

A series of lectures delivered
to the Melchisedec priesthood
of Independence, Missouri
January 6-11, 1957

Whosoever Repenteth

Reorganized
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
of Latter Day Saints
Herald House
1958

Foreword

In January of 1956 I was in San Diego, California, conducting a training institute with the priesthood of that area. Just after finishing a lecture one afternoon in which I had exhorted the brethren to accept the challenge to be of service, I was called to the telephone in the church. It was Brother Herbert C. Lively of the Center Stake residency inviting me to give the Melchisedec Priesthood Lectures for the year 1957 and asking my permission to make such an announcement to the priesthood members assembling that week for the 1956 lectures.

With a number of the men within earshot who had just attended the priesthood class, how could I refuse? I subsequently had frequent cause to be grateful for the invitation. The year that followed my acceptance of that invitation has been one of rich rewards in terms of expanding understanding in a most engrossing field of study.

The comments of a number of my friends in the ministry have been most interesting. One would say, "What a tremendous subject to be covered in only six lectures!"

The next would exclaim, "Repentance! How can you talk for six hours on that subject?" As is usually the case, I feel much more served than serving in the entire experience and have come to look with gratitude toward the "beneficent framing" which set up the opportunity to undertake the task.

As I directed my attention to the assembling of material for the lectures I soon determined that my objective should be to make a simple, straightforward analysis of the subject rather than endeavoring to present a great mass of material which would leave the student with the task of sorting out the wheat from the chaff. Hence the lectures were intentionally brief, and the book manuscript even shorter. It is my hope, however, that brevity will add to rather than detract from its effectiveness in helping the readers to acquire a useful personal understanding of the principle of repentance and its application to their own lives. I desire further that the Melchisedec priesthood shall become more proficient in conveying this simple but important principle to all those to whom they seek to minister.

L. WAYNE UPDIKE
Director of Priesthood and Leadership Education

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set up a parallel in the form of some questions. Is it good news or bad when the doctor tells you that the pain you have been suffering is **12** caused by appendicitis and that you must have an appendectomy? Is it bad

The Chain of Thought

When we discuss the subject of "repentance," a logical beginning point is to determine first what the word "repentance" means so that we can understand each other. One objective of this series of lectures is that we may reach a common understanding, which effort is greatly helped by our using a common definition. We begin, therefore, with an attempt at identifying our subject sufficiently so that all concerned may have a means of communicating about it through the medium of spoken and written language. For this reason, in our first chapter called "The Principle of Repentance" we define repentance as "a conscious positive response to an ever-increasing revelation of God." The chapters that follow are windows letting in more light upon the subject thus partially defined.

Once we have determined the area of our discussion we must next build a bridge to those who read or hear by pointing out the significance of the subject itself. In short, we must establish our reasons for taking up the matter. This we have endeavored to do under the title "The Need for Repentance."

Having determined that repentance is needed, it is natural for us to ask ourselves how and when it happens. We seek to discover the conditions that must be present. We try to analyze the time element to see whether it is an abrupt, sudden change or whether it is a gradual shifting of emphasis. When does it begin? When does it end? Such questions as these are treated in the third lecture called "The Process of Repentance."

Having established that the subject is pertinent in our day and having given some reasons why the principle of repentance is needed, it then follows logically that some consideration be given as to whether this need is consideration be given as to whether this need is general. Does it apply in every aspect of life, or is it something that has to do only with the individual who is interested in religion? Further, in any given individual does repentance have bearing upon all aspects of his life, or is it worthy of consideration only in those areas of his life in which he considers himself religious? In order to give point and emphasis to the all-inclusive application of repentance we have, treated this matter under the title, "Repentance and the First Commandment."

We next look for some readily visible demonstrations of repentance. We seek the places and the conditions in which it becomes most readily observable. We look for the situations provided by, the great Creator in order that it might take place in the lives of people. This search takes us to the consideration of "Repentance and the Ordinances" wherein we have sought to establish that repentance has its place in each of the ordinances and that none of the ordinances are properly participated in without the element of repentance being present.

And finally, there still remains the most important subject of all: "What does repentance have to do with my salvation?" Is this subject simply a matter of ecclesiastical verbiage or does it actually have bearing upon my final destiny? Will it make any difference whose definition of salvation I use? Will it make any difference what I believe about the meaning of repentance? Do the two have anything to do with each other? Under the title "Repentance and Salvation," we have sought to establish a reasonable relationship between the meaning of these two words, and to assist the inquiring mind to see the place of repentance in obtaining the salvation which the Christ makes available.

The Principle of Repentance

"Say nothing but repentance unto this generation. "D & C 6: 4.

MOTIVATION

We embark upon this study of the subject of repentance with the conviction that the most sustained motivation rises out of understanding. It comes by the process of acting in harmony with decisions voluntarily reached. The most desirable voluntary choices are made upon the basis of adequate intellectual investigations, analysis, and reasoning. A decision reached under the pressure of a moment which appeals to our emotions and elicits from us certain action may not be the same one at which we would arrive if we had taken more time to consider our course. For this reason we strive toward understanding of repentance. Then with increased understanding one can decide with more confidence the degree to which this principle should be applied in his own life.

PERIPHERAL VISION

Often the most productive part of any presentation is that series of immeasurable lines of thought and meditation which are stimulated by what is said or written. Such lines of meditation may take one far afield from the words which are actually presented. Those who have observed the method of projecting motion pictures upon an ordinary flat screen and have compared this technique with the method used in Cinerama will know that their appreciation of a scene is greatly enhanced by the things present in the peripheral areas of their field of vision. This principle is paralleled by the broader understanding we have of a subject if there is added to the total consideration those many thoughts which the listeners or readers find running through their minds in addition to the necessarily narrow and specific thoughts expressed by one individual. It is for each of us as learners to participate actively in the task not only of recording to the best of our ability in our memory things which are presented, but also to record in similar fashion those other lines of reasoning which are stimulated by that which is here expressed. We recognize that there is no teaching without learning. Both teaching and learning are active words. Neither the instructor nor the learner can be passive if the best results are to be achieved.

Were it necessary to justify the subject which we have chosen, it is generally agreed among us that we could do so easily. I read recently of a minister who was hired for one of the churches of our day and took for his first sermon the subject of repentance. Following the sermon, the board of

trustees who had hired him were quite generous in their praise. They had liked his sermon very much. The next Sunday he preached the same sermon. This continued for several more Sundays until after the sixth time he had preached the sermon on repentance certain members of the board came to him and said, "We like the sermon very much, but we think it is time for you to (These Numbers included in the text are the original page numbers) 11 preach a different one. Surely you have more than one sermon." The minister answered, "Yes, I do have other sermons, but I am going to keep on preaching this one until the people demonstrate by their actions that they have heard it and understood it."

I trust that there will be sufficient adjustment in the lives of the Melchisedec priesthood of this area following this series of lectures so that it will not be necessary for us to use the same subject next year.

AN ECCLESIASTICAL PARADOX

There is a paradox in the subject of repentance. We often talk about the good news of the gospel of repentance. On the other hand we frequently find people who prefer to avoid sermons on this subject. As a general rule, folks do not like to be told that they must repent. I am sure the people to whom John the Baptist spoke so sharply were not particularly pleased when he told them to go home and repent before they were ready to be baptized. He further instructed them in no uncertain terms that there should be visible evidence that they had repented and that their word on the matter alone would not be enough.

Recently I was discussing religious matters with an Aaronic priest who is somewhat of a philosopher. He advanced the opinion that repentance ought to be a happy experience. Herein lies the paradox. Truly repentance ought to be a happy experience, but often it is an unpopular subject. Let us set up a parallel in the form of some questions. Is it good news or bad when the doctor tells you that the pain you have been suffering is 12 caused by appendicitis and that you must have an appendectomy? Is it bad news that surgery is necessary or is it good news that the cause of the ailment has been found and that something can be done about it? Obviously the good and the bad are mixed together and the name we choose to call it is determined by our point of view.

I have read that President Eisenhower, when he was serving in the Armed Forces some years ago, had an appendectomy when he didn't really need it in order that he might avoid the possibility of having an attack of appendicitis some time later at a time not of his own choosing. Whether repentance is good news or bad depends to a great degree on how we look forward to it. Things which we anticipate with pleasure we often reflect upon with regret, while from the things which we anticipate with trepidation we often obtain joy in retrospect. Fear rises from an inadequate perspective. So it is with repentance. As we see it clearly and understand it

thoroughly, we come more and more to feel that repentance is and should be a point of beginning a happy experience.

THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

Perhaps the initial point we should cover in considering this subject is the matter of definition. This is a logical beginning point in discussing any subject. If we know first what we are talking about then we can discuss it intelligently. Yet we have considerable difficulty in defining a word such as "repentance." After all, this is the purpose of the entire series of lectures. Our success will depend upon whether or not we achieve at the end of 13 these lectures an increased understanding of the subject so that each and all of us in stating our own definition will express similar concepts. If we are successful in arriving at a common understanding of this principle it will increase our unity and strengthen our motivations to apply this principle in our own lives.

A man is often measured by his definition of repentance. We find three common definitions or concepts of the subject. Each is made visible by the group of people who express them. The first of these to which I refer are those who think of repentance in the abstract form. They are those who say insipidly, "If I have done anything wrong, I am sorry and I pray to be forgiven." These imply that they doubt the possibility of sin in themselves. They suggest that as far as they know, they have no sin, but if they have overlooked anything just let somebody point it out to them. They will say they are sorry, and by thus freely acknowledging their sin and expressing their sorrow they will be forgiven. These, as a general rule, would be shocked to discover the extent to which sin has gained control in their own lives.

One of the brethren observed a generalization in reading the brochure which advertises these lectures while ignoring the punctuation marks. He read it this way: "Abstract repentance is required of every generation." This meaning is quite different when two little dots (:) are placed after the word "abstract." People who see this subject only in the abstract form are often self-centered and have missed the entire point of the principle of repentance as it applies in bringing them to God. Their concern is their own standing. They are interested in face saving and perhaps in 14 being a theological conformist, but repentance involves much more than avoiding loss of personal prestige through nonconformity.

A second group of people define repentance as a single act or incident or decision. They usually make it past tense, although many people make it a matter to be taken care of at some undetermined day in the future. They never put it in the present tense. These people often think of repentance as something which took place prior to their baptism. It was the day they decided to give up some particular habit which had been described to them as a sin. If they were successful in rooting out of their lives such a habit,

they spend the rest of their lives saying they have repented and urging other people to do the same. Often they spend some considerable portion of their time observing those incidentals which are in other people's lives from which they should repent. Sometimes they go so far as to point out these shortcomings in others and thus cause difficulty and disunity by their lack of diplomacy and understanding as to the broader, more adequate concept of the principle of repentance.

The third group are those who see repentance as a continuing positive response to an ever-increasing revelation of God. This is the definition which we shall work with this week. *Repentance is a conscious positive response to an ever increasing revelation of God.*

The people who see repentance with a view as broad as this are relatively few in today's world. This view includes the other two, but it is much more. It does acknowledge our error; it does attempt to make amends for our errors; but it goes deeper and attempts to adjust the 15
recusancy that accompanies such errors. It is this broader view of repentance which we wish to explore.

THE BROADER VIEW

Repentance involves obtaining a new view of God and his purposes. It sees God as all-powerful. It contemplates the reach of his creation in terms of the entire universe. While it sees him as powerful, it also sees him as purposeful, and recognizes that such purposes have to do with mankind. The repentant man also discovers that not only is God powerful and purposeful, but that his power is devoted to our welfare and his purposes concern us because he also is love. It means more to say "God is love" than just to say that God loves us. God is love. Everywhere you find love you find God. His love surrounds us. Repentance sees man as related to God, created for a purpose and having written into his being the potential of achieving that purpose.

The great purpose for mankind has been stated in many ways. While it is most profound in its concept, it can be quite simple in its expression. Thus, simply put, man has the potential of achieving the purpose of complete unity in love with his heavenly Father. The achievement of complete and perfect loving understanding between ourselves and God and the possibility that this can be done is the greatest concept that has ever been given to man. No wonder Henry Drummond called his lecture on love "The Greatest Thing in the World." Repentance sees this possibility of mutual love and understanding between God and man and recognizes that man is far short of his potential accomplishment in that direction. 16

THAT OUR EYES MAY BE OPEN

Recently I was attending a priesthood institute in the Rock Island District. One of the classes was taught by Brother Charles Shippy, bishop's

agent in that district. In his class he made the statement, "Repentance is seeing God as he is and ourselves as we are." This is illustrated by the coal miner who in one of the carved-out rooms far below the surface of the earth is not particularly troubled by the fact that there is coal dust all over everything. After several hours of hard work digging coal, he stops for his lunch and for a few minutes of rest and is quite at ease in doing so. But when he returns from work at night and walks into the house and finds that his wife has the house all spic and span with a clean white tablecloth and pretty dishes, he realizes that he is out of place in such surroundings until he changes clothes and takes a bath and makes himself clean again.

This is the same principle that is taught in the classic example of Isaiah who on one occasion said, "Woe is me, for I have seen the Lord." Prior to that time he may not have been particularly disturbed by the kind of man he was. But when he stood in the presence of God, he suddenly realized that he "was a man of unclean lips and he dwelt amidst a people of unclean lips." He realized the difficulty of being the kind of person that God would have him be in his present circumstances. He also realized more clearly the extent of his shortcomings and the great difference that separated him from a powerful and purposeful and loving God. Perhaps he saw how much more God loved him than he himself had been able to love God in response. Repentance has to do with obtaining this view of God with 17 such clarity that it assists us by contrast. We repeat: *Repentance is a conscious positive response to an ever-increasing revelation of God.*

In the case of Isaiah, an experience with God caused him to determine to serve God, and the culmination of this experience came about in the words, "Here am I, send me." Repentance notes that God's program includes us. In spite of his omnipotence and in spite of our shortcomings he still intends that eventually he shall obtain from us the response which love seeks. He is not to be thwarted or turned aside from this endeavor by any other means than our own rebellion. Only thus can we defeat him, and even when we are in rebellion, he will not let us go but will continue to strive to win our loyalty.

NOT JUST ON THE SURFACE

Repentance recognizes our small contribution to the program God has for us. It causes us to see how temporary is man here and how inconsequential our presence here another day. It sees mankind as did Peter when he said, "All flesh is grass and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away." The person who is repentant is one who, becoming aware of God's program for us, comes to see this as the most important thing in life. Eternity takes on new significance. Time becomes relatively less important.

He acknowledges that our contribution is smaller than it needs to be and that this is a form of rebellion. It is refusal or failure to do what might reasonably be expected of us. He sees non-co-operation with God as sin 18 against one who wants to share great things with us—a spurning of the best that can be, offered by the one who loves us most, a selection of something less valuable instead.

The repentant man accepts the fact that loyalty is a matter of the will, not just a series of specific acts or failures to act. He sees sin in himself as is an iceberg in the water. An iceberg is about eight ninths below the surface, yet dangerous and foreboding unless properly understood and reckoned with.

IT ISN'T THAT SIMPLE

The repentant man sees sin for what it actually is, as a barrier that stands in the way of the perfect response in love which God contemplates between himself and man. He does not seek to explain away sin in terms of the common explanations of the day. For example, he does not rationalize sin as an element of materialism. If he were to do this and follow it through to its logical conclusion, he would discover that if sin *is* materialism, then being poor would make us righteous, and being rich would make us evil. How ridiculous to think along such lines when we have accepted the fact that God has made the whole earth available for our habitation and all things here are for our use. How erroneous to assume that to use the things which he provided for us to use is in itself evil. How much more logical to conclude that righteousness lies in the proper use of these things He made available to us, rather than in the turning away from them. Repentance does not seek to explain away sin in terms of materialism, but rather it seeks to establish righteousness 19 in the proper relationship between the spiritual and the material.

Repentance sees sin as rebellion against God, not just a matter of inherited characteristics. Some people attempt to explain sin away by saying that heredity is so strong that we are what we are without being able to do anything about it and therefore we are devoid of any responsibility in the matter. One person put it in poetry:

“Our defects are inherited,
Our strictures are unmerited,
Directly from our fathers they all came.
Our sins are all transmitted,
And we should be acquitted
From all responsibility and blame.”

To believe that sin lies in the matter of heredity is to put repentance out of our grasp, for we cannot change our ancestry. It says that some people

will go to heaven and others will go to hell, depending upon who was their grandfather. This is an untenable line of reasoning. Repentance sees the individual relationship to God and does not rationalize by attempting to explain it away in terms of ancestry.

Again, there are those who suggest that sin is a matter of ignorance and that repentance is therefore a matter of education. Continuing this line of reasoning would tell us that to become righteous would be simply a matter of becoming well educated. Those who are protagonists for education suggest that no man would choose unrighteously if he knew all the consequences. Therefore, they reason, overcoming sin 20 is simply a matter of making sure that everyone has sufficient information. But we see this refuted in life every day. Many educated men become criminals. Many ignorant people are most devoted.

To follow this line of reasoning to its logical conclusion would lead us to say that total ignorance would become total innocence, and the way to God would be a matter of unlearning all we have ever been taught. No, sin is not just ignorance, and righteousness is more than education or knowledge. Sin is rebellion against God. Righteousness is co-operation with God. Repentance is a continuing positive response to an ever-increasing revelation of God. It is partaking of the divine nature which is potentially ours as we have been told, "To them gave the power to become the sons of God." It is avoiding the use of the precious gift of life for lesser purposes, not wasting a valuable gift given by One who loves us enough to have given his Son. It is enlisting in his cause, continuing as a crusader with him, his cause being the restoration of ourselves to him. It is as if we were taking his part against our worse selves.

SUMMARY

Repentance, then, is a way of life which we see with increasing clarity as we walk therein, a way in which our sin becomes more apparent as we move closer to the light. The one who leads us is not only willing but anxious to write our sins in the sand if we will continue in our endeavor to be free of them. He loves us so much he is eager to forgive us. He urges toward perfection by constantly calling us to avoid the wasting of our time and talent in the cheap and sordid things of earth, 21 and sets before us the ever-present opportunity of turning away from such dead works in favor of the activities which are wholesome and uplifting. In harmony with this plan for mankind, he has instructed us to "say nothing but repentance to this generation." To repent is to respond continuously to our growing knowledge of him. 22

The Need for Repentance

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."-Romans 3: 23.

THE SPIRIT ENLIGHTENS

It is our observation, and in this I am sure you will also agree, that whenever we listen to a speech its major value is the stimulation of various lines of thought which can be followed in our own meditations. The things which are actually said are of less value to us than the things which we are led to think about. The degree to which such additional values comes to us is determined by the presence or absence of the spirit of God among us.

One of our hymns ("Lord, Speak to Me") contains a phrase which is undoubtedly to a degree the prayer of every preacher. I refer to the line which reads, "And wing my words that they may reach the hidden depths of many a heart." We trust it shall be our experience that the things which we shall present will indeed stimulate the thinking processes and lead in beneficial directions.

It is logical that we should follow an effort to define repentance with some treatment as to the reasons why we feel that repentance is needed today. There are those to whom this question seems much too academic. They say, "The answer is very simple: we need repentance because there is sin. Sin needs to be eradicated and the only way to do it is to repent 23 from it, therefore, repentance is needed." But such an answer will not suffice.

Let us look candidly at the current situation in order to bring emphasis to the matter of how appropriate is the subject of repentance and how urgent is the need for immediate and continuing positive response to an ever increasing revelation of God. We believe this matter is urgent. We believe further that it is most appropriate that Melchisedec priesthood should consider it in the light of their particular calling and their specific function under God.

THREE PICTURES

In order to bring before us an adequate view of the current situation we shall paint three word pictures. Before we do this, however, I must say a word or two about a picture. I should like to illustrate by asking those of you who are familiar with the picture called "The Angelus" by the French painter, Millet, to visualize that picture in your mind.

You will note that in the foreground there are two figures, a man and a woman. They are standing with bowed heads in prayer. Our first glance at the picture falls directly upon these two figures in the foreground. We then

proceed to look at the things which surround them. They have been digging potatoes in the field. Nearby are a fork and a wheelbarrow.

As we look to the background and off in the distance we see the skyline of a little village. In the center is a church tower. When we read the story of the picture, we discover that these two people 24 have been harvesting and that it is the custom in their country to pause both morning and evening at the ringing of the bell called the "Angelus" to give thanks to God for his beneficence.

I mention this picture in order that I might bring to your mind clearly the difference between the foreground



"The Angelus"

and the background of a picture. That which is in the distance is not clearly seen, but when we know the story, it is just as real as the things in the foreground. In considering our subject we shall endeavor to draw three pictures using the same background for each of them. 25

GOD IN THE BACKGROUND

The background of the picture which we wish to describe to you is one which we shall endeavor to make clear by asking you, first, to think of God. Begin by thinking how great he is and how powerful. Think how long he has been present and what a long time in the future he will still be God. Immediately when we attempt to do this, we find ourselves reaching out to the limits of our finite mind. For God is eternal. He always *was* and always *will be*. He explained his ubiquitousness to Moses by referring to

himself as the great I AM. This is as much as we can say about the length of his life. He knows no limitations of time as man knows time.

Think, also, of the universe he made. Try to imagine the size of it. In order to do this, you might for a moment endeavor to think of the most distant star. It is so far away that the light which streams from it has not yet reached our earth. When you feel that you have your mind fixed upon the star which is most distant, then ask yourself the question as to what lies beyond that. Here, again, you find that God is infinite and the reach of our own minds is insufficient to comprehend him. Continue thinking about all the galaxies which he has created, about all the solar systems which are his. Note the tremendous and marvelous order with which this universe is made and after a few moments of contemplation about the greatness of God, the reach of his universe, the order of his creation, then think about his purposes.

We should like to describe this purpose as it applies to us. The God of the universe is infinite and eternal. Man also has the capacity of living at eternal levels. It is God's purpose that man shall do this. 26
Nothing can dissuade him from the accomplishment of that purpose.
All this is in the background of our picture.

THE WORLD

We now paint the first picture against this background, placing the first figures in the foreground so that we can see them clearly. In order to do this we stand in imagination at some distant place and view our earth. We observe the preparations made for man's life here. We note that the earth is just the right distance from the sun. If it were nearer it would be much too hot for human habitation. If it were further away, the cold could make it impossible for us to live. It rotates at just the right speed and circumnavigates the sun at just the right speed. If it turned more rapidly the darkness and the light would change so frequently that life would have little opportunity to develop. If it rotated more slowly darkness would be so long that many forms of life would die before the sun came again.

A taste of this is given in the land of the far north where life is certainly not at its best as we know it. If it took the earth much longer to rotate around the sun, the seasons would change more slowly and in the wintertime the entire earth would become a ball of ice.

Note that the earth is related to a sun of just the right size. There are stars so big that if they were in the position of the sun the present orbit of the earth would be millions of miles inside the surface of such a star. Our earth is related to a sun of just the right intensity. If it were hotter or if it were colder it would have the same results as if we were closer or farther from the sun. 27

The earth is surrounded by just the right type of atmosphere. In the six gases which make up our atmosphere, approximately 21 per cent is free

oxygen. What a wonderful thing it is as we contemplate ourselves standing off in the distance and observing our earth! What a wonderful Providence arranged that there is just this percentage of free oxygen! Were it very much more, the first bolt of lightning would set the whole world on fire. Were it very much less, life as we know it couldn't exist at all. This is increasingly interesting when we note that there is a great deal more oxygen available, but that it is combined with various other substances. How does it happen that some oxygen combined, but not some more? How does it happen that some remains free?

How delicately the earth has been prepared for the habitation of man! It has -just the right climate. All mankind lives in the narrow range between the snow on the mountaintops and the depths of the mine. As compared with the diameter of the earth, the space between these two extremes is one half the thickness of a thousand page book. Observing such preparation as this, as we gaze upon the earth we hear the Lord saying:

I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and builded the earth as a very handy work; and all things therein are mine; and it is my purpose to provide for my saints . . .

The fullness of the earth is yours: the beasts of the fields, and the fowls of the air, and that which climbeth upon the trees, and walketh upon the earth; yea, and the herb, and the good things which come of the earth, whether for food or for raiment, . . . yea, all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man ...

It is my purpose to provide for my saints, ... and there is enough and to spare. 28

And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made, to be used with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion; and in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments.¹

As we look closer at this earth we see spread upon its surface many nations. We see God sending his Son to let mankind know what he has in mind for these nations. At the coming of the Son we hear the angels singing, "Peace on earth, good will toward men," and thereafter we hear Jesus saying, "Peace I give unto you."

But the nations are not at peace. The "one world" idea has been advanced at various times, but it has never come to fruition. War is a constant threat. Where a simulated peace does exist, it is insecure and temporary.

Some leaders of government are morally irresponsible. They acknowledge no God but power and no value other than victory in battle. They hold over the world a constant threat of war as a result of some decision made while they are intoxicated either with power or with strong drink, or both.

As we look more closely we discover that real integrity is rare. Much of the world proceeds on the basis of the assumption that every man and every nation has its price. Every man can be persuaded to turn away from

God and to forego the opportunity to make a positive response to a continuing revelation of him.

Looking more closely, we discover that selfishness and greed and pride and hypocrisy are common. Even many who do good, do so because of social pressure rather than because of a positive response to a loving God. Many profess Christ yet join in pagan activities, and use the standards of the world to justify such choices. 29

Looking further, we discover that the picture shows that " 'we still have the problem of crime and criminals with us, a problem that has continued to grow faster than our nation's growth. Last year (1954) more than two million major crimes were committed.' Iniquity abounds. One of every twenty-three persons in the United States becomes a public criminal. For every dollar spent on education, crime costs us \$1.46. For every dollar spent on churches, thirteen dollars go to crime. To secure national order and safety we maintain thirty-one federal penal institutions, seventy-six institutions for the insane, and thousands of reformatories, schools of correction, and city and county jails.

"In a recent year American men and women spent nine billion dollars on liquor, while only about two and a half billion were spent on public schools and the public education program. Naturally, this amount spent on intoxicating drinks did not include the cost of results that always follow in broken homes, broken lives, lost hours of work, hospital bills, or the cost of accidents on highways directly attributable to drunken drivers which many times take the lives of innocent people. In Kansas City alone, it was reported recently that there are twenty-eight thousand alcoholics.

"No individual who understands the purpose of this land of America, and senses his responsibility to preserve happiness and freedom in the world, can survey the present conditions without concluding that something is drastically wrong."² 30

These factors are only a few picked at random on the basis of their availability. They make no mention of the crime rate in other countries which, in some cases, is much better; but which in many cases is much worse. They do not emphasize that approximately 90 per cent of the people of the world are hungry. We have not mentioned the millions of people who have been starved, tortured, deported, or killed in the international conflicts that have swept the earth from time to time. Nor have we attempted to estimate the similar sufferings and perhaps much worse which constantly threatens humanity in our day. This is the first picture which leads us to believe that repentance is needed. Sometime the nations of the earth must stop, turn around, and give attention to using this earth as God intends-with freedom and brotherhood becoming the norm, with the dignity of the individual and the worth of human life restored.

THE SECOND PICTURE

Next we would like to paint another picture against the same background, keeping in mind God's plan for the earth and his love for us. Keep in mind his greatness and power. Reflect again upon the position of the earth in a great universe which contains many planets both larger and smaller than ours. Keep thinking of God's great love behind it all. Having this background in mind, we approach our earth and look again. We see God speaking to a boy and introducing his Son. The Son tells him about the plans God has for the peoples of the earth. He points out to him the efforts that have been made in the past to establish peace and good will among men and teaches this lad that even though success has
31
not been achieved, yet the works and the designs and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated. He tells the boy further that he has a particular work for him to do. As a result of this contact between God and man, we see an organization established which, by the grace of God and the cooperation of a repentant people, is destined to bring forth the kingdom and establish right relationships among the nations of the earth.

As we see this organization, we note its rapid initial growth. We observe a period of trouble and division and later the gathering of the fragments and a reorganization in a new endeavor to accomplish the task to which God has called the members of that group. We see this group of people returning to the Center Place from which they had been driven. Difficulties develop and growing pains come as problems of church government are encountered. We see a period of debt and bondage and then of debt payment. Later we observe a period of erecting church buildings and strengthening our economic position. And through all of this and still before us is the call, "*Rise up, O men of God! Have done with lesser things; give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve the King of Kings.*"

Accepting all past activities as being necessary and appropriate at the time, the only real measurement of success is made at the point where men are brought into covenant relationship with God. In our best years the church has converted about five thousand five hundred people. Is this good or bad? If this figure is less than it might reasonably have been expected to be, then as a church we need to repent.
32
Let us do some measuring and analyzing.

The first means by which we measure success is by making some reference to the message we carry. The message we have *is* a wonderful one. There is nothing in the world today that compares with the Restoration story. In no theological circles do you find anything like it. It is marvelous because of its adherence to the truth. There is no fear of analysis. Wherever truth is found which is outside the range of our traditions and our accepted belief such new truth is to be grasped with

eagerness. Whenever new light comes, from man or from God, it is tested and accepted when proved to be of worth. There is no dearth of testimony about the value of the Restoration story. It ought to spread quickly, it is such a marvelous story. In the light of the quality of our message have we done with it as well as we should have? If not, we need to repent.

Again, to measure our progress let us look briefly at our history. When the work was new, men went forth with enthusiasm. In a short period of some fourteen years, about two hundred thousand people were brought into covenant relationship with the Christ. Against a knowledge of this kind of possibilities, is fifty-five hundred enough? If not, the church needs to repent.

We also measure our progress by looking at the opportunities that are ours. There are opportunities everywhere.

Every time one of the brethren returns from another nation, he comes saying that what those people need is the gospel of Christ. Often they bear witness that the people of other nations are hungry for just the philosophy and the demonstration which this church should bring. 33

We have modern communications. We can speak around the world in a second. We have modern transportation. We can encircle the globe in a few hours. In the light of all we have to work with, is fifty-five hundred enough? If not, we need to repent.

Again, we measure and evaluate our progress by looking at what others have done. Other churches started later but already are much bigger. As an example, I have collected a few facts from an article which appeared in a recent copy of the *New Yorker* magazine. The article tells of a visit a reporter made to the headquarters of the Jehovah Witnesses. Here is a denomination that began with a Bible discussion group in 1872 under the leadership of a twenty-year-old man named Charles Russell. This organization now numbers three quarters of a million people. Every day they print fifteen tons of literature in sixty-five languages and in Braille. Every week in New York City alone, over seven thousand Witnesses put in over twenty-six thousand hours in visiting the homes of the people of that city. They publish two magazines with a circulation of thirty-five million every two weeks. In addition, they have a block-by-block plan worked out so that they reach every home in the city three times a year.

This is only one of several churches which has shown rapid growth. The Nazarene church, for example, began in 1908. It now numbers six hundred and sixty thousand people. The Seventh Day Adventists (organized in 1860) now number over a million and are to be found in almost every country in the world. 34

We can rationalize and say that they have an easier task, we can doubt the genuineness of their conversions, we can seek in various ways to

justify our own comparative slowness, but we cannot refute the facts and figures.

If, in the light of commitments to Christ obtained by others and in recognition of the needs we haven't met which others are finding ways to meet, we come to feel that fifty-five hundred isn't enough, then, again, we need to repent. We need to look within and find out what is retarding us and whatever it is, seeing the situation against the background of God's purpose in us, we need to undertake whatever surgery is necessary to correct the malady. We must no longer measure success in terms of temporal progress, in absence of criticism and persecution, or even in the degree of our standing and respectability among the churches of our day. Rather we need to make our repentance effective by joining forces with God in the advancement of a vigorous yet stable campaign to move directly toward the accomplishment of the tasks to which God has assigned us. Yes, as we look at the picture of the church, we observe its performance, and we say frankly that repentance is needed.

THE INDIVIDUAL

We come now to the third picture. This one is fundamental to both the others. Observe that we still use the same background. "Behind the dim unknown, standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."³ We note that man has been particularly prepared for his habitation here. He has the ability to see, hear, feel, and communicate. He has the opportunity to think and to 35 react and to choose. He has been given dominion over everything upon the face of the earth. Yet, "increasingly, men are withholding from each other, robbing, molesting, kidnaping, and killing-breaking the laws of the land and of God. We find mothers and fathers who refuse to give careful guidance to their children; men of business who neglect their duties and responsibilities at home; young people who jump hastily into marriage; husbands who spend half their income in the tavern while their families live without the necessities of life; married couples who cheat on each other, forgetting their marriage vows. As a result, we see misery, poverty, hardship, and defeat on every hand."⁴ There is every evidence that Paul's analysis is still accurate, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."⁵

Every man is continually choosing. He continues to live as he is or he chooses to forsake his present ways in favor of a better life. This is illustrated by the boy who gives up a late evening social life so that he can be prepared to play on the varsity team. It is the same idea which was expressed by Brother . F. P. Curry when he said, "Repentance is the continual forsaking of things of lesser worth." It is this opportunity to move into a better life which is suggested in the command, "Repent; for the

kingdom of heaven is at hand."⁶ There is always the opportunity to change our course, to live for God as against living for our own purposes.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNREPENTANT

The man who needs to repent can be easily identified among us. Just as certain model cars have distinguishing characteristics, 36 so does the unrepentant man identify himself. In the first place he wants his own way. Brother A. A. Oakman has said, "The original normal sin is to want to have our own way." We place ourselves at the center of our universe and use our own desires as the measure of our own success. "When a wheel is not truly centered it turns eccentrically. When life is not centered on the true center of the universe, it moves erratically with disruptive results."⁷ Sometimes we set ourselves against the word of God instead of crucifying self if necessary in order to do his will. This way of life leads to all sorts of specific sins, in two categories-the sins of commission and omission. It is our intention to achieve our own desires that causes us to do these things. A concentration upon these outward evidences of sin and an attempt to eradicate them still leaves us the kind of people who will have tendencies to do the same things again. The only way to overcome permanently such inclinations is to free ourselves of this desire to have our own way and to remove ourselves from the center of our own universe. This can be done only by substituting the Christ and placing him in the center of our personal orbit instead of ourselves.

Because man wants his own way he is engaged in temporary pursuits. Our good friend and brother, C. G. Mesley, said one time in my hearing, "Embark on no crusade that does not have eternity in it." I will always remember the advice given to me by Bishop Earl Higdon as I was leaving Graceland College upon graduation. His words were "Whatever you do, never lose yourself in the spirit of something small." Dead works are determined characteristics, by the time schedule 37 of the results obtained. Everything we do has results, either in time or in eternity. The activities we engage in which bring results that are as temporary as this life itself are dead works as compared with activities which elevate men to a position closer to God, not only for here, but for hereafter.

The unrepentant man fails to see the relationship between personal righteousness and the social aspects of the kingdom. Rauschenbusch wrote: "The ABC of social renewal and moral advance is for each of us to face our sins sincerely, and get on a basis of frankness with God and ourselves. Therefore, Christianity sets out with a call for personal repentance. *Personal repentance is a social advance.*"

A Joint Council of the First Presidency, the Council of Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric gave emphasis to this a few years ago by writing in an epistle to the church: "The strength of the church is in the quality of her

men and her women and her children." This was further emphasized in a 1947 revelation with which you are all familiar, "Zionic conditions are no further away nor any closer than the spiritual condition of my people justifies."

The unrepentant man justifies himself and condemns his neighbor, measuring his own activities upon one set of scales, while using a different standard for his neighbor. He is the kind of man who often wishes that the other fellow had heard the sermon but never takes the sermon seriously as applying to himself. One of the most apt expressions of this philosophy appeared recently in a book review which was printed in the Herald.

It said, "It was the opinion of Henry Ward Beecher that 38
'The churches of the land are sprinkled all over with bald-headed old sinners whose hair has been worn off by the friction of countless sermons that have been aimed at them and have glanced off and hit the man in the pew behind.' Herald House now has available a new text which is designed to help preachers improve their 'aim!'"⁸

All of these signs or evidences of the unrepentant man point to the nature of the sin in the life of a man as if it were an outcropping of rock in a field. That which appears on the surface is abundant evidence that much more lies beneath, and that the deeper we dig the more we will find. Repentance is needed everywhere.

SUMMARY

Thus we have three pictures of the current situation because the things God set out to do in the world and the church and in our individual lives are yet undone, "[God] now commandeth all men everywhere to repent," "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."⁹

1. D. and C. 101: 2; 59: 4,5, adapted
2. Glen Johnston, quoting J. Edgar Hoover, *Saints' Herald*, Dec. 3, 1956
3. "The Present Crisis," by James Russell Lowell
4. Glen Johnston, *Saints' Herald*, Dec. 3, 1956
5. Rom. 3: 23
6. Matt. 3: 28; 4: 16
7. *Doing the Truth*, James A. Pike, page 71
8. *Saints' Herald*, Dec. 3, 1956, page 14
9. Acts 17: 30; Rom. 3: 23

Third Lecture

The Process of Repentance

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance."-II Corinthians 7: 10.

Rarely do we meet a member of the Melchisedec priesthood who doesn't agree that repentance is urgently needed in our world today. That almost goes without saying. But I am sure we shall have to proceed more deliberately and with more care in reaching unity on the "process" involved in repentance, because we reach into an area which is more analytical, not simply a matter of recounting readily observable facts.

Repentance is a subject in which we must consider the process and the definition together. To treat the process of repentance as being separate and apart from the definition is like contemplating the wind's blowing without recognizing what the wind is. Our definition is that "Repentance is a conscious positive response to an ever-increasing revelation of God." And in our definition itself, you see, we put something of the process of repentance. We want to look at the whole range of the process that takes man from where he is to God.

Imagine someone wishing to observe how to make potato chips. He goes into a factory and sees that the potato is thrown into a certain machine where it is peeled.

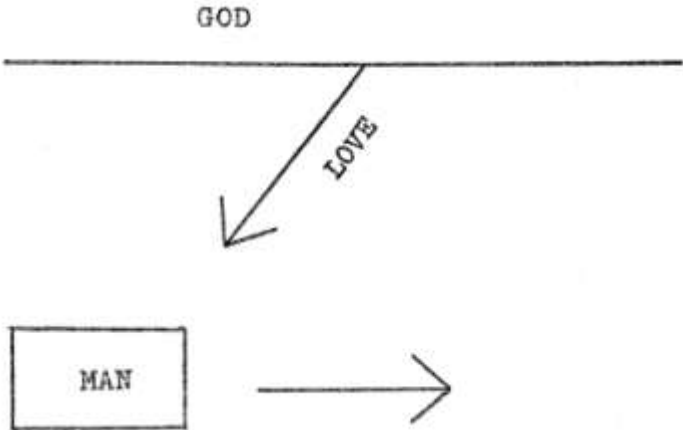
Then it undergoes certain cooking and drying processes. He says, "But I want to see the whole process. This is a 40 peeled potato. What does it look like before it is peeled? Where does it come from?" So someone takes him to the field where the potatoes are harvested and he sees the potato digger working. Then he goes back of that and sees the plant growing. When he goes back of that he sees how the man cuts the seed potato with at least one "eye" in every piece and notes how potatoes are planted. Of course some of you are already preceding me and saying, "Well, where does the potato come from?"

We want to observe the whole process of repentance as inclusively as we can. I say this for one reason-because, although it may seem illogical, this is one occasion in which we cannot start where we are. To observe the whole process of repentance we cannot start where we are because we started repenting a long time ago. I am sure that applies to everyone present. You would not be here if that were not the case. We wish to start back at the beginning and view the process that has brought you to where you are now.

We begin, then, with the man as he was before he knew about God, just as he has existed upon the face of the earth before he has asked himself any questions about eternal things. This is difficult for most of us because we

cannot remember a time in our early years when there wasn't someone talking to us about God. Our earliest remembrances are those in which we were surrounded by people who believed in him. From early childhood we have the idea of God with us, so, for most of us, it is difficult to imagine man having no concept of God. Some men call themselves atheists today. Perhaps there aren't any such things as atheists but let's assume there are 41

The process of repentance, if we begin at the beginning, must start with man's existence at the point before he makes any responses to a creator. He doesn't know yet that God is there. He is engaged in the activities of this world. He is busy doing the things that men do from day to day to make a living. He is concerned with getting ahead, with having his own way, with succeeding or winning or accomplishing or achieving some things to which he has devoted his attention which he himself has set up as his objective and by which success is measured interms of what he wants to accomplish. A man in the world, being of the world, believing he draws his substance from the world, sees nothing beyond that. He is concerned with time, with the present. He has no concern about eternity. If he thinks about eternity at all, it is in most indirect and vague terms. He has no direct thoughts about the matter. This is where we want to begin in considering the process of repentance. We describe this man in the terms of a simple chart.



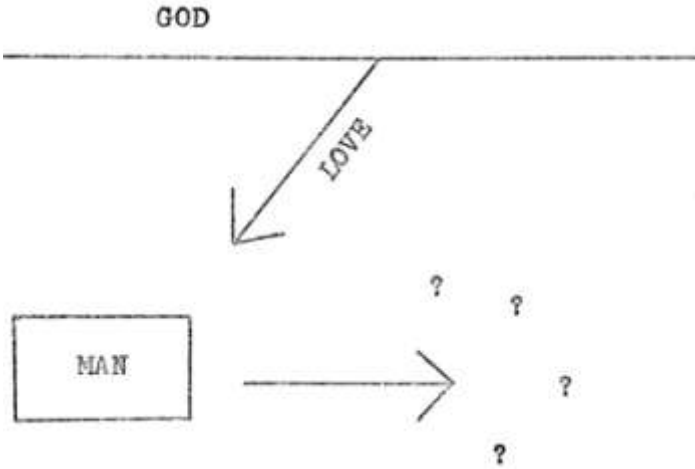
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This man is just existing. He lives because God placed him here, but he doesn't know that, nor that God loves him. Nor is he aware of God's intent that man shall move upward toward him. As he goes through various activities day after day he discovers that his life is like being on a treadmill. He gets up in the morning, goes to work, works hard all day. He comes home, gets a night's rest so he can get up in the morning and again work hard all day. Then he comes home and gets another night's rest. He keeps on doing this day after day; he observes that other people around him are doing similar things. He seems to be in a stream of humanity who

are just moving out toward the edge of their existence here and then disappearing, never to be seen again. He realizes that new people are coming into the world from somewhere. One arrives every eight seconds. And at a slightly slower rate they leave the world after this span of seventy years. He begins to ask himself some questions.

Somewhere along the way he comes to this point in his existence where he says, "This doesn't seem to be getting me anywhere. This doesn't seem to have relationship to anything meaningful. I am just grinding my life away. When I am done, what then?" He observes the shortness of life and that the rewards of his labors must be left behind when his time comes to leave this sphere of activity. He observes the apparent futility of it all, and seeks to become oriented to something meaningful.

A few years ago a group of college students of some of the universities of this country made a study of what constitutes the basic desires of people. What do they want most? One of the things they listed when they had 43 talked it all over was this: man wants to escape from meaninglessness. He wants to be oriented in his surroundings so that everything that he does and says has some value and some meaning with relation to some other things that are permanent and secure. He needs to have some check points so that the things that he does can be evaluated. He wishes to know what this is all about. He asks questions. How did I get here? What is it for? What is life supposed to be to me? We represent this on our chart also by inserting some question marks.



To this desire God Responds. It is interesting that this man, even though he didn't know God was around, was at the same time surrounded by the Spirit of God. His spirit is in all and through all. It enlightens every man. It is always there, seeking, waiting for the opportunity to enlighten men. The function of the Spirit of God is to guide men to all truth. This includes the very beginning task of helping him to orient himself in his universe. 44

An other way of stating the purpose of the Spirit of God is to say that it is to bear witness of the Father and of the Son. So we thus observe this sequence of events in the process of repentance. First, man is placed on the earth with two great gifts, intelligence and agency. In addition to these gifts, he also has his inherited propensities and is surrounded by what we call environment. In this environment one of the major factors is the Spirit of God which, in this instance, manifests itself as a pervasive, all-inclusive influence for good. This expression of the Spirit of God is referred to in such Scriptures as:

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. He was not that light, but came to bear witness of that light, which was the true light, which lighteth every man who cometh into the world.²
We love him, because he first loved us.³

We are also informed that the presence of this surrounding influence in our environment may be withdrawn under certain conditions, as indicated by the statement, "My spirit shall not always strive with man."⁴

The second step is man's response to these initial provisions of the heavenly Father. God does not force himself upon anyone. The door must be opened from within. God does not insist that man give him "credit" for being the Creator. He will not impose upon anyone the conviction that he exists and is the author of all good until man opens his mind to be receptive to such conviction. When man does want to know, the Spirit is there ready to bear witness of the Father. Because God loves all men, he blesses and provides for all. He causes the rain to fall on the evil as well as the good. Repentance,

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a conscious, positive response to him, must begin with a recognition of him. We may think of the occasion of the Apostle Paul being compelled to recognize the Christ as an exception, or as a case in point, depending on our own conjecture as to the preparation of his mind for that experience. In some cases the desire to know and respond to him may precede any faith at all. Men have prayed, "O God, if there be a God." To this desire to know, God readily responds. Alma recognized this and said that a man can begin if he has only a desire to believe. This is the first example, the earliest expression of the principle that says when a man will do the will of the Father he shall know. If you seek you shall find. Here are Alma's words: "If ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith; yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you."⁵

Brother Leonard Lea comments as follows: "There is a working formula for getting started: (1) Wake up! (2) Stir up your faculties-your hearing, your attention, your interest. (3) Give God's promise a trial-test it to see if

it is true. (4) If you have only a particle of faith, exercise it; give it a workout so that it will have a chance to grow. (5) If you are so weak and down that you are able only to desire, let the desire go to work in you. At your very lowest point, 'You can begin with nothing but a desire.'⁶

How fortunate that so few of us ever need to experience a beginning at such a low point as this. How happy we should be for the heritage of faith and the influence of surroundings which open our eyes to God before we come face to face with the futility of life without him. But in 46 the final analysis, man must be willing to see. And in response to this readiness on his part, light comes to him. Reciprocating action continues from this point on.

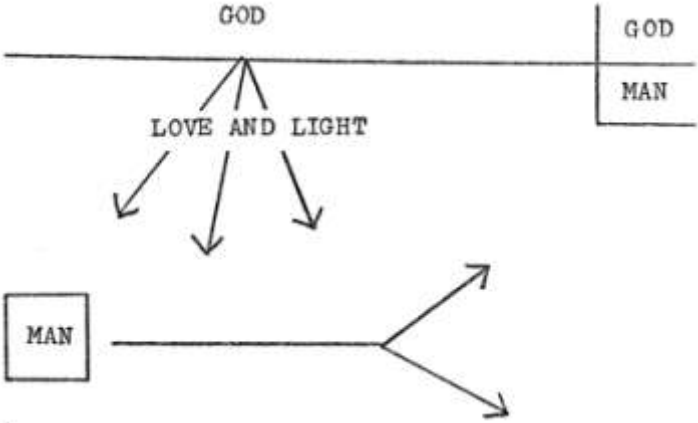
Note the alternate moves. It is somewhat like a checker game. Some of you have played checkers with a little child. He will look at the game for a long time. Then he will move. He doesn't know why he moved as he did, but as soon as he moves, then you move again. Then you wait until he has played the part of acting out what he has seen other players do. He looks at the board for a while and then decides to move again. You move again in your turn and wait again for the little fellow to move.

But there is another game that is called "Give Away." It is just the opposite of the checker game. In that game you move to try to give your men away to the other person. Every time it is your move you give him another one. God's effort to reveal himself is like a "give away" game. He is always trying to reveal himself to us. Every time he reveals himself to us a little bit, he must wait for our response to that move. Then he gives us additional revelation of his love for us. You see God's move was first he created us, placed us here, and he influences us as we have said. Our move is then to seek his meaning, and to open our minds to further light. Intelligence responds to intelligence.

This has some significance (and we say this rather parenthetically) in our missionary work. In the first place, we need to place men in a position where they will question. Expose them to the things that bear witness of God, the order of the universe, the reasonableness of there being purpose in the universe, the magnitude and beauty that is provided for man. Expose them to the futility of this round of just being 47 concerned about temporal things. Cause them to ask questions and open their minds to a revelation of God. In our missionary work also, we need to avoid the wasting of time on those who have had this initial revelation of God, who recognize that there must be some order in the universe and who have chosen to go some other way. We are instructed to seek out the honest in heart. We need to be ready to demonstrate what God has done, whenever the opportunity is afforded us.

In the process of repentance, then, we have what we shall call a reciprocating or alternating action; reciprocating not in the sense of trading

with one another, but rather in the sense of alternate moves like the reciprocating pump where each cylinder moves immediately after the other. It means again that as soon as God reveals himself to us in his own initial way, it becomes our opportunity and our responsibility then to respond to whatever light we have. We refer once more to the simple chart.



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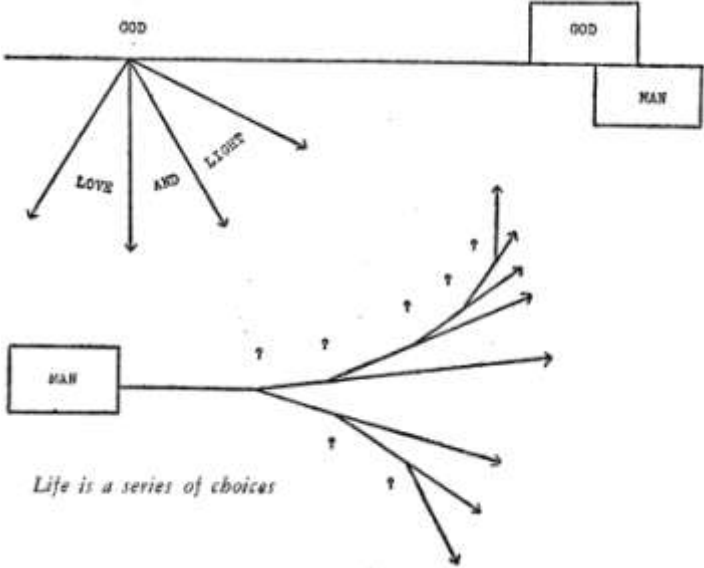
Immediately when a man asks questions, God responds. When new light comes to him he must make a new decision. Will he change directions in response to the light that God gives him, or will he continue to go in the way that he was going before? It is man's move. If he continues in the way that he was going, he has decided. If he changes direction, again he has decided. His decision is positive or negative. He cannot continue as he was after he is touched by the light, for light carries responsibility with it. He must respond one way or the other, and the choice is his own to make. Repentance is responding positively to such a revelation of God.

As man changes his direction upward, God again reveals himself to him in additional ways and thus the process continues. God always responds with more light, eagerly, generously, joyously. He is anxiously waiting for opportunity to respond to every action we make in his direction. He is especially happy when we move beyond the light that he gives us. We call this moving in faith.

Man knows something about the order of the universe. He has come to the conclusion that there is a God. On the basis of reason, he moves in a certain direction. He responds positively to the light which God gives him. He responds further than that in answer to the call of faith. Along the way his knowledge of God grows. He sees more things. His own humanity becomes clearer to him as he sees God more clearly. He receives an increasing revelation of his own weakness. Every time he receives light he makes a response to it.

Perhaps we can set it up as a little formula this way S_____ R.
 Let's call it "Seeing and Responding" 49

This happens over and over again. There is a decision every time. In the psychology books we see this same set of symbols; it is called "stimulus and response." In the books of science we find the same thought; it is called "Cause and Effect." Every cause has its effect; and every effect is preceded by a cause. The process of repentance is the process of our responding to the light God makes available to us. Making a decision to respond toward God occurs repeatedly in the life of the repentant man. Thus the way appears like this:



This "seeing" that takes place as we move along the way of repentance includes seeing his plans for us. It includes seeing what he intends to make of us. The objective is that man shall finally respond and interact with God on a basis far beyond anything that we know now. This must begin with God making himself known to us in response to our willingness to know him. It continues until the time comes when we know as we are known and we can share with one another.

And so along the way, man sees God's love for him. He sees the evidence of that love in creation around him; he sees it in the gift of life itself. He sees it in God's eagerness to forgive us, repeatedly if necessary; in God's willingness to be hurt for us as it is demonstrated in the gift of his Son. Some of you have taken the time, I am sure, to contemplate what must have passed through the mind of God when he looked down upon the face of the earth and loved us so much that he permitted that to happen which happened to his son. Man begins to see the joy which is in heaven when he responds properly. We are told in the Scripture that Jesus did what he did for the joy of it: "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."⁷ It is because he loves us that he does so much for us.

The repentant man has an ever-unfolding expansion of his understanding of what God thinks of each individual. And he thinks, too, of the persistent efforts of God to draw us to himself, observing that he never gives up. He never accepts our best as final, nor our worst as typical of us. He never accepts the present as being the best that we can achieve. He always says that if we are not doing our best, the thing that we have done today is not our own standard. He reminds us that we can do better than that. He always makes allowances for us when he can, if he can do so without seeming to condone the sin itself, for he never makes allowances for sin. 51

As the repentant man begins to see himself in the light of the plan God has for him, he notes how far he has fallen short of becoming what God would have him become; and in the revelation of this difference, he begins to observe, too, the difference between spirituality and carnality. He gets some notion of what Isaiah meant when he said: "Woe is me! for ... I am a man of unclean lips."⁸ Perhaps he understands what the Apostle Paul was trying to convey to us when he wrote such words as these:

They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are after the flesh cannot please God.⁹

We see, then, that as a man moves in the direction of God his perception increases, his mind is being opened, his understanding is being enlarged. As he becomes aware of the hurt inflicted upon God, he becomes sorrowful and ashamed. He is sorry for being just what he is and not being farther along the way, not sorry just for being caught in error and not sorry only for some specific act or failure to act, but ashamed that he has responded so slowly to all that God has in store for him.

Out of a recognition of this deficiency on his part, every man somewhere along the way re-enacts the scene that took place at Pentecost. You will recall the occasion when Peter was describing the situation. He was saying to these people, "This man whom you permitted to be crucified was the Messiah."¹⁰ When that conviction broke 52 through to the minds of those people they were pricked in their hearts. The Scripture says they looked at one another and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"¹¹ This is what happens to a man when he comes to the realization that he is as short as he is of the distance that he ought to have achieved toward godliness. He asks himself, "What can I do in the light of all the love of God which surrounds me-in the light of all his investment in me? Being this far short of what I might have been, what can I do?"

But God already has the next step prepared. We are told that godly sorrow worketh repentance, but not just the repentance of being conscience

stricken. That kind of repentance is a repentance to despair. It has a legal framework. This kind of repentance just says-"I have made a mistake. The time is past. I didn't do the right thing. What shall I do?" It has in it the element of fear. This is not godly sorrow. Rather, godly sorrow is the kind which has with it the conviction of hope. It is the confession of guilt and shortcoming but is not within a legal framework but an evangelistic framework. It is the arrangement whereby sorrow issues forth in action to correct the shortcoming. A man's light increases and he responds by ceasing to do evil and learning to do well. At any point where he is doing things that are not acceptable or that move him in an adverse direction, he makes an about-face and turns back toward God.

Somewhere along the line he makes a particular decision. He enters a covenant with his heavenly Father in his baptism. He accepts the laying on of hands that the heavenly Father might confirm this to him. Having it confirmed to him that this is the thing to do he commits himself never to turn back again. It is as if he were saying, "Henceforth, God and I will work together. Henceforth, I am one of his covenant children. I am taking sides with him to improve myself."

In addition to this covenant, each priesthood member is a party to another covenant. There came a time that we recognized that it is important to become concerned not only about ourselves moving toward relationship with God, but also that we share the task of moving other people in that direction. So we accepted ordination. We, with a double covenant, in a way, have committed ourselves to continue to seek light, not only for ourselves but for others entrusted to our care. Thus we not only respond to his call to us, but we also share his work.

REPENTANCE WITHIN

At some point each repentant man decides to become a loyal subject-not just to lay down his arms and quit fighting against God, but to take up arms for God, to enlist in his cause and to embark upon his crusade. When man does this, he seeks immediately to make restitution as far as it is possible for him to do so. He makes amends for all the errors of his past which he can correct. This is not just a matter of paying indemnity. God doesn't want us to pay so that he can forgive us. He wants us to be free of the tendency to sin. Repentance is inward. It has to do with decision making and direction setting.

It is not to be confused with the fruits of repentance. The fruits of repentance are those external evidences that say that we have made an inward decision for him, and God wants such inward decision. It is written in the Scriptures that "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."¹² And because man must make some decisions under authority given to priesthood in connection with the ordinances and membership in the church, we are told

that there should be fruit meet for repentance. There should be evidence that repentance takes place. But God does not want primarily those external evidences. They must be present as evidence of genuineness, but God wants internal decisions on our part to respond, to our growing revelation of him. Repentance is inward.

The law of Moses called for restitution, as you know, at the rate of 120 percent. It says:

If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbor in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbor; or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein; then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, Or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, Or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering.¹³

This suggests that when a man has aught against his brother he must do two things: He must get right with his brother and he must get right with his God. This Scripture says that in that day that he brings to God his trespass offering, in that same day he should restore to 55 the one whom he has injured the principal sum that he took from him plus a fifth part more. That was the law of Moses. And in Matthew we are told:

Therefore, if ye shall come unto me, or shall desire to come unto me, or if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave thou thy gift before the altar, and go thy way unto thy brother, and first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.¹⁴

God wants this right relationship between us and himself, and this requires right relationships between us and our brother.

Zacchaeus carried this a little further. When the light came to him about getting right relationships with people and with his heavenly Father, he restored fourfold.

The repentant man does not regard penitence as offsetting the demands of the law and making punishment unnecessary. The person who sins against God does not come with a penitence offering of some kind and say: "I am going to buy my way out of this." He must make the decision within himself and get right with God. He must acknowledge his sin, and decide not to repeat it. The idea of doing penance was a mistaken translation by Jerome who was a secretary to Pope Damascus in A.D. 382. It was translated by him to mean "discomfort offerings" but the Latin prefix "re" means "back again," thus repentance means turning back to God. We are

not punished for our sins; we are punished by them, for they keep us away from God our Father.

The process of repentance includes ceasing to do evil and learning to do well. It is illustrated all around us. One song in our hymnal 56 is about higher ground. "I'm pressing on the upward way, new heights I'm gaining every day." There is another line that says, "Lord, lead me on to higher ground." We see illustrations in life such as the work of Burbank with the flowers. He kept at it, never accepting the present as good enough, until finally he had what we call the Shasta daisy. We see Edison trying over and over and over again to find the right substance for that filament in the incandescent bulb, until he found one that would burn long enough. We see ourselves measured against the man we might have been, if we had not done some repenting along the way, and we note that this movement toward God is illustrated time after time, even in our own life.

The repentant man no longer seeks to justify failures. He does not stop, saying, "Ninety-nine per cent is good enough; I've done pretty well, just let it go at that." He uses the most accurate scales on himself, and never stops, because every time he makes a response and gets to the point where he says, "I can stop here, I'll take this one step then I'll stop," God responds with more light, and he is always called onward and upward.

There is a Scripture in the Book of Mormon which we often read at Thanksgiving time which says that we are always in debt to God. God blesses us and as we recognize it we try, to thank him. But if we thank him and acknowledge his goodness he gives us some more. So we are always indebted to him. This is the way it is with the process of being repentant. We are always being called upward.

One of the things we do is to make safeguards against future sinning. We do this in two ways. One way is by establishing certain habit 57 patterns. If we have been in the habit of doing things that we ought not to do, or if we have been in the habit of thinking in terms of our own self-interest, we replace these habits as rapidly as we can with habits of thinking of the other person. We adjust our patterns so that everything we do moves us toward him at a rate commensurate with the best of our ability.

In addition to adjusting our habit patterns, we apply ourselves to the social aspects of the kingdom. That is to say that we want other people repenting around us. We want to remove the temptations as far from us as we possibly can. Repenting in its larger sense has to do with moving into the social aspects of the kingdom as well as to the individual aspects. Security in righteousness is parallel to security in finances. There are some people who say: "I am going to add more and more money to my bank account." But after one's bank account gets so high, every dollar he adds doesn't buy him more security at all; it buys him more insecurity. In my

present condition I haven't any fear at all that my wife and children are going to be kidnapped tonight for ransom. I don't have the slightest fear in that regard. But if I had a million dollars I might have to live in a different situation. I would make sure who are all my neighbors. I would have a fence and a gate with a lock on it. If I had ten million dollars maybe I would need some watchdogs around. If I had a hundred million dollars I might need some guards with guns. Every time I add more money to my bank account after I get so far up, I buy insecurity with every additional dollar I possess.

Security isn't a matter of adding more in this direction. Security is a matter of increasing the circle of those people 58
around me who have things similar to those I have, similar desires and ambitions and goals. The bigger that circle gets, the farther I am from those people who seek to destroy me or seek what I have.

Security in righteousness works this way also. Every man should seek to establish for himself an island of righteousness in a sea of sin. When he is repenting, in terms of its social application, what he is really doing is attempting to extend the area of those islands of righteousness by filling in the marshes of immorality along the shoreline until he has extensive areas of solid ground. This is security. This is protecting himself against future sinning by establishing himself in a social situation where there are many things which are conducive to righteousness and the things which are conducive to retrogression are far from him. That is why we have "the gathering" in the church. That is why we have the idea of a social gospel. That is why we have the idea that we should work together, because together we can move effectively in the direction that God would have us go. Yes, basically it is an individual matter but it has these social implications.

SUMMARY

As a man responds to the light, he moves nearer and nearer to God. As he responds negatively the result is increasing distance from God until finally outer darkness is his habitation. "He that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven; and he that repents not, from him shall be taken even the light which he has received, for my Spirit shall not always strive with man, saith the Lord of Hosts."¹⁵ 59
He who will come down in the depths of humility and confess and repent his sin, he who will be honest with himself as well as with his fellow man can find peace of mind. He can ask for, seek, and find forgiveness of God; he can unite his divided personality, he can respect himself. He can go on and on to perfection. He makes some progress each day as he walks in the way that leads to life eternal, guided by that light which shineth brighter and brighter, until the perfect day.

1. Eph. 4: 6

2. John 1: 8,9

3. I John 4: 19
4. Gen. 8: 5
5. Alma 16: 151
6. *Saints' Herald*, March 4, 1957, page 6
7. Heb. 12: 2
8. Isa. 6: 5
9. Rom. 8: 5-8

10. Acts 2: 36
11. Acts 2: 37
12. I Sam. 16: 7
13. Lev. 6: 1-5
14. Matt. 5: 25, 26
15. D. and C. 1: 5 f, g

Fourth Lecture

Repentance and the First Commandment

"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."-Romans 12: 2.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."-
Proverbs 4: 23.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve." - Joshua 24: 15.

Man begins in the world in a position where God placed him. He has intelligence and agency, or in other words, intelligence and the right to use that intelligence. God will not take these gifts away; he loves us too much to do so. At the moment man begins using his intelligence to seek for significance, then God begins to move into his life with an additional revelation of himself. Eventually man comes to a point where he must consciously decide to respond to the light. If he decides to move toward the light he turns in the direction toward which he is destined to move according to God's plan. Continuing in this way eventually leads him back to be with God in unity forever. God's initial gift of intelligence (light) sets up a reciprocal series of activities. Every time man responds to light, God gives him more light. This continues all through his life. Each stimulus, followed by positive reaction or response, brings more light until eventually man again returns to God to be at peace, sharing a perfect, loving, understanding relationship. This is the objective toward which man strives and this, in brief, is the process of repentance which we have set forth previously.

ALL-INCLUSIVE

We are aware of the fact that when Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment he responded with a most inclusive and profound statement. He said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."¹ Mark records this same incident using four words: "heart, soul, mind, and strength." And Luke also records the same occasion, and he also uses all four words. All of these together lead us to the conclusion that it was the intent that we should observe that the range should be all inclusive. Jesus intended that man's relationship to God should touch the life of man in all its aspects.

There was no plan on his part that man's life should be divided, that he should not be at unity with himself or that on one hand he should respond to God and on the other hand he should seek to maintain other objectives and other loyalties. He emphasized this by saying, "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and

Mammon."² I am sure that Jesus intended that man's relationship to God should be such that every aspect of the human life should be affected. Every area of life should be so adjusted that its contribution to the total life should help to move man toward God. 62

We want to be just as inclusive as that in our treatment of repentance. It affects every area of human life. We don't divide ourselves and repent with our mind or our strength and not our heart, or the other way round. No part of our life proceeds in any direction alone. Each part or area of our life affects the other area. They all go together. The individual should be treated as a unity. To leave out one area of life means we are still in rebellion. If, for example, we say, "My heart says I should move toward God and I would like to do that, and my mind says I ought to, but my strength and my activities are invested in some other direction," we are not really repenting. We are not responding continuously to an increasing revelation of God. If anyone part of our life or anyone area is at odds with him and his purposes we are still in rebellion and still maintaining our allegiance to ourselves rather than to him. We haven't made the unconditional surrender which is required in repentance. Part of our life is still bearing arms against him and against his plan for us.

Further, it is not complete repentance if we stop halfway along the way, even though we take all areas of our life into consideration and begin in every aspect of our life to move toward God. If there comes a point where with conscious intent we stop and say we have proceeded far enough, we are not fulfilling the purposes of repentance and acting in accord with the definition of repentance as we know it. It is illustrated by the story of the little girl who had been scolded by her parents and perhaps threatened a little bit. When she came to the evening time and knelt down to say her prayers she said, "Lord, make me good, not real good, but just good enough so I won't have to be spanked." Repentance doesn't go just part way. In repentance every area of our life is touched by the call of God as he continually reveals himself to us. Within the framework of God's plan for us, we have been given the right to choose our own way. But we can't go both ways. 63

REPENTANCE AND THE HEART

To determine our direction we must look at three areas of our own life. The first of these that we wish to discuss is the area that we call the heart. The heart is usually mentioned when one wishes to refer to the center of life. It has to do with our motives. Our motives move us. We respond in accord with the things that we want. In the library at the School of the Restoration is a book called *The Motives of Men*, written by George A. Coe. I recently picked it up and skimmed through it again. One of the questions that stands out is this: "What do human beings want?"

I took the time to read again the story of a play that ran some years ago in New York in which there was recorded a short conversation between someone who had been one of the respectable people of this earth and his guide in the next world. He had been one of the leisure class who had enough money so that he didn't have to work hard for his living. Now his time had come. He had arrived on the other side and had met someone over there who was showing him around. The guide said, "Now anything 64 you want you can have. The only exception to the rule is that there can be no pain, no suffering, no serious problems of any kind. Otherwise, however, anything you want you may have." "Well, that is just fine; thank you very much." So he began asking for the various things he wanted. No sooner had he made the request than he had the object he desired.

After a while the man got so many things that he wanted just by asking for them that he began to get bored with the situation and said, "Well, this is getting tiresome." Finally he became so disgusted and bored with having everything he wanted that he said, "I don't even want to be here. I want to be in hell" And his attendant said, "Why, brother, where do you think you are?"

God is not so concerned with our getting what we want as he is in our wanting the right things. Repentance has to do with what human beings want. And there are some people who continually work to obtain things that will take them to the place they don't expect to go. Our motives have to do with our heart. They move us in various directions. We respond to our desires. These can be adjusted but we must recognize the fact that our motives do set the tone of our life. A song I used to hear when I was a boy went "If your heart keeps right, if your heart keeps right, every cloud will wear a rainbow, if your heart keeps right."

We read in Proverbs, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life,"³ We talk about "getting to the heart of the matter," or we speak of a man who is enthusiastic about his job or a game or sport 65 as one who "puts his heart in it." If I were to invite one of you up here just at this moment without warning and ask you to complete this lecture you might respond if I called your name, but your heart wouldn't be in it. We talk about putting our heart into something when we are totally committed. The question is-what do human beings want? Into what endeavor do they put their heart?

These motives which we catch up in this word "heart" change from time to time. How quickly we pass from wanting toys, to wanting a house, to wanting to please the grandchildren! Time goes so quickly and our motives change. From time to time we do different things and act in different ways by the motives which we have at that time. Some days we will sacrifice a great deal for the kingdom. We will give almost anything for it.

I remember the story of Brother John F. Garver saying, "Under this spirit I'll go anywhere." On certain occasions our motives are strong for the kingdom. But on another day we hardly sacrifice at all. We are hardly willing to take even an unkind word from someone as an opportunity to demonstrate that the kingdom way is the magnanimous way. Some days we retaliate even for little injuries. Some days our motives are strong in one direction, some days in another direction.

The repentant man recognizes that his heart can go either way. His heart can move him, that is, his motives can pull him up toward God or away from him. He accepts responsibility for his own loyalties, and does not assume that they just happened. He doesn't say, "I just happen to want the things I want; I just happen to have the motives that I have." He accepts responsibility for those motives because he has discovered something 66 about how we arrive at these motives. He looks frankly at the gods who seek to govern him and decides for himself which desire shall control him. He discovers that his emotions and his motivations follow his actions. We used to think this was in reverse, but we know better now. Fear comes from running away.

People used to say that you become afraid and then you run away, but anyone of you can recall a time in your boyhood when you were walking home in the dark somewhere and you got the idea that there was something behind you. If you stopped and turned around and looked and there was nothing behind you, you walked on home. But if instead of doing that, you started to run, you ran faster and faster and faster until when you got to the door you could hardly get it open in time because something was right behind you. Fear grew in you all the way as you ran. Your emotions followed your actions.

This is illustrated by other emotions as well. You hate those you mistreat, rather than injuring those you hate. Anger comes because you take action against someone. If a man does something to you that you do not like and you refuse to retaliate, even refraining from thinking evil of him when he goes away, regardless of what he has done to you, you are still not angry. But if you double up your fists and put your left foot forward, think of a few mean things about him, tell yourself how unkindly he is acting, by that time you are angry. A few choice verbal barbs will speed up the reaction. You see, your emotions follow the things that you do. The study of human nature has taught us this. 67

Love comes as a result of doing things for people. I remember one time when Bishop Walter Johnson and I were mutually exchanging friendly boasts about what nice children we have-his two and my two are better than anyone else's, of course-he inserted this little sentence in our conversation, "You want to do a lot of things for them, it makes you love them." Through the years I have observed how it works. I am sure that you

have observed it, too. When you do something for people, you love them. The Master said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."⁴ Wherever you make your investments you influence the trend of your motives. The repentant man takes the responsibility for the creation of a pattern of motivation and set of loyalties which will move him toward God. If he doesn't find himself loving God and desiring to move in that direction, the repentant man goes to work actively by the direction of his own will and makes investments to create in himself the right kind of habit and motivation patterns. He takes responsibility for the loyalties of his own heart because he knows those loyalties can be created, controlled, and adjusted by the things he does. Therefore the repentant man deliberately invests in carefully chosen ways so that his loyalty to God will be strengthened.

Repentance thus becomes an achievement of the loves and hates that motivate God. Only as we love the same things as God loves and hate the things he hates can we say that we are at one with him. This is the great objective. Each of us has some further investments of ourselves to make to achieve that relationship with God. 68

THE MIND

The second area of your life that is affected by repentance is the mind. This also is directed to some extent by your will. To a large degree we choose what we think. The will stands guard at the doorway of our mind and permits the thoughts to enter and remain which it chooses to select for entrance. Now I know some people will say, "This isn't quite true. I will be trying to think about something and my will says that I should be thinking about this subject, but my mind goes away off there in a day dream." It does take some practice. Some of us have the type of mind which jumps from one thing to another rather quickly. Others have the orderly mind which moves consistently in harmony with the direction of the will. There are all the various ranges of abilities, but we are so constructed that if we practice and if we choose to do it this way, the will can control our mind and we can shut out things that we want to shut out.

I have personally had the experience of saying to my heavenly Father in prayer, "I wish I could forget that thing," and having prayed, have been able to forget it and dismiss *it* from my mind. Some of you may have experimented with your mind that way. It can be done.

The will controls the mind. The repentant man learns to make the right selections so he moves in the direction of thinking more and more as God thinks.

We do not wish to go into the technical difference at this point between the mind and the brain. We want to treat the whole intellectual area

together, even though we might well refer to the brain as a physical or temporal side of the intellect, while the mind is the spiritual side. 69 We are not going to try to divide it; we are considering this whole area of life called the mind or the intellectual area.

The repentant man makes a deliberate attempt to think God's way, to see God's point of view. The Greek word for repentance is *metanoia*, to change one's mind, or to have a new mind. The repentant man gives intellectual assent to God's sovereignty. He acknowledges that God is supreme and that it is appropriate for us to have allegiance to him. It isn't logical for us to say that we ought to have supremacy over him, but some men are that illogical. The repentant man says that it is appropriate that God should reign supreme in his own life. He follows the line of reasoning that leads to an acknowledgment that God loves us and that he actively invests in us. There are some people to whom this has been said so many times from so many pulpits and surrounded by such emotional circumstances that some reasonable and logical and coolly analytical minds tend to reject the whole premise.

When you talk about the love of God, some people say, "I haven't the time for that sort of thing. Religion is for the ladies and the aged, but I am a kind of self-made man; I'm a person who doesn't need that wishy-washy philosophy called 'religion.' Besides, many so called religious people are no better than I am." It is too bad that in the field of religion we have catered so much to the emotions and haven't always carried along the idea of the reason, the intelligence, the sound logical understanding of what is involved here. But the repentant man, with the best logic he can muster, acknowledges that God does love him. Here we are 70

speaking of love in the *agape* sense, the active sense. You see, there are two sides of this business of love. Some people are in love with being loved. But love, Christian love, is an active thing. It has to do with our investment in other people. God loves us that way, and the intelligent man looks at the earth and observes, "That is true. God does love me." With his mind he acknowledges and admits that God is investing in him. He recognizes and acknowledges that we hurt him by sinning, as the Psalmist conceded, "For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight."⁵

The repentant man, as he thinks in terms of repenting in the area of his life which we call the mind, acknowledges with sound reason, with careful calculation, with no particular influence of any emotional approach at all, that God loves him and that he hurts God when he sins.

He goes further and acknowledges that his own mind has certain powers and influences, that it can do some things to him that affect his total being. Perhaps he goes back to that simple little series of thoughts which we sometimes recall-"Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit.

Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny." The repentant man acknowledges that his thoughts find fruition in action.

He also acknowledges that his mind has some influence upon other people. One poet says,

Mind is the master power that molds and makes,
And man is mind, and ever more he takes
The tool of thought, and shaping that he wills
Brings forth a thousand joys, a thousands ills. 71
He think s in secret and it comes to pass.
Environment is but his looking glass.

Notice that? The mind is the power that shapes what he wills, and what he thinks comes back to him as a reflection in the universe around him. He builds the kind of society of which he dreams. The Zion we build will be the reflection of that which we have been thinking about building.

Recently Leonard Lea wrote in the *Saints' Herald* these words:

The mind is a system of communication through which we can understand the love, the power, and the great mercy of God. It enables us to understand other people. Through the mind we have the power to live while we live, not merely to exist. The mind has one power that is very remarkable. It is able to heal some of its own illnesses if we employ it in the right way. It can overcome its fears, it can conquer hate, it can control worry, it can make love stronger, and because the mind has the power to heal some of its own illnesses it also has power to remove some of the causes of physical illness. Take away fear, tension, worry, and grief and a tremendous strain is removed from the body. Nature's power to cure the body has a new chance to operate, and when this happens a restoration of health can often come to one who is sick. The mind has another power to heal which is very important. It can heal broken relationships in the family and in society. It can devise ways to bring peace to those who have quarreled or had trouble with each other. It can restore friendships, it can rebuild love, and this avenue of healing also helps the body to have better health. The mind is an instrument that can be controlled, it can be governed by the human will. The mind is not you, it is your servant. It will work for you. The real inward *you* can tell the mind what to do. And within the natural and reasonable limits it will obey. To repeat, the mind is an instrument, it belongs to you and you can control it. God gives you the power to control it and he will help you. 72

The repentant man strives for strict intellectual honesty, not that God will say, "Now own up, you have been a sinner." That isn't the way God approaches the situation at all. It is rather that God desires that we shall know the truth which sets us free, free to be with him. That is why he wants us to acknowledge our sin. Until we do, we do not know the truth about ourselves and we cannot be free of the sin which is in us.

The repentant man forsakes a false set of values and frankly admits that building for eternity is much more important than temporary values. He no longer tries to rationalize his apparent devotion to unworthy objectives, but

attempts to change. He escapes from the effort to ease his conscience by justifying himself. Every time a man is placed in a position where he sees that some aspect of his life is not as it should be, he has the choice to make, either to do something about it in terms of changing his direction, or to continue to do that which he is doing and to figure out some way to rationalize what he is doing to ease his conscience. Many times man makes the wrong choice, and takes the wrong course at that point.

The repentant man seeks to overcome mental laziness which condemns so many of us to mediocrity. I remember hearing Bishop Higdon say, "Zion will never be built by slipshod intellectualism."

The repentant man avoids illogical reasoning, the sort of thing that we so often do by using words with variable meanings. We use a word to mean one thing. Another man uses the word to mean something else. We never get together on our meanings so we never have unity or a meeting of the minds. 73

One of the courses that we want to insert in the School of the Restoration in which I have a particular interest is a course in "Logic." We offered such a course in the fall of 1956 and didn't get enough registrations so that we could actually give the course. This is a course which should always be popular among us. The repentant man wants to be sure that the conclusions he is reaching are the conclusions which he logically has a right to reach from the facts that he has in mind. He is very careful not to form conclusions which are not justified by the facts. The man who is not careful in his reasoning is not in a position to say that in all aspects of his life he is repentant. If he is consistent he doesn't change philosophies just to fit the occasion.

All of us are aware that many people slip at this point. Sometimes we are guilty of what we call pious hypocrisy. We put on our Sunday attitudes on Sunday; we use our holy tone when we are in the pulpit. But in a different situation we become a different person. The intellectually honest man, the one who repents in this field of the mind, is one who does not shift his philosophy for various situations, but his philosophy continues unchanged. He believes what he believes, no matter in what situation he finds himself.

Just now my mind goes back to a time when I was just a little boy hearing some men conversing in the church yard in a little branch of the church in rural Wisconsin. These men were talking about the presiding elder of the congregation. I just remember this one statement from the conversation, "Brother Bowen is a fine man; no matter what day you meet him he is always the same." I didn't realize what was meant at the time, but in the years that have followed I have come to understand 74

the significance of such a statement. A man who is truly repentant seeks to maintain a constancy in his philosophy. He does not switch his way of thinking or his line of reasoning just to fit a temporary occasion.

The repentant man avoids uncharitable thoughts of others, particularly others in the ministry. Failure here does a great deal of damage to us. It makes us unlike God.

A man and his wife were quarreling one day when the man said, "I can read you like a book." His wife responded, "I wish you *would* read me like a book. When you read a book you skip lightly over the pages that you value the least, but you read carefully the good parts of the book. When you analyze me, you spend all of your time on my human weaknesses."

God does not look upon the worst side of us and emphasize that. So if we wish to become like God it behooves us to become increasingly aware of our brothers' good points and to de-emphasize his weaknesses by removing those things from our conversation. Every time we talk about the weaknesses of a brother we damage him. We weaken his power to minister because he becomes aware of the fact that he is thus analyzed among his brethren. It takes away some of his confidence and power. But more than that, it closes certain opportunities to minister which may otherwise be his because those in whose presence we make such derogatory statements tend to discount the things he says from then on, and the opportunity to minister to that particular life is reduced. 75

The repentant man watches the way he thinks, so there will be nothing issuing forth from him in conversation that will be detrimental to the work of the kingdom and hinder moving people toward God. He finds no enjoyment in thinking the worst. He tends to be optimistic as he knows God better. He has more confidence as he moves closer to God and thus greater peace of mind. He avoids defeatism and negativism and pessimism without going so far as to be blindly unrealistic. He does not try to bargain with God. You do not bargain with one you love; you share with him. It is not a matter of being good so we can collect a good reward. The reward is in being with him. That is what we want. Yet being with him is not a pay-off, it is a consequence. It is a natural outgrowth of overcoming sin.

The repentant man trains his mind in accordance with his opportunities. He avoids the intellectual malnutrition which *is* found among those whose diet is trash in reading material, television programs, and conversation. He avails himself of the best intellectual sustenance that he can obtain. He practices the habit of graciously yielding to the inevitable. He is philosophical in that he learns to accept difficulties without being unduly upset by them. Paul said this on one occasion, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."⁶ In all these ways the repentant man gives attention to his own mind so that its powers are available to God in the work of the kingdom. His mind is oriented toward

God by the exercise of his own will, and the degree of his repentance is measured in terms of his continuing response to the ever-increasing light.

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THE STRENGTH

The third area of man's life in which he must exercise his will is an area which we sum up in the word "strength." By "strength" we mean his power to do things, the activities in which he engages, the pursuits which occupy his time. What we do in this area is a reflection of what happens in the other two. One's motives are displayed by the nature of his investments. His thoughts are made visible through his actions, because all our thoughts eventually tend to be either rejected or they eventuate in action. God wants *activity* in his direction, not just talk about believing in him or loving him or repenting. He wants *action*.

The investment of our strength can be in one of two directions. The repentant man sees to it that his strength is invested in such a way that it will help the kingdom and thus move himself toward God. This is probably one of the greatest areas in which the church needs to go forward. The idea of witnessing is strong among us. We have emphasized it for years. We have worked on technique; we have developed our procedures; we have set our goals; we have tabulated our results. But the heavy emphasis in all these years of talking about witnessing has been in witnessing in word only. We have worked hard on learning how to tell the story. The day is here when we must begin actually meeting the needs of people. We must not only tell them the gospel, but show how it works, not only by feeding the poor but also by solving for them the problem of poverty.

The repentant man works for God with all his strength as well as with his heart and mind. To do less than this 77 is not loyalty but a form of rebellion, and it may well be that the army of the Lord has been infiltrated with many enemy agents who talk the language of a volunteer but who have volunteered only for talk.

The repentant man deliberately chooses actions that will build emotional and intellectual patterns which are in harmony with God's purposes. It is interesting to note the parallel in the life of the individual and the life of the church in this respect. Notice how the four major uses of the funds of the church considered in sequence and put to their proper use repeat the most logical series of events which take place in a man's conversion and enlistment. First of all, a man hears the story, then the one who witnesses to him supports his story with some Christian living, some action. If the story comes to a man in word and in deed he accepts it. Then the new convert seeks the fellowship of others in faith. It is indicative of progress when we have good fellowship. Then together, these people in fellowship

reach out for others. They invite friends to share with them. And finally, they practice their philosophy in Christian relationships.

The repentant church follows a pattern similar to this; the treasury supports such a sequence of activity. We have first the operating funds for the purpose of telling the story, sending out men, the printing of literature, the use of radio and the television and all the other avenues through which we can tell the story in word. And when people hear that story they are inclined to look to see what happens, to see if it is supported in deeds. The work of the oblation fund becomes apparent in the lives of those it serves—this fund which bears witness that this is not a
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gospel in word only, but it seeks to meet the needs of people.

We have demonstrated that no member of the church in good standing needs to be in want of food or clothing or shelter or medicine. We have arrived at that point where we have supported our story with deed. People who share the philosophy want to be together. Thus, the next logical step is to have a place to meet. So there are building funds. In addition to all these, through the mutual efforts of all, we seek to gather such good people together. This the Lord refers to as "the gathering" and "the building up the New Jerusalem."⁷

The idea of winning souls is here to stay! We hope that the day is dawning when we shall recognize that the most effective evangelism is that which comes as a natural consequence of serving the Lord with all our strength.

Never before has mankind had at his command so many tools for the establishment of the kingdom. These tools have been developed slowly, almost imperceptibly, as men of each generation have added bit by bit to the sum total of human knowledge and skill.

Suppose Jesus had been born into the atomic age with modern medicine to conquer disease and relieve human suffering; with new agricultural methods to provide food supplies to feed the hungry; with machines and technological crafts to raise the living standards and banish poverty from the earth; and with astonishing means of communication and transportation to bind all the peoples of the world together. To these must be added the increasing store of knowledge about the nature of man himself that has issued forth from the studies of historians, anthropologists, sociologists, physiologists, and psychologists. Jesus would surely ask why these products of human genius are not being fully used to free human personality from its ancient enemies of fear, ignorance, poverty, and disease, and to promote good will and peace on earth. He would rightfully accuse us of not carrying forward the high purpose of the living God.

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As the true representative of that purpose, Jesus would undoubtedly say to us as he said to the multitudes in Palestine: "It is not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."⁸

One of the areas in which man needs to repent is in the area of investing his strength to do things to meet the needs of people, and to do this over and above the matter of telling them the gospel story, to go on and on with the investment of our strength to demonstrate that God loves men and that we, with them, would like to move toward reassociation with him.

SUMMARY

In all three of these areas—the heart, the mind, the strength—man makes his own choices by the exercise of his own will. One may fight to the death if he chooses instead of surrendering, even though he knows that defeat is inevitable. Or he can make a complete surrender and in every area of his life he can respond continually to the ever-increasing revelation of God. This is the way of repentance. Choose you this day whom you will serve.

1. Matt. 22: 36, 38
2. Matt. 6: 24; Luke 16: 13
3. Prov. 4: 23
4. Matt. 6:21; Luke 12: 37
5. Ps. 51: 3, 4
6. Phil. 4: 11
7. D and C. 122: 6 f

8. *Great Ideas of the Bible*, Ryllis Goslin Lynip, Volume I, page 95, Harper & Brothers, publishers.
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Repentance and the Ordinances

“For they have, strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant they seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness.”- Doctrine and Covenants 1: 3.

“He that prayeth, whose spirit is contrite, the same is accepted of me, if he obey mine ordinances.”- Doctrine and Covenants 52: 4.

We now come to an aspect of repentance which has particular significance to members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints because ordinances in Christ's church have a significant and prominent place. We consider the ordinances important, first of all, because of our concept of God and his purpose. We have attempted to make sure that this purpose was kept before us, hoping that during the course of these lectures every man has had his life enriched and his understanding increased. We trust that each shares the conviction that the one over-all controlling purpose of a man's life ought to be to live so that he can return to right relationships with God and share fellowship with him.

We have already tasted that fellowship to some extent as we have come to some understanding of God's purpose in us. It is this concept of the purpose of God as it applies to us that makes the ordinances important. I quote from Brother Oakman as to this divine purpose,

It is the divine purpose expressed in creation for man to have joy, and that is good. Mind, both in man and in God, always seeks that which is akin to itself. 81 So God seeks in creation a response that is in harmony with his own nature. This he found in Jesus Christ. This he seeks through that same Jesus from every creature.

Members of this church and particularly members of the priesthood look and long for the day when they shall be able to give a more adequate response to the God who loves us, so that there can be a greater feeling of understanding, a richer fellowship between him and us.

Ordinances are given a prominent place in the Scriptures. We believe in them for the same reason that we believe anything else that comes from the word of God. When we seek to establish the purpose of the ordinances we always turn to such Scriptures as these:

Wherefore he that prayeth, whose spirit is contrite, the same is accepted of me, if he obey mine ordinances.¹

One which is more frequently quoted is this,

And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof the power of godliness is manifest; and without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; for without this, no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.²

Perhaps it is adequate to conclude that because they are described in the Scripture is sufficient reason to consider ordinances important. But there ought also to be understanding. There must be practical reasons as to why something should be considered significant among us. Just to say it is in the "Book," and to prove it by the "Book," is not sufficient for many 82 minds. But we must admit and recognize that, for many of us, finding testimony such as this in what we believe to be the word of God does lend credence to our placing the ordinances in a position of importance.

Ordinances are important among us, too, because of our concept of a covenant people. We think of a covenant people in terms of the final destiny of men, that it is part of the plan of God that a covenant people shall be with him and shall have fellowship with him in a relationship which they have voluntarily entered. But the covenant idea applies in the present, too. It is not just something for the future. The idea of a covenant people includes that militant group who have agreed to work with God. We enter a covenant a long time before we return to the place of our destiny. God's plan has to do with working with a covenant people to achieve his purposes in us and includes the ordinances as steps along the way, as significant points in the life of people who have determined to become the kind of people he wants us to become.

A WORD ABOUT WORDS

Before we go further, we should say a word about semantics. It is fruitless to converse about something unless we all talk the same language. Once in a while we meet a man who speaks some other language. If he is one of another nationality we don't understand what he is saying. But sometimes one may speak in our own tongue, but we still don't understand him because he uses words in a different meaning than the use to which we are accustomed. He says something and we hear it, but we hear 83 it with a different meaning than he intended it. This is the basis for almost all religious argument. A high percentage of the religious differences rise out of the fact of the difference in the meaning of words. Of course, some of the difference rises in a basic difference in theology, but these differences of theology are readily ascertained, defined, isolated, and recognized if we use the same words and the same meaning of the same words in discussing them.

In the field of ordinances, the problem of semantics is very common. Even between brethren in the church we often have discussion as to the meaning of such words as "ordinance" and "sacrament." I want to say just a few things about these words, not to set up any specific differences, to draw any fine lines, or to split hairs at all, but by way of arriving at the general area which we are discussing. The hairsplitting can be done some other time.

The word "ordinance" itself implies that there is a legal frame of reference. We talk about a city ordinance and about the penalty which is attached to breaking a city ordinance. Whenever we talk about things in a legal term of reference, we are in that area that has to do with deeds and contracts and legal documents. Words get their meaning from the use we make of them. In our church we use the word "ordinance" to mean something in addition to a law or a command. We have made it mean something very close to the word "sacrament." We use these two words interchangeably. One day we will refer to the "ordinance of marriage" and the next day "the sacrament of marriage." Sometimes we will talk 84 about the Communion as one of the ordinances of the church and the next time we will specifically call it "the sacrament service." The words are interchangeable because we use them that way.

I am not going to attempt to distinguish which is which, except to say that in general the word "ordinance" means the legal connotation, the idea of law, or of commandment. And the word "sacrament" has attached to it, the connotation of ecclesiasticism. It has an ecclesiastical frame of reference, the idea of making sacred. It suggests the idea of stewardship; that is, if we bring something to a sacramental situation, we bring it there in order that it might be devoted to sacred purposes. So these two words "sacrament" and "ordinance" are used interchangeably among us, but each has these two slants of meaning, the legal and the ecclesiastical aspect. There are such other words, as "rite," "symbol," and "ceremony," which also enter frequently into discussion in this area.

At this point we are talking about the relationship of this whole area of ordinances, sacraments, rites, symbols, and ceremonies, as related to the principle of repentance. All of these are to be taken together, without trying to divide them from each other. All of these are to be considered as repentance come to bear upon them and as it is made visible through them.

The ordinances make a significant contribution to our progress toward God. They provide a focal point or a check point along the way. An ordinance or sacrament is the point at which there is an outward indication of a decision within. Now this is different from providing an outward sign of an inward grace, which is a phrase 85 frequently heard in the Christian world and which almost always, shall we say, "raises the hackles" of Latter Day Saint elders. Every time you say,

among a group of Latter Day Saints, that baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace, you are involved in a discussion immediately. And we believe we have some soundness in our position. An ordinance provides the situation wherein some outward evidence is given of a decision made within. Grace is a gift received from outside us, a gift received of which we are not worthy. Both are present in the ordinances.

In the ordinances we give evidence of an inward commitment to devote ourselves to becoming more nearly worthy of His gifts. The ordinance is an indication of a step along the way which man is intended to go. It is not a sign of having completed the course. It is more like a service station than the destination. The Christian world seems to be in darkness at this point and many people think that the ordinance of baptism is but an outward sign of a gift that has been received and that the task of overcoming sin has been taken away from man by the gift of Jesus Christ. We would not want to rule out the fact that the gift of grace is made available to us, but we must always recognize that in and through the ordinances grace is received only as that ordinance provides the situation in which man makes a decision rising out of his own will to do some things in harmony with God's wishes.

In the legal aspect of the act, the "ordinance" side of the picture, the ordinance provides the proper setting in which God acknowledges his commitment in the covenant which we share with him. It is the situation in which God reaffirms the contract he has made with us and confirms 86 this to us by his presence. It is the situation in which God condescends to come and say, "I participate here with you in this legal act."

If you wanted to sell me a ticket to a baseball game we could close the deal on the street somewhere. It would be a perfectly proper setting. But if you wanted to sell someone the stadium and the franchise of the American League, you would sign the papers in a plush office in the presence of witnesses. If you enter a covenant with God you enter that covenant in a setting which he has prescribed. There is nothing too good for this setting in which we meet God and make a covenant and in which he agrees, as we agree, to do certain things. Here God condescends to meet us and agree with us on the terms of that covenant. God, being a party to a covenant with us, is willing to confirm that covenant at any time in a proper setting. Therefore he provided in the church these acts or rites or ceremonies which we call "ordinances" and "sacraments."

Having looked at the ordinance side of the matter we need also to see the sacramental side. The sacrament provides an orderly situation in which the Christ can reveal himself and therefore reveal God to us. It does not seem proper or appropriate to expect God or his Son Jesus Christ to come into situations which are not surrounded with the proper dignity and reverence. The sacrament sets up a situation in which the Christ is willing to come

and make himself perceivable to the mind and spirit of man. Seeing him pulls us toward him. Further, "repentance is induced when the revelation of the love of God in Christ's sacrifice on Calvary claims and receives the attention it deserves from men."³ 87

The Sacrament provides an occasion when the Christ is placed at the center to receive the attention which he deserves among us and thus call forth from us additional action to move us toward God. To accomplish this he specifies the symbols which we shall use to represent him. When these specified symbols aren't available, we can use certain substitutes which are also prescribed by him. In the sacraments other than the Lord's Supper, he has indicated that the representation of Christ among men shall be the priesthood themselves. That is why it is that we do not set up altars made of wood or stone. The altar is formed at the point where the ordinance or sacrament is taking place. In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper we place that Communion table at the center, with those prescribed symbols placed thereon. When some other ordinance is taking place we make no reference to the altar, outside of the representation of Christ himself as he is seen in and through those priesthood who are called to represent him.

Many people participate in the ordinances unworthily, as the Scripture says, "not discerning the body of Christ." Since the purpose of the ordinance is to set up the situation in which the Christ can make himself visible to us through his Spirit, the person who partakes unworthily is not just simply breaking a law. He is failing to prepare himself, that his eyes can be opened to the presence of Jesus. Seeing causes us to commit ourselves to him. This response to him we have called repentance.

Thus we see certain relationships between repentance and the ordinances. Repentance is a prerequisite to proper participation. This is true in all of the ordinances. But 88

it applies among only one group of people, and that is the group who are covenanted to walk with God toward the day when they shall be with him forever. The Christ reveals himself to people who have committed themselves to going his way. You will recall that we have defined repentance as making a conscious positive response to a continuing revelation of our heavenly Father. The person who has not made his commitment to so respond will not find a continuing revelation. The Christ will not be revealed to him, and to that extent he partakes unworthily.

People who are of the covenant have a specific promise from God that every time they approach one of the ordinances of the church properly he will meet them there.

It is interesting to note in today's world various ways in which the people are being gathered together in groups. We see various loyalties, some national, some religious, some racial. We have various clubs and organizations, even among the youth in the high schools. How high pitched

are the loyalties to a high school football team! It seems that all the people of the world are being gathered together into various groups and many of these, of course, are good.

But the thing that is most significant is that among all of these, there is only one person who has the right to command our first allegiance. There is One who has the right to command the loyalty of everyone who ever lived because He is himself superior to all. Christ stands out above all others and seeks to call them into one fellowship. But men are not moving toward that one fellowship. They are being bound into bundles for burning. The purpose of almighty God is that men might come
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to see him as transcending every other person to whom they might give loyalty and that they might be gathered together in one with him. The repentant man gives himself to the achievement of such fellowship.

Repentance is an appropriate prerequisite to the proper participation in the ordinances. If there were no prerequisites there could be no significance. A man could be the same before and after. He could still participate in an ordinance a second time even though nothing happened on the first occasion. If one were still without any qualifications whatsoever, all we have said is that the first ordinance had no effect at all. Thus, if we have no prerequisites, no purpose would have been served. For this reason we conclude, and this is supported by the Scripture also, that repentance is a prerequisite for proper participation in the ordinances and sacraments in the church.

This requirement is the protection God has against placing his seal on any fraudulent agreement. He does not participate with anyone who is coming to the ordinance in an ungentle approach. Only the repentant man has a promise that God will meet him there. God commits himself only to those whose allegiance he has obtained: the penitent ones. He neither deals nor dines with rebels. He does not work with them in the sense of being in covenant relationship with them. He surrounds them with his Spirit; he seeks to encourage them to move forward; but the arrangement of entering a covenant relationship is reserved for those who have been repentant. A man can bring no less than his loyalty to the ordinances and sacraments of the church. If he brings less than that the ordinance is only a ceremony. 90

Christ has the right to prescribe the conditions under which he will meet man. I have in my library a book which I prize very much for the introduction. The book is *The Autobiography of R. C. Evans*. The best thing about it is the introduction by Joseph Smith III. In it he makes one significant statement which has particularly caught my attention and which has been useful to me on a number of occasions. It is this statement: "Only the Christ can dictate the terms of salvation." Just as truly as it is he who dictates the terms of salvation, so also he can direct us in any ordinance or sacramental situation having to do with salvation.

Repentance is not only a prerequisite, but also an indirect result of proper participation in the ordinances. When one participates in the ordinances properly and sees the Christ, there is born a new determination to serve him more adequately. One regrets his failures and resolves to be more like the Christ. This repentance becomes a result as well as a prerequisite. The ordinance which reveals Christ has its effect upon man. The revelation of God through Christ moves us to action in response to that revelation. This movement toward God opens the way for a greater revelation which serves as a prerequisite for the next such occasion. Thus the process continues, man responding to light, with God meeting him frequently along the way, revealing himself to us and leading us forward to respond again to the new light which he offers.

And this leads us toward what we call the three "R's" of our salvation. The first of these is repentance from dead works, the matter of giving our allegiance to God, of lining up our desires to accomplish the thing that 91 God would have us accomplish, of responding to God and his call to us. These things I would place under the word "repentance."

As we repent and participate properly in one of the ordinances, something happens which causes us to feel that our sins are remitted and there is no longer anything between us and God. This *remission* or forgiveness removes those sins which separate us from him and, there now being nothing between us, we can see him. This new view of him we call *revelation*. As the sins are removed, our way is made clear, our eyes are opened so that we can see him. In this order, things happen in our life. We repent, receive remission of sins, and an additional revelation of God. This calls us to further repentance, and thus the process continues.

It is well known among us that as we attend one of the good services of the church and have an additional revelation of Christ and his love for us, it brings into our being some godly sorrow. We begin making comparisons between the man we are and the man we ought to be. Our heart, mind, and strength are again reviewed. We note that in all these ways we have fallen short. The ordinance is the point at which repentance is acknowledged, forgiveness is granted, and the new revelation of God is made possible. Those who fail to discern the body of Christ or who fail to sense the forgiveness of God have not been cheated in a deal; they have failed to comply with the formula. This is not by decree, rather it is written in the nature of universal law. If we were to see Him while unrepentant we would feel guilty and afraid. But since we see Him as penitent people we feel 92 hopeful and renewed.

I remember being in a youth camp in Nauvoo about 1949. In a prayer meeting toward the end of the camp I began by saying something like this: "We have been trying to learn about the Christ while we were here. We come to these prayer meetings once in a while and have certain formal

arrangements. We have certain things in order. Now this morning we are not going to be formal. We have met a Friend here. Some of you knew him a long time ago, but perhaps you have come to know him a little better. If you do not have anything to say about him, that is all right. Let us not be ill at ease; we are just going to sit here together for a while. And if anybody has anything to say, feel free to say it. If not, that is all right, too." We placed the service on a level where all expression would be completely voluntary, with no "arm-twisting" to get somebody to speak, with no feeling of failure if people preferred just to sit and meditate.

One young lady stood up and said, "I have seen Jesus more clearly than ever before, and I never before knew anyone who made me feel that my ways are not just about right." There was a note of cheer in her testimony that she had discovered this. This was not an expression of fear and guilt, but here she was rejoicing that she had met someone who had made it possible for her to see herself and to see some of the adjustments that had to be made. Along with the recognition of what had happened to her and an awareness of her own failures, she received some release and a sense of remission of her sins. She went forward from that new revelation of God to make adjustments in her own life. This is 93 what happens in an ordinance. We meet the Christ. He reveals himself to us with the result that we see ourselves more clearly. This leads to additional repentance and this process repeats itself over and over again.

Now let us take a very brief look at repentance as it appears in each of the various ordinances.

BAPTISM

We begin by making reference to baptism by water. Note how many evidences there are in the nature of the ordinance itself that repentance should precede it. A proud or unrepentant man is skeptical. To him it doesn't look reasonable for one as great as God to require such a simple and apparently foolish thing as baptism. But the repentant man has decided to follow and trust his sovereign King. He agrees that with the King there rests the right to determine the process by which a man shall be led to him. And he says, "If that is the way he wants it, I will go that way." It takes a humble and penitent man to make that approach. Repentance is a prerequisite to the ordinance of baptism. Only the penitent are inclined to be baptized by immersion. Only a humble and penitent man will participate in an act which seems so unpopular in many circles. Only a penitent person will participate in a symbolism that implies that he is dirty, that he needs washing, and that he admits to uncleanness. A proud man will not do that. A humble man acknowledges his sins and his need for repentance.

A prideful man who feels that life is his to command does not readily acknowledge that his life as it is must die and that he must be 94

resurrected again to a new way, new loyalties, new ways of thinking and acting. The symbols of death and burial and resurrection are all lost to him. The idea of being planted with Christ, as baptism is referred to in the Scripture with its suggestion of death and decay to the old man, doesn't appeal to the prideful man at all. It takes a humble man to accept these things. In all these ways we see evidence in the ordinance itself that repentance is a prerequisite to proper participation.

At baptism most people have their first experience with the sense of being forgiven. I have an old friend in this city who is about eighty-one years old. He can't get around very well because of his physical limitations so I drop in to see him frequently. He tells me the story of his baptism about sixty years ago. He was the son of a coal miner and tavern keeper, one of a large family of boys. The thing that catches my attention most of all is the way his face lights up when he tells how he felt when he was going home from his baptism. He will say, "And I thought I was the happiest man alive."

At baptism the people who approach the ordinance properly have their first experience with a sense of being forgiven and being clean. Forgiveness does come, of which fact many testify, but because it happens at the time of the ordinance we are constantly under the threat of being led into believing that it comes as a result of the ordinance itself rather than as a result of the repentance with which we participated therein. The failure to make this distinction has led many people into priestcraft and has led many others to believe that the ordinances are not necessary at all. 95

CONFIRMATION

In the ordinance of confirmation the setting is provided in which the Lord has arranged for man to receive confirmation from him that his repentance has been acceptable. He also at this time seals the covenant with the candidate to the effect that henceforth this person may always lay claim to the presence of the Holy Spirit by placing himself in a condition to be guided by it. Note that the confirmation comes from God. I know that many times, and it is a matter of tradition among us, we place our hands upon the head of the candidate and say *we* confirm him, often using the words "Receive ye the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Sometimes our traditions obscure the true meaning. In confirmation, we are praying to the Father that he will send his Spirit to confirm to this person that this ordinance has been acceptable. We are praying that he will confirm this covenant which has been made. A part of our prayer is that, henceforth, whenever the man repents (note, it is whenever the man repents, not just whenever he participates in another ordinance) the Spirit shall bear witness that he is forgiven. Forgiveness or remission of sins is the result of repentance. This is why we speak of the *abiding* Comforter which comes and bears witness to a man that he has been cleansed from his

sins whenever he properly approaches God, acknowledges his guilt, and sets his hand to overcome those things of which he has previously been guilty.

This demonstrates again the need for repentance to precede the ordinance, for God is not going to send his Spirit to guide a rebel. He 96 does not supply his enemies with blessings, but is eager to bless his covenant people with a remission of their sins.

COMMUNION

In the Communion service the baptismal covenant is reaffirmed by both parties. The emphasis here is on the social aspect of our relationship with God, and upon seeing the Christ. Here we see him and are aware of his desire to have us freed of our sin, not just one of us, but all of us. Here we accept responsibility for others as well as for ourselves. And this becomes more significant as we see repentance as being our response to the growing revelation of God. It is our seeing him that carries us on to additional repentance. The chief objective of those who plan such services should be to arrange for his presence, so that man seeing him might be blessed by such added revelation.

MARRIAGE, ORDINATION, AND BLESSING

In the sacrament of marriage it is expected that there shall be continuation of the inclination to work with God. But now it applies to two instead of one alone. In ordination also, there must be the attitude on the part of the man to do God's will instead of his own. This, too, is repentance.

In this case it is the commitment to do God's will as one has opportunity in the lives of others as well as in himself. Probably no sin is more grievous than to take the powers bestowed in priesthood and use them for our own purposes rather than to bring men to God. 97

In the blessing of children, the parents acknowledge that they will teach the child to do God's will, to make a positive response to his heavenly Father. In so doing such parents are not rebels but loyal subjects, penitent people who have enlisted in the crusade to create a desire to do God's will in the lives of those they have in their care. They present the child to God through his representatives, and dedicate him to sacred purposes.

In the patriarchal blessing also, there is a place for the concept of repentance. We can see no reason for God to bless with his Spirit those who are working against him. But there is every reason to believe that he will richly reward those who come with firm determination to respond continuously to their highest revelation of him. The patriarchs of the church usually ask a member who wishes to receive his blessing to spend some time in thinking over the commitment which is implied in the

request. Only when a man has decide to go God’s way is he ready to receive God’s blessing.

ADMINISTRAION TO THE SICK

In the administration to the sick the relation to the principle of repentance is most clearly stated in the Scripture. Following the promise that “the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up” is the additional promise, “and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”⁴ It couldn’t be otherwise and be consistent. We cannot repent just half way. God does not expect us to be just loyal enough to be healed of physical sickness but not sufficiently loyal to be forgiven of our sin. Jesus said: “He that is not with me is against me.”⁵ 98 If we repent—that is, if we give our allegiance to him and come to him with a prayer of faith—he heals us both physically and spiritually. If we do not repent we have no promise.

All of this is within the framework of his larger purpose for us which at times we do not understand. Because he knows of our question at this point and because his plan does not include our being repeatedly healed in this life and thus live here in this earthly state forever, he answered our question by explaining that those who are righteous if they die, die unto him, provided the quality of their repentance is such that had they been healed they would have lived unto him also.

SUMMARY

Perhaps the best summary of the process of repentance and remission and revelation is found in the words of Mormon to his son, Moroni. Observe the sequence:

And the first-fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith, unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandment bringeth remission of sins; and the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart, cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God.⁶

This summary in the words of Mormon is one with which all members of the Melchisedec priesthood should be very familiar. We must teach our people that repentance, and inclination to respond to an ever-increasing revelation of God, is a prerequisite to proper participation in 99 the ordinances of the church. Should any feel the ordinances are not sufficiently effective in his life, let him not look first to the adjustments of techniques and procedures, but let him carefully examine the quality of his allegiance and the genuineness of his repentance.

1. D. and C. 52: 4c

3. A. A. Oakman

5. Matt. 12: 25

2. D. and C. 83: 3 b-c

4. James 5: 15

6. Moroni 8: 29 100

Repentance and Salvation

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” - Psalm 51: 1,2.

"Suppose I do repent. What does it get me? Is it worth the effort? Is it smart to surrender completely to the heavenly Father?" We have been saying that repentance has to do with completely turning our life in the way God would have it go. It calls for renunciation of any ambitions on our part except such personal goals as can be fitted into the total background of what God has in mind for us. What about our agency? Do we relinquish that? Or do we complete the exercise of our agency in deciding that we will go God's way?

We would like to examine the matter of what repentance and salvation have to do with each other. In so doing we do not wish to get into the realm of speculation about the life hereafter with the various glories and rewards, but rather determine what aspects of the principle of repentance have particular bearing upon the determination of our final destiny.

In a way, this is a rather profound subject. It has been our objective not to make anything seem profound or difficult, but rather to take things which ordinarily seem to be difficult and to make them appear simple. 101 Sometimes we may be guilty of oversimplification and make it appear that salvation and repentance are too simple. We think that this error has been committed by a great portion of the Christian world as we shall see. It hasn't been our intent to oversimplify or to make it overly difficult, but we have attempted and we shall continue to attempt to make things which are crucial and profoundly important understandable and useful.

There are some scriptural references which are helpful. As a matter of fact, most of our information in this field must come directly from the Scriptures. There is a great deal written about salvation and the place that the Christ plays in it, but not so much applying specifically to repentance as it contributes to our salvation. These Scriptures are not by any means inclusive but there are three or four which are particularly pertinent.

Please listen for the references to repentance and salvation. Two of them come from Genesis:

And the Lord God called upon men, by the Holy Ghost, everywhere, and commanded them that they should repent; and as many as believed in the Son, and repented of their sins, should be saved. And as many as believed not, and repented not, should be damned. And the words went forth out of the mouth of God, in a firm decree, wherefore they must be fulfilled.¹

And then one on the negative side, also from Genesis,

And an hell I have prepared for them, if they repent not; and this is a decree which I have sent forth in the beginning of the world, from mine own mouth, from the foundation thereof; and by the mouths of my servants, thy fathers, have I decreed it; even as it shall be sent forth in the world, unto the end thereof.² 102

There are a number of others which we quote more frequently in this field. We have already mentioned "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation."³ "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."⁴ "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."⁵ "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."⁶ "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."⁷ Note the frequent association of the concepts of repentance and salvation.

These Scriptures, particularly the last one quoted, imply that there is a difference in being forgiven and being cleansed. This difference we shall see later. Note again the Scripture which seems to state that there are two things that happen when we confess our sins: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, *and* to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."⁸

There is a difference between being forgiven and being cleansed from our sins. These two things should be considered as being related but not necessarily the same. First of all, there is the matter of being saved from sin, saved from the condition of continuing in sin, being saved from the situation in which we find ourselves if we are rebellious or if we are against God. We are saved *from* that condition. But more than that, there is the other side of being saved—the being saved *to* something worthwhile or for some purpose. We have attempted this week to set up the idea that we are saved *for* the possibility, for the great destiny, of being with God forever and sharing with him in fellowship. 103

One cannot be saved without being forgiven. Because of this, a very simple sequence has been worked out by the Christian world which is quite inadequate but rather generally accepted. Teachers of religion have been vying with one another to see how simple the way can be made. They have not said to man, "See how valuable is salvation. It's worth a high price." Rather they have been saying, "See how little you can pay and still obtain it. Look how easy it is to be saved. See, here is the formula. Number one, recognize that you are a sinner. Two, be sorry. Three, believe that Jesus paid for your sins. Four, be forgiven and accept forgiveness as your salvation." A very simple formula.

But in the spirit of making it easy, this formula has become even shorter. It now involves just one step: "Believe and you *are* saved." The Christian

world has so reduced the price of salvation that it is no greater than that. What a bargain! In the light of current developments in the field of hydrogen bombs, who is to say that this isn't the greatest fire insurance policy ever offered for sale?

One aspect of the great purpose of the Restoration is to prevent men from being deceived and misled in this area. Forgiveness and salvation are not the same. Even though we cannot be with God unless we are forgiven, yet the two are different. Forgiveness cannot cancel consequences. It removes the reasons for pressing charges against us under the law, but it does not erase the effect our sins have had upon ourselves. If a man in error drives a nail in a beautiful panel door, he may remove the nail, and the landlord may forgive him, but the nail hole still remains. 104

It is as inaccurate and incomplete to say that forgiveness is the same as salvation as it is to say that to give a boy a job makes him a rich man. He must still work, within the privileges and limitations of that job, to become rich. And he must take the necessary time to change from boyhood to manhood if he is to be a rich man. To say that you have made him a rich man by giving him a job is in direct parallel to saying a man is saved by being forgiven. But forgiveness is necessary. This is why so many people think it is the goal itself. It is necessary because God cannot accept into full fellowship one who is not completely loyal to him. All disloyalties must have been forgiven; all rebellion must be done away. Unless this is done, being with him is still disunity. If he would permit us to come into his presence and be with him while we retained some element of disloyalty we still would not be at peace and unity with him; we would just be tolerated. There would still be sin between us. And so it is necessary that we be forgiven in order to be saved and have fellowship with him.

On the other hand, God cannot fail to forgive those who are repentant. He loves us too much. He wants to forgive us. He wants to have full fellowship with us and therefore wishes to place us in a position where no sin can be between him and us, where we can have communication one with the other. We conclude, then, that one step in our salvation is to repent and be forgiven, but even though we are restored to favor, the application of the law must still be had in determining the measure of our reward. Being found not guilty in a court of law does not restore to us the lost time and prestige which resulted from our being brought to trial. 105 Nor does being found guilty necessarily determine specifically what our sentence shall be. Even though we are forgiven, the stain of our sin must still be removed. It is at this point that the atonement of our Savior enters, and "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."⁹

In one of the tracts of the church we read the following: "The parable of the prodigal son points out that the wasted years apart from God were not recovered; the past cannot be lived over, nor erased as if it had never been.

The great thing that is accomplished by repentance is a return to and a reconciliation with our heavenly Father. We are no longer separated from him; we are now ready to make a new start in a new life. We have not magically left the past far behind us, but we have now aligned ourselves with powers that will help us lift ourselves from the figurative pig sty and husks. With God's help no past can be so dark but that the future can be bright."¹⁰ Jesus takes upon himself the sins for which we have repented and been forgiven and removes the stain of such sin. For this we give thanks to him in unbounded measure. Without his help we could never be free.

Forgiveness comes as a result of certain circumstances. In the broad terms that we have been using this week, forgiveness follows repentance. But to be more specific, as pointed out to you in the words of Mormon to his son Moroni, forgiveness follows that phase of repentance to which we refer as "keeping the commandments." Particularly apropos are the commands to cease to do evil and to participate properly in the ordinances.

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Forgiveness follows a keeping of the commandments, as Mormon said-"the first-fruits of repentance is baptism ... unto the fulfilling the commandments."¹¹ It is in the other phase of keeping the commandments, in the learning to do well, that we work out our salvation and determine the reward or glory which shall be ours. Being saved in the sense of being forgiven may come to many in any of the many glories. Rewards are as myriad as the stars of the heavens. But being saved in the celestial glory, where we shall be in fellowship with God forever, requires not only the forgiveness of sin in the sense that these things will be no longer remembered against us so that we shall never again be put on trial for them, but also it requires the removal of the stains such sins have made. This is why Isaiah says, "Learn to do well"¹² and then goes on to quote the Lord as saying, "Come now and let us reason together, ... though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."¹³ And the Psalmist prays this way" Have mercy upon me, a God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, *blot out* my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."¹⁴

CHRIST AND MAN TOGETHER

It seems that Jesus does two specific things for us. Both of these are caught up under the heading of taking our sins upon himself. It is interesting to note that sometimes the Scripture refers to his taking our sins upon himself, but in one place we have the words, "Surely he hath borne our griefs."¹⁵ These two words, "sins" and "griefs," have distinctive 107 meaning. We well recall, of course, that we are told in the epitome of faith that "man shall be punished for his own sins and not for Adam's transgression." Jesus had removed from us the responsibility for answering

for any of the sins which are a part of our inheritance. When we are born into the world the sin of Adam is not laid to our charge; we come to the world as innocent ones. For that reason we do not believe in infant baptism.

The second aspect of Christ's effectiveness in providing for our salvation is that he removes the stain of those sins for which we have repented. "Surely he hath borne our griefs" means that at the point where we repent and are forgiven, these things for which we now have sorrow are removed by his atonement. It is effective in erasing the blemish those sins have placed upon our lives. He bears our sorrow. He bears the burden of restoring or cleansing us from the sins which we have overcome. Isn't that reasonable? Why should he be burdened with sins for which *we* are still accountable, or the other way around, why should we still be accountable for sins which *he* bears? We sometimes are quite inconsistent at this point.

We mentioned when we talked about being repentant in the mind that we should be logical and that we should not use one philosophy one day and another philosophy the next day unless these two philosophies would correlate and agree with one another. We have found that sometimes we preach about being responsible for our own sins. We take this item from the epitome of faith and other Scriptures and justify this position and almost leave

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Jesus out of the picture in attempting to place responsibility upon our people to adjust themselves so that they are not sinning any more. And we need to do that. People do need to be exhorted to accept responsibility. But on another day we will preach about how Jesus brings his atonement to bear and takes care of our sins. The questioning listener doesn't always get it clear that he shares with Christ the task of overcoming sin, but that each has his own specific part of that task.

Man must repent and be forgiven of his sins, but once that is done there is still something to be done in removing the stain that these sins have caused and only through the Christ can this be accomplished. God isn't so inconsistent, and the plan isn't so illogical, that the Christ and we both are to do the same thing. We both attempt to overcome sin, but each of us has his part to play. Thus there is a place for the atonement as well as the effort of the individual in the matter of working out of our salvation.

SUMMARY

We must view the principle of repentance as the good news that makes possible our salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. When practiced intelligently and sincerely, it places us in positions of tremendous influence

among men. The reason we are so weak is that we, having our own desires in mind, must always devote a portion of our attention to the achievement of such desires. We strive to save our own face among men and to have our own way. This explains why Christ was so powerful. He had nothing to lose; he had already relinquished the 109 things to which most men cling. No one could make him feel bad by saying that he was of lowly birth because he had voluntarily accepted lowly birth. No one could weaken his position by suggesting that he was a poor man in worldly goods because he had already turned away from those things and freed himself from their attraction. No one could weaken his power by taking power away from him because he had already relinquished any thought of being the ruler himself and had given all the credit to his heavenly Father.

The repentant man becomes like the Christ. He has no fear of losing anything since he has already turned away from anything that man could take from him. He has turned away from desires to achieve his own way. The devotion to doing the will of the heavenly Father which was found perfectly expressed in the Christ is achieved in man by repentance and makes him strong, even to the achievement of the power of salvation in his own life.

This same desire to do the will of the Father can be achieved on a social basis also. It requires a group of individually repentant men who will identify together their purposes with the will of their Creator. As this is done, man shall develop social situations which we referred to previously as islands of righteousness. From a central point in such a society, a place called Zion, the word will go forth to the nations of the earth. Men shall go up to Zion to learn of her ways. And in that place preparation shall be made for Christ's coming. When he comes, all shall see him and the covenant shall be fulfilled that "When thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward."¹⁶ "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, ... and he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."¹⁷

Those who have practiced the principle of repentance to the extent of learning to do well shall share in the salvation which we know and describe as "being with him forever." Because he loves us and longs for a loving response from us, God now commands all men everywhere to repent.

1. Gen. 5: 1, 2
2. Gen. 6: 30, 31
3. II Cor. 7: 10
4. Luke 13: 3
5. Luke 15: 7

6. I John 1: 7
7. I John 1: 9
8. I John 1: 9
9. I John 1: 7

10. *Faith and Repentance*, by Paul A. Wellington
11. Moroni 8: 29
12. Isa. 1: 17
13. Isa. 1: 18

14. Ps. 51: 1, 2
15. Isa. 53: 4
16. Gen. 9: 22
17. Isa. 2: 3, 4

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Whosoever Repenteth by L. Wayne Updike

Each year, the Center Stake of Zion (Independence, Missouri) holds a special Melchisedec priesthood lecture series on important theological subjects. In 1957 L. Wayne Updike, Director of Priesthood Education and Leadership Training and Director of the School of the Restoration delivered the lectures. The core of discussion was the basic principle of "repentance."

From the notes for this series Brother Updike has prepared this book. Recognizing the problem of communicating the meaning of words, he has devoted the entire first chapter to a discussion of the definition of "The Principle of Repentance." As a basis for succeeding chapters, the definition, "a conscious positive response to an ever-increasing revelation of God," is formulated and expanded. As he puts it: "The chapters that follow are windows letting in more light upon the subject thus partially defined."

Elder Updike has endeavored to make a simple, straightforward analysis of the subject rather than presenting a great mass of material for the student to sort through. Intentionally, then, the lectures are brief. But they are packed with illustrations and bring an insight into the principle of repentance.

We recommend this book to all people who are searching for an understanding of the basic principle leading to salvation-repentance.



L. Wayne Updike has been Director of Priesthood Education and Leadership Training for the General Church since the General Conference of 1954. He was one of those primarily responsible for establishing the School of the Restoration as part of an organized effort to develop the Latter Day Saint concept of "lifelong study" by the membership. Since the School's establishment, he has been its director.

Elder Updike was born in 1916 in Black River Falls, Wisconsin. He attended Graceland College for two years before completing his Bachelor's degree in finance at the University of Wisconsin. He became a church appointee in 1942, and in 1944 was ordained a bishop after an assignment to Kansas City Stake. In 1950 he moved to the newly organized Detroit International Stake and remained there until his assignment to priesthood and leadership education.

Since childhood, Brother Updike has had the aim in his mind to be a full-time worker for the church. He is a devoted leader in educational processes within the church, and an ardent advocate of democratic principles in church government and administration.

He is married to the former Mary Elizabeth Malcor. They have two children: Lee, age twelve; and Vicki, age ten. The family lives in Independence, Missouri.