful teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the principle of repentance. This principle has its beginning in the plan of God to give us free agency to live our lives according to our own wishes. It was formed through the atonement of Jesus Christ. It is a symbol of the love God has for his children. And the feeling of true repentance follows in natural sequence, the gaining of faith.

To the Children of Israel, who had transgressed the ordinances and broken the laws of God, the prophet Isaiah said, "**Come let us reason together. Though your sin be as scarlet, yet they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.**" (*Isaiah 1:18*) Even though these chosen people had rejected the commandments of God and had began to worship gods of stone, yet in mercy, did God give them the promise of forgiveness if they would repent.

Let us consider the importance of repentance. When Adam disobeyed the commandment of God and ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, a spiritual death came upon him. This spiritual death was being shut out from the presence of God. Also, sin entered into the world and has been part of man's existence since the time of Adam. According to the plan of God, man must rise from the spiritual death and sinful condition, before he can enter again into the presence of God. Added to the spiritual death, a mortal death was also introduced into the world. This mortal death, or the death of the body, was a direct result of Adam's eating of the forbidden fruit. The change upon the physical body of man produced mortality and the end of mortality is physical death. The spiritual death was a result of sin, this sin being disobedience to the law of God. In order for man to overcome this fallen condition God provided a redeemer who had power to redeem men from this penalty of sin and overcome the power of this death, which came upon all men through Adam's transgression. Christ was this redeemer. By his own will he gave his life for a price of sin and by doing this took away the penalty of Adam's sin and made it possible for men to be resurrected. He also made it possible for us to overcome our sins have them taken away from us, The condition placed upon this cleansing from sin was repentance. We should realize that Christ, through his suffering and finally through his death on the cross, opened the pathway to cleansing us from sin. Because no unclean thing can enter into the Kingdom of God, this cleansing from sin is very necessary.

In the principle of Repentance there is a promise, that through the gaining of godly sorrow for sins, we are able to become free from sin. God has permitted us to be sensitive to things pertaining to sin and the truly faithful person is permitted to gain a godly sorrow for disobedience to God. "**For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of....**" (*2 Corinthians 7:10*) This godly sorrow is part of repentance. Do not attempt to subdue this God given means of overcoming sin. When the power of faith in God has brought about this godly sorrow, and repentance has taken possession of your thinking, do not deny this working of God by trying to stop this feeling or hide it. Let the full workings of the spirit take possession of your being so that you may be purged from the effects of personal sin. This godly sorrow is the means by which we can receive an assurance that we are free from sin. Let your sorrow bring

about true repentance through confession and reconciliation, that you might feel the joy of being pure before God.

Our duty to our fellowman is clear on this principle of repentance. **"Hath he commanded any they should not partake of his salvation? Behold I say unto you, Nay; but he hath given it free for all men; and he hath commanded his people that they should persuade all men to repentance."** (2 *Nephi 10:18*)

Let us all combine our faith with a true spirit of repentance that we might enjoy a nearness with God which will bring joy and satisfaction into our lives.

H. Grant Heaton, President

Southern Far East Mission

October, 1956