

leaders truly do counsel in righteousness, thus enabling him to walk upon safe ground.

I pray that each of us might be more humble and desirous of receiving and obeying counsel. May each of us seek not to counsel the Lord, but seek counsel from his hand and from his inspired priesthood leaders, *as it is the same*. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Gene R. Cook of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who is Supervisor of the Andes Area, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Sterling W. Sill of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

He will be followed by Elder Joseph Anderson of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Sterling W. Sill

Of the First Quorum of the Seventy

Sometime ago I read a very helpful book written by New York psychiatrist Smiley Blanton, under the title of *The Healing Power of Poetry* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1960). In his book Dr. Blanton explains how for forty years he had used great ideas to heal people of their emotional difficulties and psychiatric problems. These ideas were not all in poetic form. He also used the great scriptures, the great prose, and the great hymns.

I suppose this healing power of the psychiatrist might be related to the practice of a medical doctor who writes prescriptions for people to be filled not at drugstores but at bookstores, for he has discovered that there is frequently more healing power in books than in bottles. A mother heals the bumps and bruises of her children by her caresses and her loving expressions of sympathy.

As I meditated upon these healing procedures, I tried to understand some of the things that Jesus may have had in mind when he said, "Physician, heal thyself." (Luke 4:23.) And I think he was giving us the detail of one method for handling this healing power when he instructed Emma Smith to make a selection of the inspiring hymns to be

regularly run through our minds and hearts.

Celestial thoughts develop celestial minds

I recently went to the library and obtained a copy of this little book, which I hold in my hand, which is a compilation of the ninety hymns selected by Emma Smith for our benefit. (*A Collection of Sacred Hymns, for the Church of the Latter Day Saints*, Kirtland, Ohio: F.G. Williams and Co., 1835. Available on microfilm in the Church Historical Department, Salt Lake City.) And because each of us has a different set of needs and a different set of interests, it seems to me that each one of us ought to make his own selection of hymns and then see to it that each one is thoroughly memorized and enthusiastically appreciated so that we may get the maximum from their healing message as well as their growing and saving power.

William James, the great Harvard psychologist, once asked this question, how would you like to create your own mind? But isn't that about what usually happens? Professor James explains that

the mind is made up by what it feeds upon. He said that the mind, like the dyer's hand, is colored by what it holds. If I hold in my hand a sponge full of purple dye, my hand becomes purple. And if I hold in my mind and heart great ideas of faith and enthusiasm, my whole personality is changed accordingly.

If we think negative thoughts, we develop negative minds. If we think depraved thoughts, we develop depraved minds. On the other hand, if we think celestial thoughts, which are the kind of thoughts that God thinks, then we develop celestial minds and fulfill the meditation of Edward Dyer when he wrote:

*My mind to me a kingdom is,
Such present joys therein I find,
That it excels all other bliss
That earth affords or grows by kind.*
("My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is,"
Poet's Gold, comp. David Ross,
New York: Gold Label Books,
1937, p. 41.)

Poetry of sympathy

We develop our own godliness at the funerals of our loved ones when we listen to inspiring music, hear sacred prayers, comfort the bereaved, and stimulate ourselves with the greatest ideas. Recently a bereaved couple came into my office to tell me about their little three-year-old daughter who, without warning, died suddenly before their eyes. Of course the parents were heart-broken. They had shed many tears but their pain had not gone away, and they wanted to release their tensions by talking with someone. We all understand that we can heal others by listening sympathetically to an expression of their grief. It helped me to help them by remembering that as a very young man I sat at the bedside of my little seven-year-old sister, whom I loved very much, while she died of diphtheria.

The mother of this other little girl felt that there could be nothing quite so

terrible as for her beautiful little daughter to die almost before she had begun to live. And I could understand her pain. But finally I said to her, "Sister Jones, if you think it would help, I think I can tell you something that would be worse than your present trouble." She said, "If you know of anything worse, I would like to hear about it." So I recited for her James Whitcomb Riley's poem entitled "Bereaved." This was not the bereavement of one whose child had died, it was the bereavement of one who had no children. This sorrowful person said to her bereaved friend:

*Let me come in where you sit weeping,
ay,
Let me, who have no child to die,
Weep with you for the [loss of that] little
one whose love
I have known nothing of.*

*[Let me imagine those] little arms that
slowly, slowly loosed
Their pressure round your neck; those
hands you used
To kiss. [Such arms] such hands I never
knew.*

*[For them will you not let me come and
weep with you?]*

*[Out of an empty heart it may be that I
can say some thing,*

*Between the tears, that [may] be
comforting.]*

*[For] ah! [how] sadder than yourself am
I,
Who [weep alone, because I] have no
child to die.*

*(The Complete Poetical Works of James
Whitcomb Riley, New York:
Grosset and Dunlap, 1937, p. 444.)*

I am very grateful to Mr. Riley for these stimulating thoughts. And he inspired me to compile my own book of ideas to heal those who are bereaved.

Poetry of courage

There is also a poetry of courage. For many years Grantland Rice, the fa-

mous sportswriter, traveled around the country attending the great athletic contests, trying to isolate those traits that made athletes into champions. And then to make these traits negotiable in other lives, he wrote some seven hundred poems about the qualities that made people great. One of these he entitled "Courage." He said:

*I'd like to think that I can look at death
and smile, and say
All I have left now is my final breath;
take that away,
And you must either leave me dust or
dreams or in far flight
The soul that wanders where the stardust
streams through endless night.*

But, said he:

*I'd rather think that I can look at life
with this to say:
Send what you will of struggle or of
strife, blue skies or gray,
I'll stand against the final charge of hate
by peak and pit
And nothing in the steel-clad fist of fate
can make me quit.*

"O My Father"

It has been said that the poets stand next to the prophets in their ability to lift us up. I have never heard of Eliza R. Snow being sustained as a prophet, and yet she wrote "O My Father." Sometimes we merely read these great lyrics out of the hymnbook instead of memorizing them and loving them and frequently saying them over to ourselves. Just think what would happen in the world if each person made his own selection of those ninety great poems of faith that most thrill him. I am sure that this afternoon you would not like to hear me try to sing "O My Father," but I hope you will not object if I recite to you those great words of faith and worship, wherein Sister Snow said:

*O my Father, thou that dwellest
In the high and glorious place,*

*When shall I regain thy presence,
And again behold thy face?
In thy holy habitation,
Did my spirit once reside?
In my first primeval childhood,
Was I nurtured near thy side?*

In the second verse, she said:
*For a wise and glorious purpose
Thou hast placed me here on earth,
And withheld the recollection
Of my former friends and birth.
Yet oftentimes a secret something
Whispered, "You're a stranger here";
And I felt that I had wandered
From a more exalted sphere.*

Verse three:

*I had learned to call thee Father,
Through thy Spirit from on high,
But until the key of knowledge
Was restored, I knew not why.
In the heavens are parents single?
No; the thought makes reason stare!
Truth is reason, truth eternal
Tells me I've a mother there.*

Verse four:

*When I leave this frail existence,
When I lay this mortal by,
Father, Mother, may I meet you
In your royal courts on high?
Then, at length, when I've completed
All you sent me forth to do,
With your mutual approbation
Let me come and dwell with you.
(Hymns, no. 138.)*

It might be difficult to find very many passages, even among the prophets, with more healing power than this.

Value of poetry

Just think what would happen in our lives if each of us memorized a goodly number of the poems of love. The Library of Congress has one section entitled The Poems of Faith and Freedom. The Lord said, "For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea,

the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads." (D&C 25:12.)

As I walk to work each morning, I have almost an hour wherein I can think the ideas that most stimulate me. And I have some other prayers to which I enjoy giving expression. In one of these, I pray:

*Oh God I thank thee for each sight
Of beauty that thy world doth give.
For sunny sky and air and light,
Oh, God, I thank thee that I live*

*That life I consecrate to thee
And ever as the day is born
On wings of joy my soul doth flee
And thank thee for another morn.*

*Another morn in which to cast
Some silent deed of love abroad,
That great'ning as it journeys past
May do some earnest work for God.*
(Anonymous)

Then I have collected another set of the poetry of success, the poetry of enthusiasm, the poetry of industry, and the poetry of progress. Someone has said:

*To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
[And every man may give his life
For something good and great.]*

*And how can man die better
Than in facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his gods.*
(Adapted from Horatius, "Stanza XXVII of a Lay Made in 392," *Lays of Ancient Rome*, ed. Thomas Babington Macaulay, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912, p. 12.)

As we get older, we may have new difficulties arise, and I like to encourage

myself by paraphrasing some ideas under the title "Carry On."

*Things may not look well
But then you never can tell,
So carry on, old man, carry on.
Be proud of your mission,
Greet life with a cheer,
Give it all that you've got
That's why you are here.
Fight the good fight
And be true to the end,
And at last when you die
Let this be your cry:
Carry on, my soul, carry on.*

(See Robert Service, "Carry On!" in *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*, ed. James D. Morrison, New York: Harper and Row, 1948, pp. 307-8.)

And I would like to extend to each of you my own blessing and appreciation in the words adapted from an old Irish poem used by some of the people of that land as they attempted to heal and enrich those they loved by praying:

*May the road rise up to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
And the rain fall gently in your fields,
And now and forever may God hold you
Lovingly in the hollow of His hand.*

And that it may always be so I sincerely pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Sterling W. Sill of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Joseph Anderson, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, following which the Choir and congregation will sing, "Now Let Us Rejoice."