**DC 64                                                 Historical Background**

While many saints were making preparations to go to Missouri, the elders including Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, by and large, had just returned from their trip to Zion. The Prophet’s history doesn’t elaborate much on the state of the church upon his return from Missouri. The context of section 64, however, demonstrates that the Lord was not too pleased with those saints who were finding fault with the Prophet. Usually, criticism of church authorities only represents a coping mechanism for individual apostasy. Prejudice and faultfinding were as much a problem for the early saints as they are today. In response, the Lord would give them a great lesson on forgiveness.

**John Whitmer**

There was much trouble and unbelief among those who call themselves disciples of Christ: some apostatized, and became enemies to the cause of God, and persecuted the Saints…

And now when the elders had returned to their homes in Ohio, the churches needed much exhortation in the absence of the elders many apostatized: but many have returned again to the fold from whence they had strayed. (*The Book of John Whitmer,* typescript, [Provo: BYU Archives and Manuscripts], chap. 9)

**Elder John W. Taylor**

Many of the Saints found fault with the Prophet Joseph. Some of the presiding authorities found fault with him; and at one time things had reached such a climax that there were only two of the Twelve Apostles, then present, who stood firm and faithful to the Prophet Joseph. Satan is a man of great intelligence, having dwelt with God the Eternal Father; and he knew that Joseph Smith was, in embryo, one of the greatest prophets that ever came forth among the children of men. Therefore, he sought by seizing hold of and over-powering him to blot out the possibility of the Church of God being organized in this the dispensation of the fulness of times. But this is another instance which shows that the wisdom of the Lord is greater than the cunning of the devil…

Now, I can see that same spirit just as plainly to-day working among the Latter-day Saints… I can see that same spirit of apostasy lurking underneath the surface, attacking the present presiding authorities of the Church. (Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses,* 5 vols. [Burbank, Calif., and Woodland Hills, Ut.: B.H.S. Publishing, 1987-1992], vol. 4, April 5, 1895)

**DC 64:2 I will that ye should overcome the world; therefore I will have compassion upon you**

To overcome the world sounds like an individual accomplishment. Certainly, the individual who overcomes the world is granted great and glorious blessings (See Rev. 2:7-3:22). However, the scriptures remind us that our individual accomplishment is dependent on the Lord’s grace. It is because the Lord has compassion on us that we can overcome the world. Without his mercy and grace no individual could succeed. Fortunately, it is his *will* that we should overcome the world. He wants us to succeed, but in order for that to happen, he has to first administer a divine quantity of compassion, mercy, and grace.

**DC 64:5 the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom shall not be taken from my servant Joseph Smith**

**Charles W. Penrose**

Here the promise was made to the Prophet Joseph Smith that he should have those keys as long as he lived, if he obeyed the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.

Our testimony is that he lived and died a prophet of God, and that he sealed his testimony with his blood. The Lord promised that the keys should not be taken from him while he lived, inasmuch as he obeyed His ordinances, so when the Prophet Joseph was taken away, the keys were with him, as the Lord promised they should be, both in this world and in the world to come. I will read a verse from the 112th Section. The Lord says:

   Now, I say unto you, and what I say unto you I say unto all the Twelve, Arise and gird up your loins, take up your cross, follow me, and feed my sheep.

   Exalt not yourselves; rebel not against my servant Joseph, for verily I say unto you, I am with him and my hand shall be over him; and the keys which I have given unto him, and also to youward, shall not be taken from him till I come. (D&C 112:14-15)

Here is the promise of the Lord, not only to the Prophet Joseph Smith, but also to the Twelve, that the keys should not be taken from the Prophet until the Lord should come; for by this time he had been tested, proved, and found worthy. As he himself said, he had been swimming in deep waters and up stream, and he had struggled against false friends and those surrounding him who professed to be his disciples, but who spoke against him and had risen up against him. Now the Lord said to him and to the Twelve, that the keys, which had been given first of all temporarily, as if were, until he should be tested and proved, should abide with him until the Lord should come, and with the Twelve whom He had called and appointed. Therefore, rest your souls easy in this security, that the kingdom, as the Lord says, is given to His people. (*Conference Report, October 1905*, Second Day,—Morning Session 97.)

**DC 64:6 There are those who have sought occasion against him without cause**

“One man named Hawley came from the State of New York and declared that God had rejected the Prophet because he had suffered John Noah, a false prophet, to be cut off from the Church, and also because women in the Church were permitted to wear caps. Some of the Saints listened to him, and it became necessary to call a Bishop's Council to investigate the charges. Oliver Cowdery and others searched the Bible for passages permitting or forbidding women to wear caps and veils, and the outcome of the trial was that the man was expelled for having a false spirit. To quote:

“There was a prevalent spirit all through the early history of the Church, which prompted [some of] the Elders to suppose that they knew more than the Prophet. Elders would tell you that the Prophet was going wrong. Men who thought they knew all about this work, some of them thirty or forty years before the Lord revealed it, tried to 'steady the ark.' The Church was constantly afflicted with such a class of men (George A. Smith,*Jour. of Dis.,* Vol. XI., p. 7).”

(Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], 391.)

**Joseph Smith**

Although I was called of my Heavenly Father to lay the foundation of this great work and kingdom in this dispensation, and testify of His revealed will to scattered Israel, I am subject to like passions as other men, like the prophets of olden times.

Notwithstanding my weaknesses, I am under the necessity of bearing the infirmities of others, who, when they get into difficulty, hang on to me tenaciously to get them out, and wish me to cover their faults. On the other hand, the same characters, when they discover a weakness in Brother Joseph, endeavor to blast his reputation, and publish it to all the world, and thereby aid my enemies in destroying the Saints. Although the law is given through me to the Church, I cannot be borne with a moment by such men. They are ready to destroy me for the least foible, and publish my imaginary failings from Dan to Beersheba, though they are too ignorant of the things of God, which have been revealed to me, to judge of my actions, motives or conduct, in any correct manner whatever.

The only principle upon which they judge me is by comparing my acts with the foolish traditions of their fathers and nonsensical teachings of hireling priests. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], 315.)

**DC 64:8 My disciples, in days of old, sought occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts**

“The hope is that his modern Saints will learn from this negative example. It is significant to note that the requirement entails the heart, not just the mind, for, as we learn in v. 22, the Lord requires our hearts. If the heart is not right, the outward show means nothing. Every meaningful act involves a change of heart, not merely of mind. Conversion, testimony, faith, repentance, and forgiveness all require our whole-hearted focus. Forgiveness requires our hearts to change.” (Ann N. Madsen, *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 1: The Doctrine and Covenants,*ed. by Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], 249.)

**Spencer W. Kimball**

Note the Lord's comment about inadequate forgiveness on the part of His former-day disciples. Just what their sufferings were is not stated, but the penalties and chastisement were sore.

The lesson stands for us today. Many people, when brought to a reconciliation with others, say that they forgive, but they continue to hold malice, continue to suspect the other party, continue to disbelieve the other's sincerity. This is sin, for when a reconciliation has been effected and when repentance is claimed, each should forgive and forget, build immediately the fences which have been breached, and restore the former compatibility.

The early disciples evidently expressed words of forgiveness, and on the surface made the required adjustment, but “forgave not one another in their hearts.” This was not a forgiveness, but savored of hypocrisy and deceit and subterfuge. As implied in Christ's model prayer, it must be a heart action and a purging of one's mind. Forgiveness means forgetfulness. One woman had “gone through” a reconciliation in a branch and had made the physical motions and verbal statements indicating it, and expressed the mouthy words forgiving. Then with flashing eyes, she remarked, “I will forgive her, but I have a memory like an elephant. I'll never forget.” Her pretended adjustment was valueless and void. She still harbored the bitterness. Her words of friendship were like a spider's web, her rebuilt fences were as straw, and she herself continued to suffer without peace of mind. Worse still, she stood “condemned before the Lord,” and there remained in her an even greater sin than in the one who, she claimed, had injured her.

Little did this antagonistic woman realize that she had not forgiven at all. She had only made motions. She was spinning her wheels and getting nowhere. In the scripture quoted above, the phrase in their hearts has deep meaning. It must be a purging of feelings and thoughts and bitternesses. Mere words avail nothing. (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*[Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], 261-264.)

**DC 64:8 for this evil they were afflicted and sorely chastened**

**Gordon B. Hinckley**

How much we need application of this God-given principle and its companion principle, repentance! We see the need for it in the homes of the people, where tiny molehills of misunderstanding are fanned into mountains of argument. We see it among neighbors, where insignificant differences lead to undying bitterness. We see it in business associates who quarrel and refuse to compromise and forgive when, in most instances, if there were a willingness to sit down together and speak quietly one to another, the matter could be resolved to the blessing of all. Rather, they spend their days nurturing grudges and planning retribution.

In that first year of the organization of the Church, when the Prophet Joseph Smith was repeatedly arrested and tried on false charges by those who sought to injure him, the Lord said to him through revelation, “Whosoever shall go to law with thee shall be cursed by the law.” (D&C 24:17.) I have seen that in our time among some of those who have vindictively pursued their nurtured grudges. Even among some of those who win their contests there appears to be little peace of mind, and while they may have gained dollars, they have lost something more precious.

Guy de Maupassant, the French writer, tells the story of a peasant named Hauchecome who came on market day to the village. While walking through the public square, his eye caught sight of a piece of string lying on the cobblestones. He picked it up and put it in his pocket. His actions were observed by the village harness maker, with whom he had previously had a dispute.

Later in the day the loss of a purse was reported. Hauchecome was arrested on the accusation of the harness maker. He was taken before the mayor, to whom he protested his innocence, showing the piece of string that he had picked up. But he was not believed and was laughed at.

The next day the purse was found, and Hauchecome was absolved of any wrongdoing. But, resentful of the indignity he had suffered because of a false accusation, he became embittered and would not let the matter die. Unwilling to forgive and forget, he thought and talked of little else. He neglected his farm. Everywhere he went, everyone he met had to be told of the injustice. By day and by night he brooded over it. Obsessed with his grievance, he became desperately ill and died. In the delirium of his death struggles, he repeatedly murmured, “A piece of string, a piece of string.” (*The Works of Guy de Maupassant*, Roslyn, New York: Black’s Reader Service, n.d., pp. 34–38.) (“Of You It Is Required to Forgive,” *Ensign*, June 1991, 2, 4)

**DC 64:9 there remaineth in him the greater sin**

“Is the Lord truly saying that refusing to forgive another is a greater sin than the offense committed against us? Yes. Truman Madsen suggests one reason for this: In refusing to forgive another, we, in effect, attempt to deny the blessings of the Atonement to that person: ‘You may have reached the point of desperation in your own life when you have prayed and yearned for forgiveness of your own guilt and sin. But then you turn and say, `But not him! Don’t you forgive him! I’m not going to, he doesn’t deserve it.` You will then close the channel of love and compassion and revelation from the Lord. You seek to nullify His atonement for others. It is like triple plate steel against water.’ (Roderick J. Linton, “The Forgiving Heart,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1993, 16)

**Rudger Clawson**

What a wonderful saying is this. It puts the matter, you might say, in a new light. The offender is less accountable for sin than the unforgiving man who is injured, when his brother comes to him and confesses his sin and is willing to make it right, and wants to be reconciled, and the brother says, “No, I will not forgive you. I hold it against you. I cannot forget it. I will not forget it, and I will not accept your offering.” That man stands condemned before the Lord. (*Conference Report, April 1917*, Afternoon Session. 28.)

**DC 64:10 of you it is required to forgive all men**

**Joseph Smith**

Ever keep in exercise the principle of mercy, and be ready to forgive our brother on the first intimations of repentance, and asking forgiveness; and should we even forgive our brother, or even our enemy, before he repent or ask forgiveness, our heavenly Father would be equally as merciful unto us. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 155)

**Spencer W. Kimball**

[Is forgiving] hard to do? Of course. The Lord never promised an easy road, nor a simple gospel, nor low standards, nor a low norm. The price is high, but the goods attained are worth all they cost. The Lord himself turned the other cheek; he suffered himself to be buffeted and beaten without remonstrance; he suffered every indignity and yet spoke no word of condemnation. And his question to all of us is: “Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be?” And his answer to us is: “Even as I am.” (3 Ne. 27:27.)

In his *The Prince of Peace*, William Jennings Bryan wrote:

“The most difficult of all the virtues to cultivate is the forgiving spirit. Revenge seems to be natural with man; it is human to want to get even with an enemy. It has even been popular to boast of vindictiveness; it was once inscribed on a man’s monument that he had repaid both friends and enemies more than he had received. This was not the spirit of Christ.” (Independence, Zion’s Printing and Publishing Company, 1925, p. 35.)

If we have been wronged or injured, forgiveness means to blot it completely from our minds. To forgive and forget is an ageless counsel. “To be wronged or robbed,” said the Chinese philosopher Confucius, “is nothing unless you continue to remember it.”

The injuries inflicted by neighbors, by relatives, or by spouses are generally of a minor nature, at least at first. We must forgive them. Since the Lord is so merciful, must not we be? “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (3 Ne. 12:7) is another version of the Golden Rule. “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men,” said the Lord, “but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.” (Matt. 12:31.) If the Lord is so gracious and kind, we must be also. (“The Power of Forgiveness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 48)

With variations of characters and circumstances, that story could be repeated many times in our own day. How difficult it is for any of us to forgive those who have injured us. We are all prone to brood on the evil done us. That brooding becomes as a gnawing and destructive canker. Is there a virtue more in need of application in our time than the virtue of forgiving and forgetting? There are those who would look upon this as a sign of weakness. Is it? I submit that it takes neither strength nor intelligence to brood in anger over wrongs suffered, to go through life with a spirit of vindictiveness, to dissipate one’s abilities in planning retribution. There is no peace in the nursing of a grudge. There is no happiness in living for the day when you can “get even.” (“Of You It Is Required to Forgive,” *Ensign*, June 1991, 2, 4)

**Heber J. Grant**

I have a very wonderful respect and regard for this quotation from… the D&C. Some years ago a prominent man was excommunicated from the Church. He, years later, pleaded for baptism. President John Taylor referred the question of his baptism to the apostles, stating that if they unanimously consented to his baptism, he could be baptized, but that if there was one dissenting vote, he should not be admitted into the Church. As I remember the vote, it was five for baptism and seven against. A year or so later the question came up again and it was eight for baptism and four against. Later it came up again and it was ten for baptism and two against. Finally all of the Council of the Apostles, with the exception of your humble servant, consented that this man be baptized and I was then next to the junior member of the quorum. Later I was in the office of the president and he said:

Heber, I understand that eleven of the apostles have consented to the baptism of Brother So and So,” naming the man, “and that you alone are standing out. How will you feel when you get on the other side and you find that this man has pleaded for baptism and you find that you have perhaps kept him out from entering in with those who have repented of their sins and received some reward?”

I said, “President John Taylor, I can look the Lord squarely in the eye, if he asks me that question, and tell him that I did that which I thought was for the best good of the kingdom. When a man holding the holy Priesthood of God goes forth to proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, to call the wicked to. repentance; goes to proclaim that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and that the gospel has been restored again to the earth, and that man in the mission home of the Church of Christ commits adultery, I can tell the Lord that he had disgraced this Church enough, and that I did not propose to let any such a man come back into the Church.”

Well,” said President Taylor, “my boy, that is all right, stay with your convictions, stay right with them.” …

I left the president's office. I went home. My lunch was not ready. I was reading the D&C through for the third or fourth time systematically, and I had my bookmark in it, but as I picked it up, instead of opening where the bookmark was, it opened to:

I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men; but he that forgiveth not his brother standeth condemned before the Lord.

And I closed the book and said: “If the devil applies for baptism, and claims that he has repented, I will baptize him.” After lunch I returned to the office of President Taylor and I said, “President Taylor, I have had a change of heart. One hour ago I said, never while I live, did I expect to ever consent that Brother So and So should be baptized, but I have come to tell you he can be baptized, so far as I am concerned.”

President Taylor had a habit, when he was particularly pleased, of sitting up and laughing and shaking his whole body, and he laughed and said, “My boy, the change is very sudden, very sudden. I want to ask you a question. How did you feel when you left here an hour ago? Did you feel like you wanted to hit that man right squarely between the eyes and knock him down?”

I said, “That is just the way I felt.” He said, “How do you feel now?”

Well, to tell you the truth, President Taylor, I hope the Lord will forgive the sinner.”

He said, “You feel happy, don't you, in comparison. You had the spirit of anger, you had the spirit of bitterness in your heart toward that man, because of his sin and because of the disgrace he had brought upon the Church. And now you have the spirit of forgiveness and you really feel happy, don't you?”

And I said, “Yes I do; I felt mean and hateful and now I feel happy.”

And he said: “[I hoped that] you and some of the younger members of the apostles would learn the lesson that…to have in your heart the spirit of forgiveness and to eliminate from your hearts the spirit of hatred and bitterness, brings peace and joy; that the gospel of Jesus Christ brings joy, peace and happiness to every soul that lives it and follows its teachings." (*Conference Report, October 1920*, 5-7.)

**DC 64:11 let God judge between me and thee**

**George Albert Smith**

If our lives, were such that, when we differ with our neighbor, if, instead of setting ourselves up as judges one against another, we could honestly and conscientiously appeal to our Father in Heaven and say, “Lord, judge between me and my brother; thou knowest my heart; Thou knowest I have no feeling of anger against him; help us to see alike, and give us wisdom that we may deal righteously with each other,” how few differences there would be, and what joy and blessings would come to us! But, little difficulties arise from time to time which disturb the equilibrium of our daily lives, and we continue to be unhappy because we cherish an improper influence, and have not charity. (*Conference Report, October 1905*, Afternoon Session. 97.)

**Rex D. Pinegar**

When we forgive men in our hearts and let the Lord judge the acts of men, we create a condition whereby men can live in peace with one another. Forgiving others frees us of ill feelings toward them. It lifts the burden of grudges from our heads, and it puts us in a position of seeking forgiveness from the Lord for our own sins. A spirit of forgiveness enables us to remain in control of our thoughts, words, and actions. An attitude of forgiveness generates a feeling of peace and optimism about life. Being forgiving helps us to keep from being easily offended, and we are less likely to judge the intentions of others in a negative way. We are also ready to accept correction and criticism ourselves. In times when we may be wronged or mistreated, we can, in the spirit of love and peace, work out solutions to the problems. We can determine a positive course of action. If an honorable agreement cannot be reached, the attitude of forgiveness provides us the strength to turn the other cheek in the spirit of love…

Yes, prayer is a very important part of the spirit of forgiveness. We must ask the Lord to forgive those who offend us and soften our hearts toward them. Through prayer we may find the strength to forgive others and leave their judging in the hands of the Lord. We also receive comfort and direction for our own lives. (“Grandfather Johansen’s Example,” *New Era*, Sept. 1977, 4-5)

**DC 64:12 do with him as the scripture saith unto you, either by commandment or by revelation**

**Dallin H. Oaks**

To “do with [an unrepentant transgressor] as the scripture saith” is to follow the principles and procedures specified in the scriptures. In 1831, when this direction was given, the leaders of the Church had many scriptures explaining the principles of church discipline and the transgressions for which it should be imposed. These scriptural directions were found in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and a modern revelation, the “law of the Church” (D&C 42), given just six months earlier. (The revelation prescribing the procedures for high councils, section 102, came several years later.)

The succeeding words of the verse quoted above explain *how* the scriptural directions are to be applied in church discipline: “either by commandment or by revelation.”(D&C 64:12.)

To apply the scriptures by commandment means to follow their directions literally, according to their terms. This includes the familiar judicial function of receiving and weighing the evidence, as is done by a civil or criminal court. For example, in a revelation given just a month earlier, the bishop was identified as “a judge in Israel . . . to judge his people *by the testimony* of the just.” (D&C 58:17-18; emphasis added.)

In contrast, to apply these scriptures “by revelation” (D&C 64:12) contemplates something more than following their literal terms and being limited to the evidence before the council. The subsequent revelation pertaining to high council procedures gives one illustration of the meaning of this direction: “In case of difficulty respecting doctrine or principle, if there is not a sufficiency written to make the case clear to the minds of the council, the president may inquire and obtain the mind of the Lord by revelation.” (See D&C 102:23.) (*The Lord's Way* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1991], 241.)

**DC 64:15-16 I, the Lord, was angry with…Ezra Booth and also my servant Isaac Morley**

“Note the difference. Booth, the Lord says, *was* my servant. Morley is still recognized as such. Both had failed to keep the Law. Both bad condemned as evil that which was not evil. Both had lost the spirit (v. 16). But Ezra Booth persisted in evil-doing, while Isaac Morley repented and was forgiven.” (Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], 392.)

“Ezra Booth lives in infamy in the annals of the Church. He is sometimes mentioned as an example of one who was converted by a miracle. The wife of Father Johnson was unable to raise her arm for two years. As a friend of the family, Ezra Booth, a Methodist priest, was present when the Prophet Joseph Smith and the elders administered to her, restoring her arm to instant use. Soon after this healing, Booth was baptized. President George A. Smith said that when Booth had to preach without purse or scrip, he felt that there were better ways of ‘earning a livelihood.’ The Prophet reported that when Booth learned,

. . .that faith, humility, patience, and tribulation go before blessing, and that God brings low before He exalts; that instead of the "Savior's granting him power to smite men and make them believe," (as he said he wanted God to do in his own case)—when he found he must become all things to all men, that he might peradventure save some; and that, too, by all diligence, by perils by sea and land, as was the case in the days of Jesus—then he was disappointed. (*DHC* I:216.)

“Under these circumstances Booth apostatized and, as is true with many apostates, he sought to justify himself by publishing a series of lying letters as evidence against the Church. His apostasy contributed to the organization of a mob that tarred and feathered Joseph Smith, and caused the death of one of his adopted children. (*Ibid*., 1:260-265.)”  (Roy W. Doxey, *The Doctrine and Covenants Speaks* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1964], 1: 512.)

“Both Isaac Morley and Ezra Booth were chastised for having ‘evil in their hearts’ (D&C 64:16), but unlike Booth, Morley repented and was forgiven. While he was also reproved for faultfinding and not selling his farm as he had been commanded (D&C 64:15-16, 20), he proved himself a man of conviction when he later offered his life as a ransom for the safety of the Saints in Missouri. Isaac Morley died in Sanpete County, Utah, after having been a great strength to the establishment of the Church in that area.” (Susan Easton Black et al., *Doctrines for Exaltation: The 1989 Sperry Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], 118.)

**DC 64:17 Edward Partridge…hath sinned, and Satan seeketh to destroy his soul**

“Edward Partridge and Isaac Morley were still in Missouri when Doctrine and Covenants 64 was received (see D&C 58:24), and they probably did not learn of its contents for weeks. Thus the Lord said of them, ‘When these things are made known unto them…, they shall be forgiven.’ The specific sins referred to here are not known, but the Lord had warned Edward scarcely a month before to repent of his ‘unbelief and blindness of heart’ or he would fall (D&C 58:15).” (Stephen E. Robinson, H. Dean Garrett, *A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2001] 2:215)

**DC 64:18, 26 Sidney Gilbert…shall return…to his agency in the land of Zion**

Sidney Gilbert had been the main business partner of Newel K. Whitney and had extensive experience with the retail store in Kirtland. In section 53 he was called to go to Missouri with Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. While there he was commanded to set up a store as one of the foundations of the new Zion society. He was also called to act there as the agent for the Church for major business and land transactions (D&C 57:6-10). Having come back to Ohio with the Brethren, section 64 calls him to return to Missouri in order to set up a store and spend his first winter in the rugged circumstances that characterized the Missouri frontier.

**DC 64:20 Isaac Morley may not be tempted above that which he is able to bear**

**Bishop H. Burke Petersen**

“We will have no temptation or trial beyond our ability to overcome—He will provide a way for us to rise above—whatever it may be.

“May I suggest the best way I know to keep close to the source of this great strength is through prayer. No man can stand alone in his struggle through life. Sometimes in discouragement our prayers, at best, become occasional or maybe not at all. Sometimes we forget or just don't care. **Brigham Young**once said, 'Prayer keeps man from sin, and sin keeps man from prayer.'” (*LDS Church News, 1995*, 08/05/95)

**Joseph B. Wirthlin**

“You young people face the same temptations that have been common throughout history, plus many others that were unknown to earlier generations. However, be sure you understand that God will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability to resist. (See 1 Cor. 10:13.) He does not give you challenges that you cannot surmount. He will not ask more than you can do, but may ask right up to your limits so you can prove yourselves. The Lord will never forsake or abandon anyone. You may abandon him, but he will not abandon you. You never need to feel that you are alone.” (“Running Your Marathon,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 75)

**Neal A. Maxwell**

Paul, in writing to the saints in Corinth, reminded them that the temptations they had were common to man and to life. He then went on to assure them that God would not suffer them to be tempted above that which they were able to bear but would always make with the temptation a way to escape it so that it could be borne. (1 Corinthians 10:13.) Alma, a hemisphere away and over a century earlier, urged the people to pray “that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear.” (Alma 13:28.) The same words Paul used were used by the Lord centuries later when he said, “And again, I say unto you, that my servant Isaac Morley may not be tempted above that which he is able to bear.” (D&C 64:20.) A divine Father measures out our growth experiences according to our readiness and capacity to cope. Peter, writing in his second epistle, reassured all who would heed that “the Lord knoweth how to *deliver* the godly out of temptations.” (2 Peter 2:9. Italics added.) The practical counsel of James must always be heeded too: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.” (James 1:13.)

Obviously the prophets and apostles of different dispensations have written or spoken on these truths without consulting with each other to correlate what they were saying. They were correlated by that powerful and perfect correlator, the Holy Ghost.

We see this same interior consistency as the prophets of God assure us that we will not be tested with trials and tribulations beyond that which we can handle in life if we are righteous and prayerful. (*Things As They Really Are* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], 97.)

**DC 64:20-21 Isaac Morley’s farm to be sold, Frederick G. Williams commanded not to sell his farm**

The command for Isaac Morley’s farm to be sold was given in order to fund the purchase of lands in Zion (DC 63:29, 38-39). Initially, Brother Morley resisted this idea and was therefore rebuked by the Lord. In 1831, the farm had been a key gathering place for the saints.

“The Morley farm was a gathering place for the Smiths and many of the Saints coming from New York. After Joseph and Emma's arrival in Kirtland, they first stayed in the home of Newel and Elizabeth Whitney for a few weeks. After this they were invited to live on the Isaac and Lucy Morley farm. Here they made their residence until September 12, 1831, whereupon they moved to Hiram, Portage County, Ohio, to live with the John and Elsa Johnson family.” (Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith, Revised and Enhanced,*edited by Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], Chap. 38, footnote 12)

The command for the Morley farm to be sold while the Williams farm was to remain is symbolic of a new period in the history of the young church. The members were to be divided—some in Missouri and some in Ohio. Some farms would be sold; some would not. Some saints would go to Zion; some would remain in Ohio. Newel K. Whitney would retain his store in Kirtland while A. Sidney Gilbert would set one up in Missouri. The Williams farm, therefore, became the next natural gathering place.

“As a result of the flow of immigrants into Kirtland, there was a constant need for places to house them. Many resided with other Saints until they could secure homes of their own. The first major gathering place of the Saints in Kirtland was the Isaac Morley farm; although Morley moved to Missouri in 1831 and sold a portion of his land in Geauga County, he retained a tract of approximately eighty acres, which was farmed for a brief period by other members. Some members lived on the flats near the Newel K. Whitney store… the Frederick G. Williams and the Peter French farms on the plateau south of the meandering branch of the Chagrin River and decided to build a temple there, the main gathering place for the Saints in Kirtland shifted from the Morley farm and flats to the fertile land near the temple site.” (Milton V. Backman, Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830-1838* [Salt Lake City: Desert Book Co., 1983], 138.)

**DC 64:21 I, the Lord, will to retain a strong hold in the land of Kirtland, for the space of five years**

**Joseph Fielding Smith**

There were very significant reasons why the Lord desired to retain a strong hold upon Kirtland and its vicinity for five years. It was in that land where the first temple in this dispensation was to be built. In that Temple the essential keys of restoration were to be revealed. It seems apparent that had all the people moved to Zion in Missouri at that time, the building of a temple would have been frustrated by the enemies of the people. Opposition against them in Missouri was made known as soon as members of the Church began to arrive there. In 1833, they were driven from their homes and the persecution against them raged… The restoration of the keys of the Priesthood held by the ancient prophets was essential to the progress of the Church. The Lord decreed that a house to his name should be reared in Kirtland where he could come and where he could send his messengers with these keys of power… The revelation in which the Lord called upon the Saints to keep a strong hold in Kirtland, was given Sept. 11, 1831. It was in March 1836, that the house of the Lord was dedicated and the following April when these holy keys were bestowed. (*Church History and Modern Revelation,* 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946-1949], 2: 9 - 10.)

**DC 64:23 verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people**

**James E. Faust**

The Lord speaks of offerings in the plural. He expects us, as a condition of faithfulness, to pay our tithing and our fast offerings to help the poor and the needy. But we are privileged to make other offerings, not by way of assignment, assessment, or ecclesiastical direction. Among these are donations to the General Missionary Fund, Humanitarian Aid Fund, and the Book of Mormon Fund. We are also privileged to voluntarily contribute to building the new temples President Hinckley has announced.

Recently I received an anonymous letter from a person who made a substantial sacrifice for the General Temple Fund of the Church. She said: “I decided when I wanted to spend any money on myself I would forgo it and put the money into the temple fund. This meant no new clothes or shoes, books, hair appointments, necklaces, or anything of a personal nature until I reached my goal. I thought this would be a sacrifice, but instead I have found joy in it. It has been a rewarding and fulfilling experience.”

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** once said, “A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation.” (“Opening the Windows of Heaven,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 59-60)

**Gordon B. Hinckley**

This is a day of sacrifice… If the burden ever seems heavy to you as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, you think of a statement once given by a friend of mine: “It’s true, isn’t it, and nothing else really matters.” (Duane Cardall, “News of the Church,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1979, 75)

**DC 64:23 he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming**

“The law of tithing, as understood today, had not been given to the Church previous to this revelation (D&C 119). The term ‘tithing’ in the prayer just quoted and in previous revelations (64:23; 85:3; 97:11) had meant not just one-tenth, but all free-will offerings, or contributions, to the Church funds. The Lord had previously given to the Church the law of consecration and stewardship of property, which members (chiefly the leading elders) entered into by a covenant that was to be everlasting. Because of failure on the part of many to abide by this covenant, the Lord withdrew it for a time, and gave instead the law of tithing to the whole Church.” (Introductory comments D&C 119)

Taken in this context, we can see why this explanation is placed where it is in this section. Isaac Morley was being asked to sell his large farm—a sacrifice and offering much greater than one tenth. What would such a consecration bring to Brother Morley? It would bring the guarantee that he would survive the destructions attendant to the Second Coming.

For many decades, saints have interpreted this passage to mean that those that keep the law of tithing, as currently understood, are guaranteed not to be burned at his coming. While this may be true, it is important to understand that at the time the revelation was given, the Lord was speaking of those saints who were willing to offer their properties as part of the greater law of consecration, not the lesser law of tithing as practiced today.

**Joseph Fielding Smith**

There are many who accept this declaration merely as a figure of speech; but it is a statement given in complete earnestness and solemnity. The people of the Lord have always been called upon to sacrifice. This is an essential principle of the Gospel. Likewise they are instructed to pay their tithes and offerings. It is a very strange thing that there are those in the Church who seem to feel that it will be a happy day when the law of consecration is established, yet they do not keep the law of tithing. They seem to think that it will be much simpler and more easy to obey the law of consecration than it will be to observe the law of tithing. We may say, however that it is extremely doubtful if any person who could pay tithes honestly and does not do so, will ever have the privilege of partaking of the law of consecration. How can we live the higher law, if we cannot live the lesser law?

Again, it is not a figure of speech that is meaningless, or one not to be taken literally when the Lord speaks of the burning. All through the scriptures we have the word of the Lord that at his coming the wicked and the rebellious will be as stubble and will be consumed. (*Church History and Modern Revelation,* 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946-1949], 2: 11.)

**Gordon B. Hinckley**

Some years ago one of our brethren spoke of the payment of tithing as “fire insurance.” That statement evoked laughter. Nonetheless, the word of the Lord is clear that those who do not keep the commandments and observe the laws of God shall be burned at the time of his coming. For that shall be a day of judgment and a day of sifting, a day of separating the good from the evil. I would venture a personal opinion that no event has occurred in all the history of the earth as dreadful as will be the day of the Second Coming—no event as fraught with the destructive forces of nature, as consequential for the nations of the earth, as terrible for the wicked, or as wonderful for the righteous. (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 576.)

**DC 64:24 all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up**

**George Q. Cannon**

The earth will be visited by fire. President Smith yesterday told us that “he that is tithed shall not be burned (at His coming.”) I believe that there will be literal fire come upon the earth, and calamities and destructions of so universal a character that the earth will be burned, so to speak, so that there will be but few men left. (*Conference Report, October 1897*, Afternoon Session .)

**A. Theodore Tuttle**

For those who say “We're not going to burn,” it would be prudent to remember that it wasn't raining when Noah built the ark! (*Conference Report, April 1970*, Afternoon Meeting 86.)

**DC 64:25 labor while it is called today**

**Marion G. Romney**

I have in my heart a desire to emphasize the importance of doing the will of God now while today lasts. Perhaps more hangs upon what a man does during the short period of his mortal probation than upon his performance in any other period of equal duration since the spirit hosts took sides in the great war in heaven. (*Conference Report, April 1954*, Afternoon Meeting 133.)

**George Albert Smith**

This is our day, our generation, and we had better learn to live and to “labor while it is called today,” being mindful of each day's opportunities and obligations. The far future may be better. We doubt not that it will. But when the future comes, it will be called the “present.” When tomorrow comes, it will be called “today.” “This.... is the day for men to perform their labors.” And one of the great gifts of life—one of the surest sources of happiness—is the power to appreciate the present. (*Conference Report, October 1950*, Afternoon Meeting 106.)

**DC 64:26 it is not meet that my servants, Newel K. Whitney and Sidney Gilbert, should sell their store**

“This verse provides an opportunity to illustrate the lack of remembrance of Algernon [Sidney Gilbert] by the modern Latter-day Saint. The store mentioned by the Lord in this revelation passed through many owners until it was purchased by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1979. The Church authorized the beginning of research and restoration on the building in 1983. Historical documents and diaries were used to provide authentic detail for the reconstruction. Upon completion of the construction, the store was dedicated on 25 August 1984 by President Ezra Taft Benson. The purchase, restoration, dedication, and United States Presidential citation presented to the Church for its historic preservation of the store are commendable. Nonetheless, an omission exists. No mention was made of Algernon Sidney Gilbert as the co-owner with Whitney in the store's reconstruction, dedication, or citation. The title of their store was N. K. Whitney and Company. The ‘and Company’ was Gilbert.” (Susan Easton Black, *The Heavens Are Open: The 1992 Sperry Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants and Church History*, Byron R. Merrill et al., comps.,  [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993], 52 - 53.)

**DC 64:27 you are forbidden to get in debt to thine enemies**

**Franklin D. Richards**

**President Brigham Young** repeatedly counseled the Saints to get out of debt and stay out of debt. Other Latter-day Prophets have given similar counsel. **President Joseph F. Smith** told the Saints, “Get out of debt and keep out of debt, and then you will be financially as well as spiritually free.”

**President Heber J. Grant** said in one of his sermons, “If there is any one thing that will bring peace and contentment into the human heart and into the family, it is to live within our means; and if there is one thing that is grinding, and discouraging and disheartening, it is to have debts and obligations that one cannot meet.” (Relief Society Magazine, Vol. 19, page 302.) (*Conference Report, October 1966*, Afternoon Meeting)

**DC 64:29 ye are on the Lord’s errand; and whatever ye do…is the Lord’s business**

**Harold B. Lee**

When one becomes a holder of the priesthood, he becomes an agent of the Lord. He should think of his calling as though he were on the Lord's errand. That is what it means to magnify the priesthood. Think of the Master asking each of you, as this young boy did of Joseph and Mary, Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? Whatever you do according to the will of the Lord is the Lord's business. (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], 255.)

**Bruce R. McConkie**

We are engaged in our Father's business. Our Father's business is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man (Moses 1:39). We do not have anything to do with bringing to pass immortality. That comes as a free gift to all men because of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. (1 Cor. 15:22.) But we have a very great deal to do with bringing to pass eternal life for ourselves and for our brethren and sisters and in offering it to our Father's other children (Philip. 2:12; Morm. 9:27)… And so we bring to pass, in a sense, the eternal life of men by persuading them to conform to the standards that the Lord has set. (*Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie*[Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1998], 320.)

**DC 64:33 be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work**

**Joseph B. Wirthlin**

A major reason this church has grown from its humble beginnings to its current strength is the faithfulness and devotion of millions of humble and devoted [members]… He encourages us to “be not weary in well-doing, for [we] are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.” May we be faithful in fulfilling the duties of whatever calling we have in the kingdom. Let us pay heed to the “small things” that make all the difference. Let us be faithful in keeping the commandments as we have made sacred covenants to do. As our heritage and our growth clearly show, we are, indeed, “laying the foundation of a great work.”

Let us dedicate ourselves to doing the Lord’s work to the best of our abilities. May we honor the faith of our fathers by giving our own faithful service to this great cause. (“Faith of Our Fathers,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 34)

**Thomas S. Monson**

We must not be weary in well doing. Should we feel our contribution in this sacred work is small or insignificant, we remember that “the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.” Is it any wonder that when we receive a testimony of this work, we desire to give so much to its progress and its advancement? Barriers evaporate as mists before the morning sun. When we perform our work with abiding faith, we will qualify for the desired blessings. (“Happy Birthday,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1995, 59)

**Spencer W. Kimball**

We must not falter nor weary in well-doing. We must lengthen our stride. Not only is our own eternal welfare at stake, but also the eternal welfare of many of our brothers and sisters who are not now members of this, the true Church. I thrill to the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith in a letter that he sent to the Church from Nauvoo on September 6, 1842: “Shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward. … Courage … and on, on to the victory!” (D&C 128:22.) (“The Lord Expects Righteousness,”*Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 6)

**DC 64:33 out of small things proceedeth that which is great**

**Wilford Woodruff**

On Sunday night the Prophet called on all who held the Priesthood to gather into the little log school house they had there. It was a small house, perhaps 14 feet square. But it held the whole of the priesthood of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were then in the town of Kirtland. … When we got together the Prophet called upon the Elders of Israel with him to bear testimony of this work. … When they got through the Prophet said, “Brethren I have been very much edified and instructed in your testimonies here tonight. But I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother’s lap. You don’t comprehend it. … [It] will fill North and South America—it will fill the world.” (In *Conference Report*, 6 April 1898, p. 57; see also*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, ed. G. Homer Durham, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946, 1990, pp. 30–31, citing Millennial Star 54[1892]:605.)

**DC 64:34 the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind**

**Chieko N. Okazaki**

It doesn't say that the Lord requires competence, or a Ph.D. or immaculate housekeeping, or professional success. But it doesn't say that he'll be satisfied with a half-hearted you, either. He wants your whole heart, and for good reason. Real power does not lie in external forces, but in the heart. (*Lighten Up!* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993], 69.)

**Marvin J. Ashton**

A willing heart describes one who desires to please the Lord and to serve His cause first. He serves the Lord on the Lord’s terms, not his own. There are no restrictions to where or how he will serve.

As one who has tendered calls to serve to many, I am always pleased to see members willing to give their time, energy, and effort to the upbuilding of the Church. They do so for one primary reason—to serve the Lord with all their heart, might, mind, and strength. (“The Measure of Our Hearts,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 16)

**DC 64:35 the rebellious shall be cut off out of the land of Zion, and shall be sent away**

**Orson Pratt**

When this revelation was given all was peace in Jackson County. We had no enemies there any more than we had elsewhere, wherever the Church might be located; all was comparative peace. But the Lord said that the rebellious should be plucked up and sent away out of the land. The people thought there was no prospect whatever of that revelation being fulfilled. All was peace, and to say that they were to be plucked up and driven out of the land was out of the question. They did not repent, that is all of them, but continued in their disobedience, neglecting to consecrate their properties, according to the requirements of the law of the Lord; and hence, when they had been there about two years and five months from the time of their first settlement or location, they were literally plucked up and cast away out of the land. You have the history before you. Their enemies arose upon them and began to tear down their houses, and they burned two hundred and three of the dwellings our people had built in that land. They burned down their grain stacks, hay stacks and fences, and chased the Latter-day Saints around from one part of the county to another, sometimes tying them up to trees and whipping them, in some instances until their bowels gushed out. They tore down the printing office and destroyed it, also one of our dry goods stores, and scattered the goods through the streets; they went into houses and, taking therefrom the bedding and furniture, piled them up in the streets and set fire to them, and thus they continued their persecutions until, finally, they succeeded in driving the Latter-day Saints from the county, and thus the word of the Lord was fulfilled which said—“I will pluck them up and send them away out of the land, for none but the obedient shall eat of the good of the land of latter Zion in these latter days.” (*Journal of Discourses,*26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 17: 109.)

**DC 64:36 the rebellious are not of the blood of Ephraim**

“’Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people,’ declared the prophet Hosea (Hos. 7:8). Ephraim ‘was scattered more than any other among the people of other nations,’ and though he exists as a distinct tribe among the others of the ten lost tribes, yet he has posterity among the known nations of the earth today (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*,  3:250-54). ‘At this present time,’ declared **President Joseph Fielding Smith**, ‘most of those who are receiving the gospel are of the tribe of Ephraim’ (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5:70).

“It is Ephraim's responsibility to preach the gospel to the inhabitants of the earth today, and when the lost tribes come back, ‘they will have to receive the crowning blessings from their brother Ephraim, the firstborn in Israel’ (*Doctrines of Salvation,* 3:252-53). The Lord has said of this tribe that ‘the rebellious are not of the blood of Ephraim’ (D&C 64:36). Those of this tribe might be said to have the ‘believing blood.’” (Hoyt W. Brewster, Jr., *Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia*[Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 158.)

**Joseph Fielding Smith**

Ephraim has a wonderful mission to perform in this day. For one hundred years he has faithfully been performing his mission. It is proper that he stand in his place at the head, exercising the birthright in Israel. The Gospel is being preached by Ephraim to the nations. It was essential, therefore, that Ephraim be the first gathered, for he it is who is to prepare the way for the other tribes of Israel. We are led to believe, through the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, that the vast majority of those who have received the Gospel are of Ephraim. It is an exception to find one of some other tribe. Yet we do have representatives from other tribes. (*The Way to Perfection*[Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1949], 122 - 123.)

**Brigham Young**

It is Ephraim that I've been searching for all the days of my preaching, and that is the blood which ran in my veins when I embraced the Gospel. (George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1965], 326 - 327.)

**Joseph F. Smith**

A striking peculiarity of the Saints gathered from all parts of the earth is that they are almost universally of the blood of Ephraim. If they have received the Holy Ghost they are of one spirit. (*Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith,* compiled by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], 115.)

**DC 64:41 Zion shall flourish, and the glory of the Lord shall be upon her**

“In addition, Zion was and is to be the focus, the convergence, and the concentration of all that is good, all that is ennobling, all that is instructive and inspirational. In Zion all things are to be gathered together in one in Christ (see Eph. 1:10). In short, according to **President Brigham Young**, ‘every accomplishment, every polished grace, every useful attainment in mathematics, music, in all science and art belong to the Saints’ (in *Journal of Discourses*10:224). The Saints ‘rapidly collect the intelligence that is bestowed upon the nations,’ President Young said on another occasion, ‘for all this intelligence belongs to Zion’ (in ibid.8:279).” (Joseph Fielding McConkie,*Joseph Smith: The Choice Seer*[Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], chap. 22)

**Brigham Young**

We talk and read about Zion, we contemplate upon it, and in our imaginations we reach forth to grasp something that is transcendent in heavenly beauty, excellency and glory. But while contemplating the future greatness of Zion, do we realize that we are the pioneers of that future greatness and glory? Do we realize that if we enjoy a Zion in time or in eternity, we must make it for ourselves? That all who have a Zion in the eternities of the gods organized, framed, consolidated, and perfected it themselves, and consequently are entitled to enjoy it. (*Journal of Discourses,*26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 9: 282 - 283.)

**DC 64:42 she shall be an ensign unto the people**

“The promise of a flourishing Zion is given, a Zion filled with the glory of the Lord, but Zion must also serve as an ‘ensign’ to the people, a light to the world. (D&C 64:41-42.) The Lord's people can be a light only if they are different from the world. They must be a peculiar, holy people, or the ensign cannot stand high enough for the nations to flow unto it. A people who are to serve as an ensign must be obedient, not rebellious, anxiously engaged, unified, and so forth. In short, they must follow the counsel given by the Lord through Joseph Smith in the revelations already discussed. (S. Michael Wilcox, *Doctrines for Exaltation: The 1989 Sperry Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants,*ed. by Susan Easton Black [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], 252.)