

Having outlined an acceptable working arrangement between religion and psychiatry, President Richards, a wise, kind and thoughtful man, returned to his home, and I returned to mine.

**SOME THOUGHTS ON REPENTANCE  
AND FORGIVENESS**

Matthew Cowley

Good old Judea [New Zealand], where I became a man (if I ever did become one). At the age of seventeen, I was young indeed to have had the experiences I had there, but they were worthwhile and have since been an anchor to my faith. It was there that I learned that there is saintliness in sinners; that sinners sometimes manifest greater love than some so-called Saints. It was there that I descended below all things and rose to the greatest heights of loving the weakest of the weak. It was there that my mind was first enlightened and my soul enlarged by the impact of the Holy Ghost. It was there that I first became the recipient of the gifts of the Spirit. It was there that I learned the value of patience, long suffering, kindness, forgiveness and the other virtues that are so necessary in the regeneration of the human soul. No greater respect have I ever received as a bearer of the priesthood than I did from the people of Judea, both members and non-members alike. When I was there as a mere boy, they would come all hours of the night and day for confession, and for counsel and for administration. “And a little child shall lead them.” They taught me the significance of this scripture. It was there I came to know that poverty may be priceless as a source of genuine happiness. I have never seen a happier nor more fun-loving folk than were they. And they still are. Their happiness was punctuated with inter-family feuds, quarrels, but the grudges were soon forgotten. They would “cuss” each other out one minute and sing together the next. There amidst fleas and filth, I loved and was loved. Dear old Judea!

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I have in my office every day good and faithful members of this Church who are depressed, who are frustrated, who think they are not being saved, and most of these people whom I see are just as worthy as I and some more worthy. Why they are frustrated, I don’t know, unless someone is trying to scare them into the celestial glory. I like to get fun out of this business — good, wholesome, righteous fun — get a kick out of it. When I obey the principles of this gospel, I am the happiest man on earth. When I don’t,

then I am depressed, then I have a right to worry about myself; but, when I am trying to do the best I know, then I tell you, I am having the time of my life.

I learned this philosophy from the natives out in the islands. They are a simple people. They know how to repent, and they know how to repent often. They know how to be forgiven, and they know how to forgive themselves. I learned that from them. Why, they can come in every week and repent for the same offense, and if you forgive them, they go out walking on air, the happiest people you ever saw; but over here I have talked to people who have been forgiven thirty-five years ago and who have been almost perfect ever since, and they are still saying, "I'll never forgive myself. I'll never forgive myself." Brothers and sisters, teach these youngsters how to forgive themselves when they are forgiven.

Another thing we need in this Church is a willingness on the part of the people who need help to come to us for help. Too many of them feel that there is a barrier — between them and their bishop, for instance — that they have sinned, and as a result they hold this within themselves. It breaks them down, and eventually they can't stand it any longer, and they go to somebody to bare their hearts and their souls, and then they discover that they've wasted a lot of time being depressed, frustrated, and worried because there is forgiveness in the Church for the repentant soul who honestly and sincerely repents. We are all God's children as President Smith used to remind us in every sermon. We are all his children, and he loves us all. I am convinced of that.

I was at a stake conference recently. A man came up to me Saturday night and said, "Brother Cowley, will it be all right if we have a meeting with you between the morning and afternoon sessions of conference?" I said, "Yes, who are you?" He said, "The Alcoholics Anonymous want to meet with you in the Tabernacle between the two sessions of conference." The most inspirational meeting of that conference was with those sixty men and women who had been confirmed alcoholics but who had turned their lives back to God again and who had learned how to repent and purge from their lives all the assorted things which came to them from the use of alcohol.

Brothers and sisters in this Church, the last words President Smith said to me when I visited him in the hospital, and he could scarcely speak were, "My boy, you will always find good in everyone if you look for it." Remember that when you see these young men and women in your ward. Remember that if they are drunk Saturday night, maybe a year from now one of them will be the bishop of the ward, or two years from now. I know a man not far from here who was a chain smoker for fifty years, who didn't go to church much. He is a bishop now — a wonderful bishop because he speaks the language of those who need help. That's an important thing in this business we are in, too — trying to understand the other fellow's viewpoint, trying to find out what caused him to do this. Maybe it was family background. Maybe you and I have just been luckier than he. To us Providence

has been kind. As we read in that hymn, "Let each man learn to know himself." To us has Providence been kind. Consider all of those things.

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## THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS\*

Richard H. Cracroft

In *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, Elder Spencer W. Kimball, acting president of the Council of Twelve, has written an often moving, spiritually refreshing, and highly readable book. In attempting this book-length examination of the principle of forgiveness, Elder Kimball seeks "not . . . to entertain," but to entice many to "repent of their sins . . . and to purify and perfect their lives." In twenty-three lucid chapters, he extolls the priceless gift of repentance for a troubled world, a gift of peace to the "anxious, restless, frustrated, perhaps tormented soul." The gift is not a dole, however, and Elder Kimball divides his book into three basic parts which probe the effort necessary in identifying the nature and the guises of sin; understanding the unvarying steps to repentance; and, finally, recognizing and avoiding the allurements which nudge, push, then hurtle a mortal down that well-traveled Broadway. Elder Kimball concludes his work with a discussion of the Church's role in bringing the sinner to his knees and a reminder of God's infinite mercy and joy in sanctioning the transforming miracle.

In developing his ideas, Elder Kimball fortunately transcends the mediocrity which has beset the works of too many Mormon writers who, in their sincere zeal to preach the gospel to a wider congregation, have published poorly edited paste-and-scissors pastiches of their discourses. Such works, bought dutifully by many, but read, one must suspect, by few, too often amount to little more than a rehash of principles on which church members are essentially in agreement; and the active member, finding at least one or two such books in his Christmas stocking, vaguely and perhaps guiltily feels that he has read or heard it all somewhere before. These generally lifeless works likely do not transform as many lives as the more carefully written,

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\**The Miracle of Forgiveness*. By Spencer W. Kimball. Bookcraft, 1969, xii, 376 pp. \$4.95. Richard H. Cracroft is a member of the Department of English at Brigham Young University.