

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS WITH MORMONS

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR
GETTING THE CONVERSATION
STARTED



This PowerPoint is available at SharingWithMormons.com
and TheMiracleOfForgiveness.com

MORMONISM RESEARCH MINISTRY

- Founded by Bill McKeever in 1979
- Many of our resources can be found at mrm.org

TWO-FOLD OBJECTIVES OF MRM

1. To share our faith with Latter-day Saints
2. To equip Christian saints like you so they will feel confident to share with Latter-day Saints

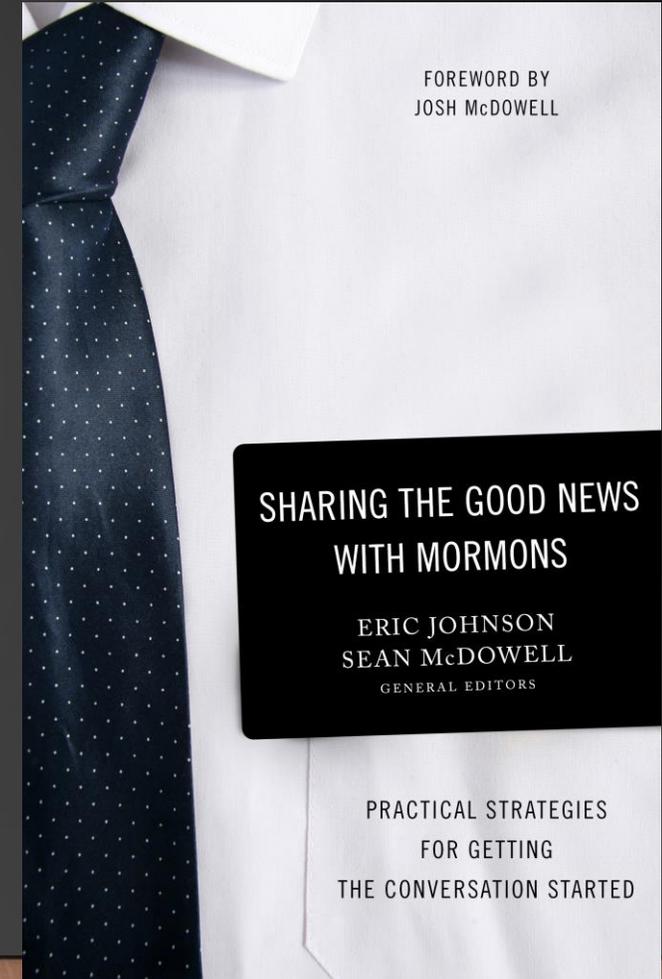
1 PETER 3:15-16

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

INTRODUCTION: HOW THIS BOOK ORIGINATED

The #1 question people ask about evangelism to Mormons: “What is the best way to show my Mormon friend that Mormonism is wrong?”

What about a book that covered two dozen different ideas?



BELLS AND WHISTLES

- Introduction by Eric Johnson: “Should Christians Share the Good News with Mormons?”
- 6 spotlight features on folks in full-time Christian ministry
- Epilogue by Sean McDowell: “Go for It!”
- 2 appendices
 - The Gospel (Good News) According to the Bible
 - 101 Mormon Terms Defined (From Aaronic Priesthood to Zion)

CONTRIBUTORS

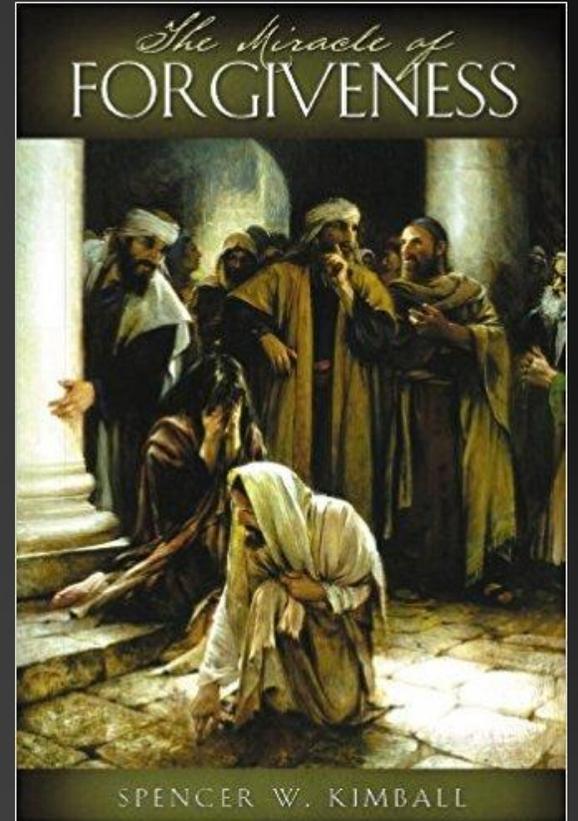
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SHARING THE GOOD NEWS WITH MORMONS: THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS STRATEGY

Book written by Apostle Spencer W. Kimball
in 1969

Kimball spent more than a decade working on
the book

A few years later he became the 12th president



THE GOAL OF THIS STRATEGY IS TWO-FOLD:

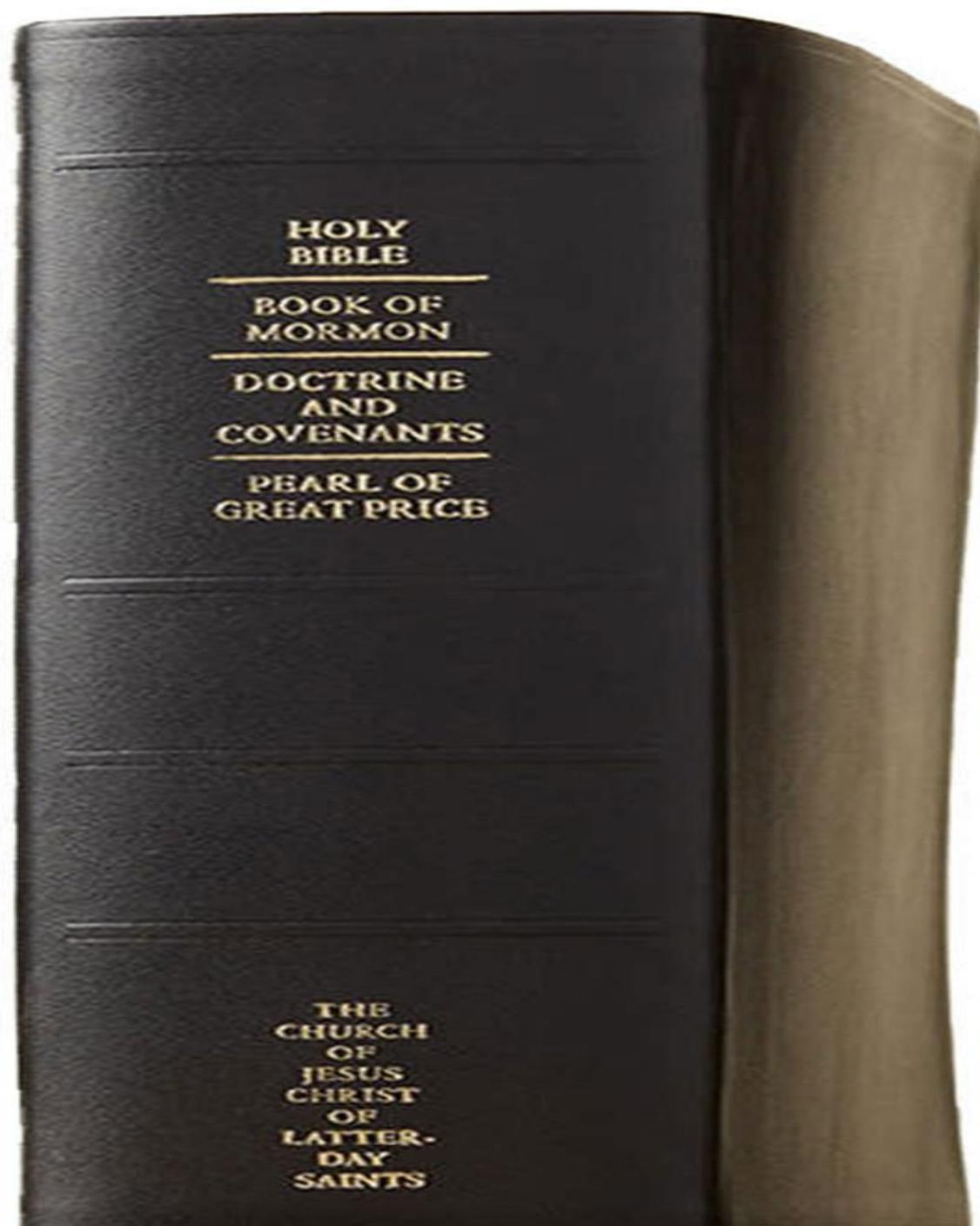
- 1. Show the Mormon that Spencer W. Kimball got it right in his exegesis (interpretation) of unique LDS scripture
- 2. Show the Mormon that nobody is capable of doing everything that Kimball said must be done

BEGAN THIS STRATEGY IN 2014



AGREE, IT IS NOT
ONE OF THE
FOUR
SCRIPTURES

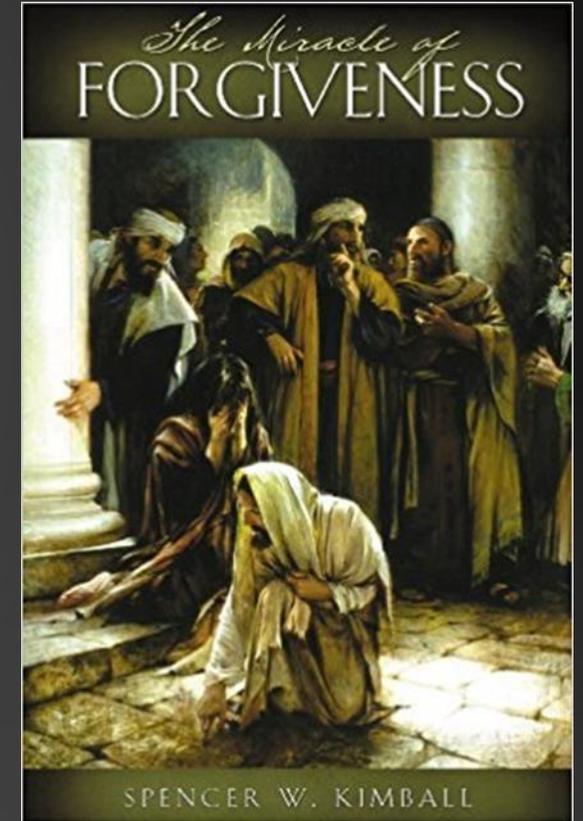
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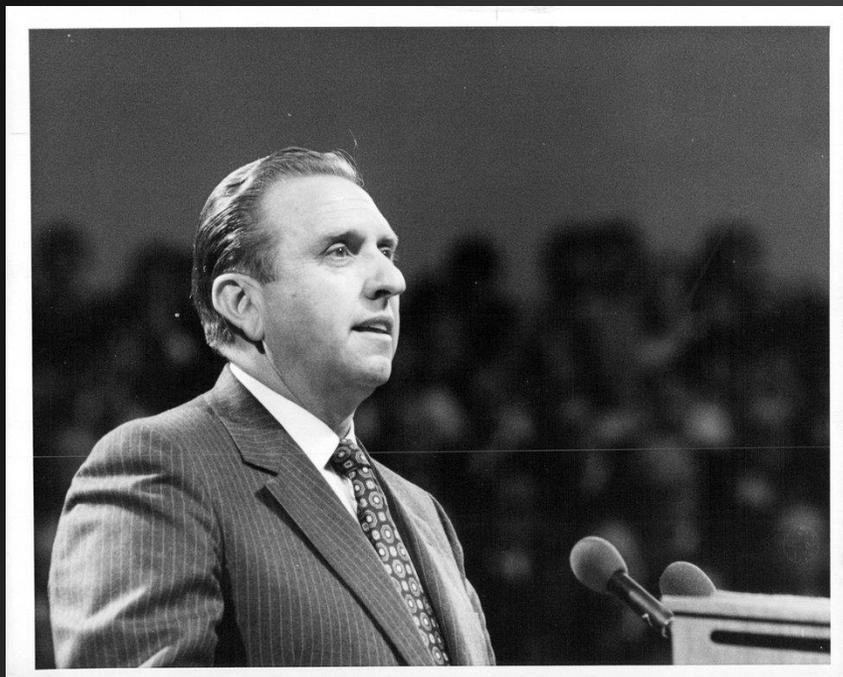
STANDARD WORKS
OF THE CHURCH

HOW COULD I USE THIS STRATEGY?

- Many Mormons own the book and have read it
- Explain that you find many of Kimball's quotes to be interesting
- Ask, "Could I share some of those quotes with you and get your opinion?"
- Or, "Would you be willing to read this book with me so we could discuss it?"



APOSTLE (PRESIDENT) THOMAS S. MONSON



“President Spencer W. Kimball has always been a prolific worker. He spent several summers working on a book which he later entitled *The Miracle of Forgiveness*. As one reads the book, particularly the first portion, one wonders if anyone will make it to the Celestial Kingdom. However, in reading the final portion, it is apparent that, with effort, all can qualify.”

--Thomas S. Monson, *On the Lord's Errand: The Memoirs of Thomas S. Monson*, 1985, p. 342.

EDWARD KIMBALL SAID:

“[T]he book filled a need, as evidenced by the printing of half a million copies in English and sixteen other languages between its publication in 1969 and his death in 1985 By 1998 the total in all languages was roughly estimated at 1.6 million copies.”

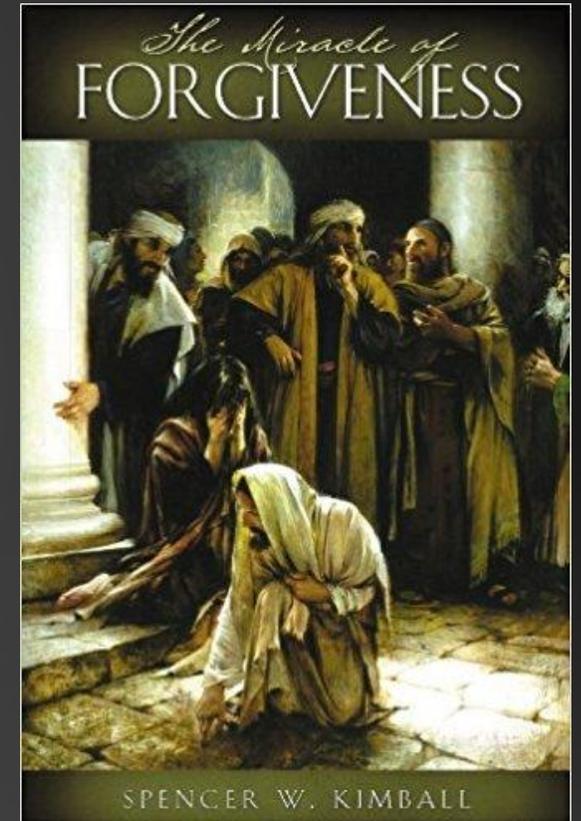


--*Lengthen Your Stride: The Presidency of Spencer W. Kimball*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005, 79.

APOSTLE RICHARD L. EVANS

(6 months after the book was published) “Many of you would be familiar with President Spencer Kimball’s wonderful work on the miracle of forgiveness. I witness to you that God is a loving Father who will forgive and help us find peace and self-respect as we repent and show our sincerity by the lives we live. And there is nothing he asks of us that we cannot do; there is no requirement we cannot keep--if we are willing, if we want to. Repentance is a miracle, if it is sincere.”

--*Conference Reports*, April 1970, p. 16.



THE AUTHORITY OF GENERAL CONFERENCE

- Held twice a year for leaders to share their teachings
- Official teaching
- “The Words of the Prophets Delivered through the Spirit during General Conference are Latter-day Scripture” – *Teachings of the Living Prophets Student Manual Religion 333*, 2010, p. 72.
- “...general conference becomes, in a sense, a supplement to or an extension of the Doctrine and Covenants”—*Teachings of the Living Prophets Student Manual Religion 333*, 2010, p. 73.

APOSTLE RICHARD G. SCOTT AT A GC, 1995



“In *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, Spencer W. Kimball gives a superb guide to forgiveness through repentance. It has helped many find their way back”

--“Finding Forgiveness,” *Ensign*
(Conference Edition), May 1995, p. 76.

APOSTLE RICHARD G. SCOTT AT GENERAL CONFERENCE IN 2000



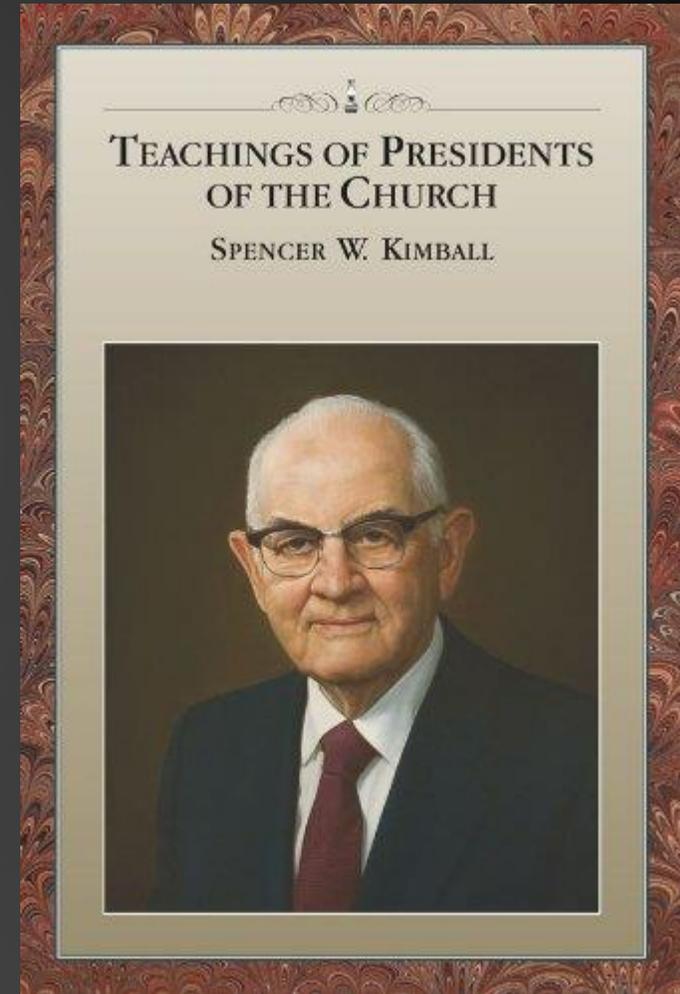
“I suggest that you read President Spencer W. Kimball’s inspired book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*. It continues to help the faithful avoid the pitfalls of serious transgression. It likewise is an excellent handbook for those who have committed serious errors and want to find their way back. Read the last two chapters first to appreciate the full miracle of forgiveness before reading anything else”

--"The Path to Peace and Joy," *Ensign* (Conference Edition), November 2000, p. 26.

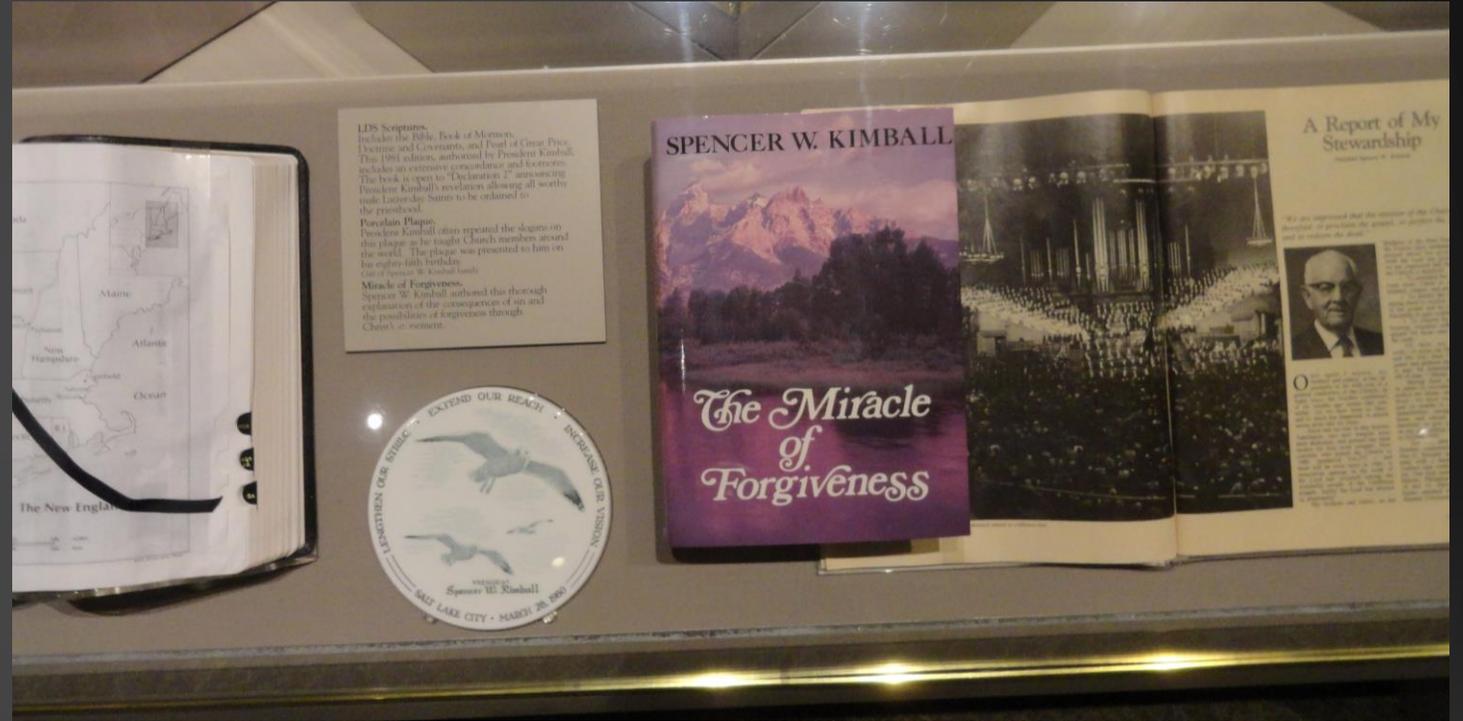
A CHURCH MANUAL

Church manual published in 2006 that all members were supposed to read in 2007.

The editors for this manual referenced *The Miracle of Forgiveness* 69 times, which makes up 12 percent of all citations found in the manual!



CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM DISPLAY



Temple Square area, Salt Lake City, UT

Christmas 1998

Dear Associate:

As we join with all Christianity in celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we pause to ponder upon His perfect life and example and the wondrous gift of His redeeming sacrifice.

As His special witnesses, we rejoice with you in bearing testimony unto all the world "that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent" (Mosiah 3:17).

We are pleased to present to you this classic edition of President Spencer W. Kimball's book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*. President Kimball's enlightening teachings on the Atonement of Jesus Christ are a precious treasure for all who would follow the Savior.

Please know of and accept our sincere gratitude for all that you do to assist in this great work. May His peace be with you and yours at this special time of year and always.

Sincerely your brethren,
The First Presidency

COLLECTOR'S EDITION GIVEN OUT IN 1998

“We are pleased to present to you this classic edition of President Spencer W. Kimball’s book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*. President Kimball’s enlightening teachings on the Atonement of Jesus Christ are a precious treasure for all who would follow the Savior.”

BUT, EVEN IF YOU DON'T USE THIS TACTIC

- Please consider these quotes taken from the book for the rest of the presentation.
- These are authoritative, written by an apostle who later became the president of the church. The pedigree is there

POINTS IN THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS

- 1. People are responsible to keep the commandments of God (now)

“THIS LIFE IS THE TIME”

- Book of Mormon: Alma 34:32 (pages 1 and 10 of MOF)
- “For behold this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors...”

This Life Is the Time

... For all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.

—Doctrine & Covenants 132:7

For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God

—Alma 34:32

IT IS THE DESTINY OF THE SPIRITS OF MEN TO COME TO this earth and travel a journey of indeterminate length. They travel sometimes dangerously, sometimes safely, sometimes sadly, sometimes happily. Always the road is marked by divine purpose.

The journey leads through infancy with its carefree activities but rapid learning; through childhood with its little disappointments and stubbed toes, its injured feelings, its keen excitements; through youth with its exuberance, its likes and dislikes, its fears and hopes and intensities; through the young married period with its responsibilities, its competitions, its ambitions, its family-rearing, its accumulating; and through older age with its achievements, culminations, goal-reaching, relaxation and retirement.

Throughout the entire journey there is opportunity for learning and growth and development toward the final goal. We see some people who merely travel, having no aim, direction, destination or purpose. Without road maps

REGARDING THIS IDEA, KIMBALL WRITES ON PAGE 2:

“It thus becomes the overall responsibility of man to cooperate fully with the Eternal God in accomplishing this objective. To this end God created man to live in mortality and endowed him with the potential to perpetuate the race, to subdue the earth, to perfect himself and to become as God, omniscient and omnipotent.”

to guide them, they just travel along the way and in varying degrees pick up such things as will please the eye, tickle the vanities, satisfy hungers, quench thirsts, satisfy passions. And when the end of life draws nigh they have traveled but are little if any closer to their proper destination than when they started. Regrettably, some have totally lost their way.

Life's Divine Purpose

On the other hand, there are some who chart their courses, make wise, right decisions, and in large measure achieve their goals and reach their happy destinations. In doing this they are cooperating with the Creator in his stated purpose of life: “For behold, this is my work and my glory — to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” (Moses 1:39.)

Since immortality and eternal life constitute the sole purpose of life, all other interests and activities are but incidental thereto. And since those objectives are the work and glory of God, they are the proper work of man also and are the major reason for his coming to earth. Of the two elements, the one great blessing — immortality — comes to man without his effort, as a gift from the Almighty. The other — eternal life — is a cooperative program to be developed by the Lord and his offspring on earth. It thus becomes the overall responsibility of man to cooperate fully with the Eternal God in accomplishing this objective. To this end God created man to live in mortality and endowed him with the potential to perpetuate the race, to subdue the earth, to perfect himself and to become as God, omniscient and omnipotent.

Our Father then sent to the earth a line of prophets to keep man in remembrance of his duties and his destiny, to warn him of dangers, and to point the way to his total victory. It appears that the spiritual perceptions of many peoples have been inadequate to a full understanding of God's purposes, and he has accordingly had them taught

AFTER CITING ALMA 34:21-34, HE WRITES:

“...*the time to act is now, in this mortal life.* One cannot with impunity delay his compliance with God’s commandments” (Italics in original) (p. 10).

and issued solemn warnings. Again and again in different phraseology and throughout the centuries the Lord has reminded man so that he could never have excuse. And the burden of the prophetic warning has been that *the time to act is now, in this mortal life.* One cannot with impunity delay his compliance with God’s commandments.

Note Amulek’s words, especially those forceful statements involving timing, which are in italics:

Yea, I would that ye would come forth and harden not your hearts any longer; for behold, *now is the time and the day of your salvation;* and therefore, if ye will repent and harden not your hearts, immediately shall the great plan of redemption be brought about unto you.

For behold, *this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God;* yea, behold *the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors.*

And now, as I said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore, I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; *for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity,* behold, if we do not improve our time *while in this life,* then cometh *the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed.*

Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; *for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.* (Al. 34:21-34. Italics added.)

Even if we leave aside the many scriptures which bear similar testimony, reading and prayerfully meditating upon this one brings an awe-inspiring conviction of the need to repent — *now!*

From the modern apostle Melvin J. Ballard we obtain an emphasis of Amulek’s expression in these terms:

... But this life is the time in which men are to repent. Do not let any of us imagine that we can go down to the grave not having overcome the corruptions of the flesh and then lose in the grave all our sins and evil tendencies. They will be with us. They will be with the spirit when separated from the body.

AFTER CITING A QUOTE FROM JOSEPH SMITH:

“While in this probation and in this life certainly means the period our mortal lives” (p. 248).

UNDER THE SECTION “REPENT IN MORTALITY”

“It must be remembered that vicarious work for the dead is for those who could not do the work for themselves. Men and women who live in mortality and who have heard the gospel here have had their day, their seventy years to put their lives in harmony, to perform the ordinances, to repent and to perfect their lives” (p. 314).

prepare properly for the day of judgment while the ordinance work is done for him vicariously on earth. It must be remembered that vicarious work for the dead is for those who could not do the work for themselves. Men and women who live in mortality and who have heard the gospel here have had their day, their seventy years to put their lives in harmony, to perform the ordinances, to repent and to perfect their lives.

The people of Noah's day heard the message of the gospel from prophets of God. They lived worldly lives. They ate, drank and were merry. They also married and gave in marriage, which means broken homes, divorces and worldly living. They ignored the many testimonies of preachers of righteousness. Then they died by drowning. The harvest had come for them. The end of their “day” had come and the “night” was to be dark and long. They waited for what must have seemed to them an interminable period; and finally the Savior came and through his missionary program taught them again the gospel, giving them a chance to repent. But did they receive the blessings of earthly faithfulness? Read again this from the Doctrine and Covenants relative to inhabitants of the terrestrial world:

And also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh;

Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it. (D&C 76:73-74.)

Were they ever to receive the celestial kingdom? They had had their opportunity; they had wasted the days of their probation; they had ignored the testimonies of the servants of God; they had followed the world and lived a worldly life. Perhaps many of them had taken the attitude, “I am not the religious kind.” “I do not like to go to meetings.” “I’m too busy; I can’t be bothered.” “I have other things of more interest.”

Again, undoubtedly many of those people in that spirit prison, like their brothers of this generation, must have

POINTS IN THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS

- 1. People are responsible to keep the commandments of God (now)
- 2. Unclean things cannot enter into God's presence

“NO UNCLEAN THING CAN ENTER”

- “...All men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence...” (Moses 6:57 in the Pearl of Great Price)
- Kimball writes on page 19:
“But to God who is perfection, cleanliness means moral and personal cleanliness. Less than that is, in one degree or another, uncleanness and hence cannot dwell with God.”

No Unclean Thing Can Enter

... All men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence ...

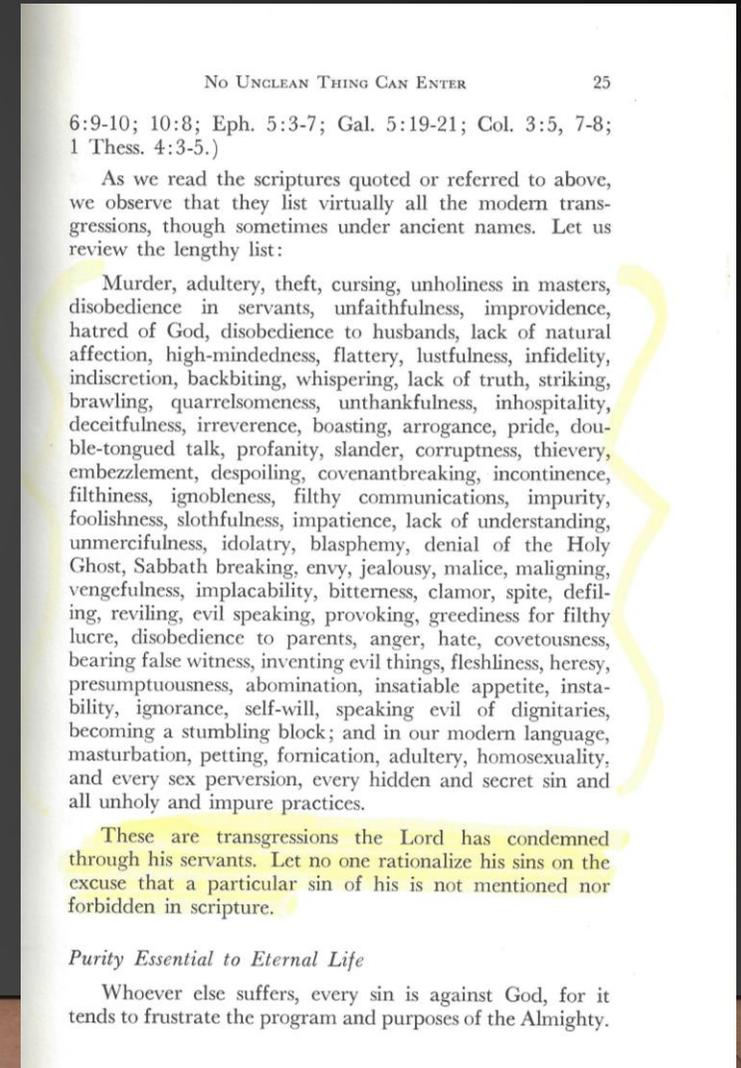
—Moses 6:57

AS WE DISCUSSED IN CHAPTER 1, THE ROAD OF LIFE is plainly marked according to the divine purpose, the map of the gospel of Jesus Christ is made available to the travelers, the destination of eternal life is clearly established. At that destination our Father waits hopefully, anxious to greet his returning children. Unfortunately, many will not arrive.

The reason is forthrightly stated by Nephi — “. . . There cannot any unclean thing enter into the kingdom of God . . .” (1 Ne. 15:34.) And again, “. . . no unclean thing can dwell with God . . .” (1 Ne. 10:21.) To the prophets the term *unclean* in this context means what it means to God. To man the word may be relative in meaning — one minute speck of dirt does not make a white shirt or dress unclean, for example. But to God who is perfection, cleanliness means moral and personal cleanliness. Less than that is, in one degree or another, uncleanness and hence cannot dwell with God.

THEN, ON PAGE 25, KIMBALL LISTS SINS THAT GOD CONDEMNNS, INCLUDING:

“Murder, adultery, theft, cursing, ... flattery, lustfulness, infidelity, indiscretion, backbiting, whispering, lack of truth, ... quarrelsomeness, unthankfulness, inhospitality, deceitfulness, irreverence, boasting, arrogance, pride, double-tongued talk, profanity, slander, corruptness, ... foolishness, slothfulness, impatience, lack of understanding ... Sabbath breaking, envy, jealousy, malice, ... greediness for filthy lucre, disobedience to parents, anger, hate, covetousness, ... speaking evil of dignitaries, becoming a stumbling block ...”



6:9-10; 10:8; Eph. 5:3-7; Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:5, 7-8; 1 Thess. 4:3-5.)

As we read the scriptures quoted or referred to above, we observe that they list virtually all the modern transgressions, though sometimes under ancient names. Let us review the lengthy list:

Murder, adultery, theft, cursing, unholiness in masters, disobedience in servants, unfaithfulness, improvidence, hatred of God, disobedience to husbands, lack of natural affection, high-mindedness, flattery, lustfulness, infidelity, indiscretion, backbiting, whispering, lack of truth, striking, brawling, quarrelsomeness, unthankfulness, inhospitality, deceitfulness, irreverence, boasting, arrogance, pride, double-tongued talk, profanity, slander, corruptness, thievery, embezzlement, despoiling, covenantbreaking, incontinence, filthiness, ignobleness, filthy communications, impurity, foolishness, slothfulness, impatience, lack of understanding, unmercifulness, idolatry, blasphemy, denial of the Holy Ghost, Sabbath breaking, envy, jealousy, malice, maligning, vengefulness, implacability, bitterness, clamor, spite, defiling, reviling, evil speaking, provoking, greediness for filthy lucre, disobedience to parents, anger, hate, covetousness, bearing false witness, inventing evil things, fleshliness, heresy, presumptuousness, abomination, insatiable appetite, instability, ignorance, self-will, speaking evil of dignitaries, becoming a stumbling block; and in our modern language, masturbation, petting, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and every sex perversion, every hidden and secret sin and all unholy and impure practices.

These are transgressions the Lord has condemned through his servants. Let no one rationalize his sins on the excuse that a particular sin of his is not mentioned nor forbidden in scripture.

Purity Essential to Eternal Life

Whoever else suffers, every sin is against God, for it tends to frustrate the program and purposes of the Almighty.

COVENANTBREAKERS (P. 57)

“Akin to many of the other sins is that of the covenant breaker. The person baptized promises to keep all the laws and commandments of God. He has partaken of the sacrament and re-pledged his allegiance his fidelity, promising and covenanting that he will keep all God’s laws.”

thousands of teen-age drug addicts. Despite local, national, and international efforts to curb the distribution of such narcotics, a U. S. Senate crime investigating committee found such drugs easy to get in most of the nation’s cities.

One should shun this habit as he would any deadly plague. Young people as well as older ones should beware of tampering with such injurious habits as glue-sniffing, taking LSD, smoking marijuana cigarettes, and so on. These are not only sinful in and of themselves, but will lead to more serious drug habits and to the addict’s spiritual, moral, and physical downfall. All such narcotic habits should be repented of and ever after shunned. Even sleeping pills, tranquilizers and such which were thought to be harmless have sometimes brought injury and death; these might well be limited or avoided and, if used at all, taken only under the strict supervision of a reputable physician.

Covenantbreakers

Akin to many of the other sins is that of the covenant-breaker. The person baptized promises to keep all the laws and commandments of God. He has partaken of the sacrament and re-pledged his allegiance and his fidelity, promising and covenanting that he will keep all God’s laws. Numerous folks have gone to the temples and have re-covenantated that they would live all the commandments of God, keep their lives clean, devoted, worthy, and serviceable. Yet many there are who forget their covenants and break the commandments, sometimes deliberately tempting the faithful away with them.

Of those who break covenants and promises made in sacred places and in solemn manner, we can apply the Lord’s words as follows:

... a wicked man, who has set at naught the counsels of God, and has broken the most sacred promises which were made before God, and has depended upon his own judgment and boasted in his own wisdom. (D&C 3:12-13.)

POINTS IN THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS

- 1. People are responsible to keep the commandments of God (now)
- 2. Unclean things cannot enter into God's presence
- 3. It is necessary for people to abandon their sins (now)

“ABANDONMENT OF SIN”

- D&C 58:43: “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them.” (p. 163)
- “True repentance prods one to action.”

Abandonment of Sin

By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins — behold, he will confess them and forsake them.

Doctrine & Covenants 58:43

THERE IS ONE CRUCIAL TEST OF REPENTANCE. THIS IS abandonment of the sin. Providing that a person discontinues his sin with the right motives — because of a growing consciousness of the gravity of the sin and a willingness to comply with the laws of the Lord — he is genuinely repenting. This criterion has been set by the Lord: “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins — behold, he will confess them and *forsake them*.” (D&C 58:43. Italics added.)

Desire Is Not Sufficient

In other words, it is not real repentance until one has abandoned the error of his way and started on a new path. Someone has said that there is only one way to quit a bad habit and that is to stop. The saving power does not extend to him who merely *wants* to change his life. **True repentance prods one to action.**

“TRYING IS NOT SUFFICIENT”

“Nor is repentance complete when one merely *tries* to abandon sin... To ‘try’ is weak. To ‘do the best I can’ is not strong. We must always do better than we can. This is true in every walk of life” (pp. 164-165).

One must not be surprised that effort is required, and not merely desire. After all, it is work which develops our moral as well as our physical muscles. Ralph Parlette puts it this way:

Strength and struggle go together. The supreme reward of struggle is strength. Life is a battle and the greatest joy is to overcome. The pursuit of easy things makes men weak. Do not equip yourselves with superior power and hope to escape the responsibility and work. It cannot be done. It is following the lines of least resistance that makes rivers and men crooked.

Trying Is Not Sufficient

Nor is repentance complete when one merely *tries* to abandon sin. To try with a weakness of attitude and effort is to assure failure in the face of Satan's strong counteracting efforts. What is needed is resolute action. A story will perhaps illustrate this.

An army officer called a soldier to him and ordered him to take a message to another officer. The soldier saluted and said, "I'll try, sir! I'll try!" To this the officer responded: "I don't want you to *try*, I want you to deliver this message." The soldier, somewhat embarrassed, now replied: "I'll do the best I can, sir." At this the officer, now disgusted, rejoined with some vigor: "I don't want you to *try* and I don't want you to 'do the best you can.' I want you to deliver this message." Now the young soldier, straightening to his full height, approached the matter magnificently, as he thought, when he saluted again and said: "I'll do it or die, sir." To this the now irate officer responded: "I don't want you to die, and I don't want you merely to do the best you can, and I don't want you to try. Now, the request is a reasonable one; the message is important; the distance is not far; you are able-bodied; you can do what I have ordered. Now get out of here and accomplish your mission."

It is normal for children to try. They fall and get up numerous times before they can be certain of their footing. But adults, who have gone through these learning periods,

“FORGIVENESS CANCELLED ON REVERSION TO SIN”

“Old sins return, says the Lord in his modern revelations. Many people either do not know this or they conveniently forget it. ‘Go your ways and sin no more,’ the Lord warned. And again, ‘...Unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God.’ (D&C 82:7.)” (pp. 169-170).

Forgiveness Cancelled on Reversion to Sin

Old sins return, says the Lord in his modern revelations. Many people either do not know this or they conveniently forget it. “Go your ways and sin no more,” the Lord warned.

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THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS

And again, “. . . Unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God.” (D&C 82:7.)

Would this mean that the person who has returned to the sins he has professedly abandoned must start the process of repentance again from the beginning? that one cannot return to sin and then start repentance from where he left off?

To return to sin is most destructive to the morale of the individual and gives Satan another hand-hold on his victim. Those who feel that they can sin and be forgiven and then return to sin and be forgiven again and again must straighten out their thinking. Each previously forgiven sin is added to the new one and the whole gets to be a heavy load.

Thus when a man has made up his mind to change his life, there must be no turning back. Any reversal, even in a small degree, is greatly to his detriment. The reformed alcoholic who takes “just a little sip” again may have lost all the ground he has gained. The pervert who relaxes and returns to old companions or situations is in grave danger again. The former cigarette addict who smokes just one more cigarette is on his way back to addiction. It was Mark Twain who said he knew he could quit smoking because he had done it a thousand times. When one quits, he must quit. Generally, those who try to taper off find it an impossible task.

One man who had been a slave to alcohol most of his adult life became convinced through the various Church programs that he must give up the habit and prepare himself for the temple program. With great effort he quit drinking. He moved many miles away from the area where his drinking friends lived and, though his body craved and ached and gnawed for the long-depended-on stimulant, he finally conquered. He was at all his Church meetings, and was paying his tithing. His new friends in the Church seemed to fortify him. He felt good in the new activity, and life was glorious. His wife was beaming, because now

POINTS IN THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS

- 1. People are responsible to keep the commandments of God (now)
- 2. Unclean things cannot enter into God's presence
- 3. It is necessary for people to abandon their sins (now)
- 4. By abandoning sins (completely), forgiveness is available

KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS BRINGS FORGIVENESS

“D&C 1:31-32: ‘...I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; Nevertheless, he that repents and *does the commandments of the Lord* shall be forgiven.’ (D&C 1:31-32” (Kimball’s italics) (p. 201)

And again, “. . . Unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God.” (D&C 82:7.)

Would this mean that the person who has returned to the sins he has professedly abandoned must start the process of repentance again from the beginning? that one cannot return to sin and then start repentance from where he left off?

To return to sin is most destructive to the morale of the individual and gives Satan another hand-hold on his victim. Those who feel that they can sin and be forgiven and then return to sin and be forgiven again and again must straighten out their thinking. Each previously forgiven sin is added to the new one and the whole gets to be a heavy load.

Thus when a man has made up his mind to change his life, there must be no turning back. Any reversal, even in a small degree, is greatly to his detriment. The reformed alcoholic who takes “just a little sip” again may have lost all the ground he has gained. The pervert who relaxes and returns to old companions or situations is in grave danger again. The former cigarette addict who smokes just one more cigarette is on his way back to addiction. It was Mark Twain who said he knew he could quit smoking because he had done it a thousand times. When one quits, he must quit. Generally, those who try to taper off find it an impossible task.

One man who had been a slave to alcohol most of his adult life became convinced through the various Church programs that he must give up the habit and prepare himself for the temple program. With great effort he quit drinking. He moved many miles away from the area where his drinking friends lived and, though his body craved and ached and gnawed for the long-depended-on stimulant, he finally conquered. He was at all his Church meetings, and was paying his tithing. His new friends in the Church seemed to fortify him. He felt good in the new activity, and life was glorious. His wife was beaming, because now

GRACE DOES NOT JUSTIFY...IN MORMONISM

“One of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation. . . . Advancement to perfection can nevertheless be rapid if one resolutely strides toward the goal” (pp. 205-206).

Faith and Works

In view of the emphasis thus far made on the importance of good works in returning from sin and establishing a repentant life, it may be well to say a word about the idea of salvation by faith alone. Some people not of our Church like to quote, in support of that concept, the following words of Paul:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Eph. 2:8-9.)

One of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved alone by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation. Along with all the other works

necessary for man's exaltation in the kingdom of God this could rule out the need for repentance. It could give license for sin and, since it does not require man to work out his salvation, could accept instead lip service, death-bed "repentance," and shallow, meaningless confession of sin.

Church members are fortunate indeed to have scriptures brought forth in this age which clarify this and other doctrinal questions beyond all doubt. One passage in the Book of Mormon, written perhaps with the same intent as Paul's statement above — to stress and induce appreciation for the gracious gift of salvation offered on condition of obedience — is particularly enlightening:

For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, *after all we can do*. (2 Ne. 25:23. Italics added.)

And the Lord further emphasized the fact:

WHAT ABOUT TEMPLE MEMBERS?

“Exaltation is available only to righteous members of the Church of Jesus Christ; only to those who accept the gospel; only to those who have their endowments in holy temples of God and have been sealed for eternity and who then continue to live righteously throughout their lives. Numerous members of the Church will be disappointed. All will fail of these blessings who fail to live worthy lives, even though the temple ordinances have been done for them” (page 246).

tation and glory words without end.

As you read this, can you conceive of the vastness of the program? Can you begin to comprehend it? Remember this: Exaltation is available only to righteous members of the Church of Jesus Christ; only to those who accept the gospel; only to those who have their endowments in holy temples of God and have been sealed for eternity and who then continue to live righteously throughout their lives. Numerous members of the Church will be disappointed. All will fail of these blessings who fail to live worthy lives, even though the temple ordinances have been done for them.

Dangers of Delaying Celestial Marriage

Too often, people think that the decisions on celestial marriage can be postponed and taken care of later. Such thoughts are the tools of Satan. He delights in procrastination and uses it much. If he cannot convince people to ignore these important matters, these ordinances in celestial marriage, he will use the strategy of procrastination on the basis that it will achieve his ends eventually.

But the time to act is now. Any mistake will be a costly one. We must not let attractions of the moment bring disaster for the eternities. All contracts that are not made under the sealing power of the priesthood terminate when one is dead.

³*Deseret News*, March 13, 1897.

AFTER CITING D&C 76:71-74:

“Too late! The terrestrial for them! It could have been the celestial and it could have been exaltation! But they procrastinated the day of their preparation. The same lamentable cry of ‘Too late!’ will apply to many of today’s Church members who did not heed the warning . . .”

WOULDN'T YOU HAVE TO BE SUPERHUMAN (TO SUCCESSFULLY KEEP COMMANDMENTS)?

- Page 286: “In the context of the spirit of forgiveness, one good brother asked me, ‘Yes, that is what ought to be done, but how do you do it? Doesn’t that take a superman?’ ‘Yes,’ I said, ‘but we are commanded to be supermen. Said the Lord, ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ (Matt. 5:48.) We are gods in embryo, and the Lord demands perfection of us.’”

he had wronged. Thereafter he brought forth fruits meet for repentance.

It Can Be Done

A certain man found that he had a suspicious growth which presaged serious trouble. When the doctor had taken a biopsy and found the growth to be malignant, the man made arrangements at the hospital for radical surgery. When he learned the truth — that his life was hanging in the balance — this good man recoiled at first, then resigned himself, relaxed and smiled as he told the doctor:

“Before I go to the hospital, doctor, I have four items of unfinished business. First, I will check my insurance policies and my titles and see that all are in order; second, I’m going to settle all my financial obligations; third, I’m going to have my will rechecked; and fourth, I’m going to see Bill and apologize for the unkind things I have said about him and ask his forgiveness for the grudge I have long carried against him. Then, I am ready to go to the hospital, and to my grave if necessary.”

In the context of the spirit of forgiveness, one good brother asked me, “Yes, that is what ought to be done, but how do you do it? Doesn’t that take a superman?”

“Yes,” I said, “but we are commanded to be supermen. Said the Lord, ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ (Matt. 5:48.) We are gods in embryo, and the Lord demands perfection of us.”

“Yes, the Christ forgave those who injured him, but he was more than human,” he rejoined.

And my answer was: “But there are many humans who have found it possible to do this divine thing.”

Apparently there are many who, like this good brother, hold the comfortable theory that the forgiving spirit as exemplified in the examples I have quoted is more or less the monopoly of scriptural or fictional characters and can hardly be expected of practical people in today’s world.

HOW DOES ONE GET FORGIVEN?

“Your Heavenly Father has promised forgiveness upon total repentance and meeting all the requirements, but that forgiveness is not granted merely for the asking. There must be works—many works—and an all-out, total surrender, with a great humility and ‘a broken heart and a contrite spirit.’ It depends upon you whether or not you are forgiven, and when. It could be weeks, it could be years, it could be centuries before that happy day when you have the positive assurance that the Lord has forgiven you. That depends on your humility, your sincerity, your works, your attitudes” (pp. 324-325).

This power, when released and given divine direction and guidance, will lead to immortality and eternal life.¹

Truly one has this power when he is a faithful member of the Church, the Church being the principal medium through which this power can be exercised and developed. Thus it is important that a member have full fellowship in the Church. Serious sin brings loss of this power, for the sinner then almost invariably cuts himself off from Church association and the influences that come from association with people who are striving for righteousness. The power then lies dormant and ineffective in the soul of the transgressor.

But the power can be set loose from its chains of bondage. Repentance and its promise of forgiveness will set this power free so that it is again effective in one's life. And to do this, where the sin is of major proportions, there are two forgivenesses which the unrepentant one should obtain — the forgiveness of the Lord, and the forgiveness of the Lord's Church through its proper authorities.

Forgiveness by the Church

Forgiveness by the Lord is dealt with in the next chapter. On the general subject of forgiveness by the Church I wrote in part as follows to a young man who had confessed to adulterous transgressions:

The other forgiveness is obtained through your ecclesiastical leader, the bishop, stake president, mission president or General Authority who has the authority to waive penalties. You have offended the Church and its people as well as the Lord by having broken the law of chastity, which is the next most serious sin to murder. If you are arrogant, cocky, and unrepentant, you may be “cut off” or excommunicated from the Church. But if the ecclesiastical officer is convinced of total and sustained repentance, he may waive that penalty — which may be termed a forgiveness in that sense. Simultaneously, the transgressor should begin his petitions to the Lord for a final forgiveness. God may obliterate or absolve sins. Your bishop has no such power. Your Heavenly Father has promised forgiveness upon total repentance

¹Taken from a radio address given December 7, 1947.

THE CHURCH WILL FORGIVE

and meeting all the requirements, but that forgiveness is not granted merely for the asking. There must be works — many works — and an all-out, total surrender, with a great humility and “a broken heart and a contrite spirit.”

It depends upon you whether or not you are forgiven, and when. It could be weeks, it could be years, it could be centuries before that happy day when you have the positive assurance that the Lord has forgiven you. That depends on your humility, your sincerity, your works, your attitudes.

Continue your work with increased zeal and your prayers with increased intensity. Read the book of Enos and “go and do thou likewise.” Read the scriptures which are enclosed and memorize the shorter ones.

POINTS IN THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS

- 1. People are responsible to keep the commandments of God (now)
- 2. Unclean things cannot enter into God's presence
- 3. It is necessary for people to abandon their sins (now)
- 4. By abandoning sins (completely), forgiveness is available
- 5. A person must completely rid oneself of even the desire to sin

ELIMINATE DESIRE TO SIN

One final quote that I think completes this tactic

(After citing Alma 13:11-12): “It is that the former transgressor must have reached a ‘point of no return’ to sin wherein there is not merely a renunciation, but also a deep abhorrence of the sin—where the sin becomes most distasteful to him and where the desire or urge to sin is cleared out of his life” (pp. 354-355).

transgressor must have reached a “point of no return” to sin wherein there is not merely a renunciation but also a deep abhorrence of the sin — where the sin becomes most distasteful to him and where the desire or urge to sin is cleared out of his life.

Surely this is what is meant, in part at least, by being pure in heart! And when we read in the Sermon on the Mount that the “pure in heart” shall see God, it gives meaning to the Lord’s statement, made through the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1832, that presently impure people can perfect themselves and become pure:

Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will. (D&C 88:68.)

Again, in 1833, the Prophet gave assurance that the totally repentant one will see the Lord; and this means forgiveness, for only the pure in heart will see God.

Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am. (D&C 93:1.)

With such a magnanimous promise, why would anyone hesitate to throw off the evils of his life and come to his Lord?

The Buffetings of Satan

A phrase that occurs several times in modern revelation should certainly be an incentive to prompt, unreserved repentance. This term talks of sinners being delivered to the “buffetings of Satan.” For instance, the Lord consigns to the buffetings of Satan those who, having organized themselves “by a bond or everlasting covenant that cannot be broken,” subsequently broke that covenant. “And he who breaketh it shall lose his office and standing in the church, and shall be delivered over to the buffetings of Satan until the day of redemption.” (D&C 78:12.)

FINISH THE CONVERSATION BY ASKING

- Do you believe that Spencer Kimball accurately interpreted the passages that he cited? (If not, please show me any other way they could be interpreted.)
- Do you believe that the LDS Church no longer teaches what Kimball was teaching? (If not, please show me where they have abandoned his book or his teachings.)
- How are you doing at what Kimball said was necessary for a person to receive forgiveness of sins?

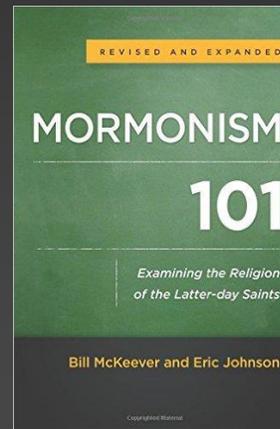
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\$10 (highlighted ed., with notes)

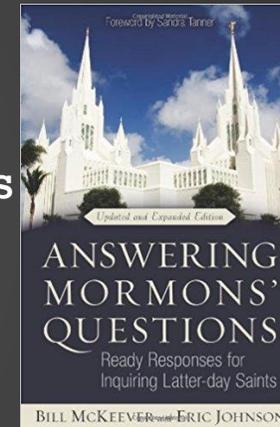


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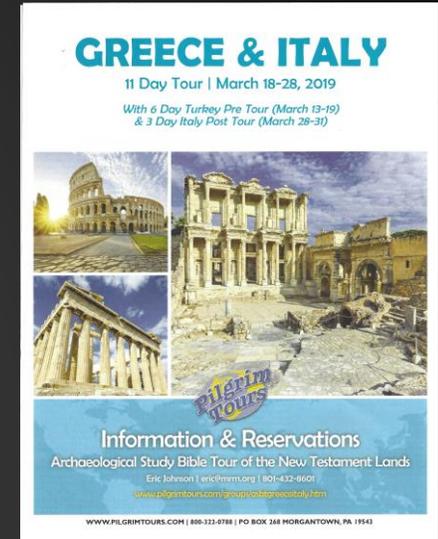
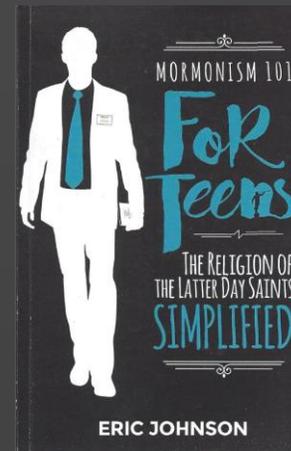


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