

teaching, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew 7:12), should be the basis for all human relationships.

The Lord is very clear about the conduct he expects from the inhabitants of this earth. Nephi declared:

"And again, the Lord God hath commanded that men should not murder; . . . should not lie; . . . should not steal; . . . should not take the name of the Lord . . . in vain; . . . should not envy; . . . should not have malice; . . . should not contend one with another; . . . should not commit whoredoms; . . . for whoso doeth them shall perish.

"For none of these iniquities come of the Lord; for he doeth that which is good among the children of men; . . . and . . . inviteth . . . all to come unto him and partake of, his goodness" (2 Nephi 26:32-33).

Rededicate ourselves

The time is now to rededicate our lives to eternal ideals and values, to make those changes that we may need to make in our own lives and conduct to conform to the Savior's teachings.

From the beginning to the end of His ministry, Jesus asked His followers to adopt new, higher standards in contrast to their former ways. As believers, they were to live by a spiritual and moral code that would separate them not only from the rest of the world but also even from some of their traditions. He asks nothing less of those who follow Him today.

Do we really believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, and virtuous? On this test may hinge the survival of our society, our constitutional government, and our eternal salvation.

I so declare, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Praise to the Man" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight has just spoken to us, and the chorus has sung "Praise to the Man."

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

The Balm of Gilead

Some years ago, I spoke at this pulpit and entitled my talk "The Balm of Gilead." The response was surprising. That very day two lawsuits were settled. One or both of the litigants decided that what they might gain materially was not worth the cost spiritually.

I wish to repeat much of what I said then.

In ancient times there came from Gilead, beyond the Jordan, an ointment made from the gum of a tree. It was a major commodity in trade. The Ishmaelite traders who purchased Joseph from his brothers were carrying this

balm of Gilead to Egypt (see Genesis 37:25).

It became symbolic for the power to soothe and to heal.

*There is a Balm in Gilead,
To make the wounded whole,
There is a Balm in Gilead,
To heal the sin sick soul.*

(Recreational Songs [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1949], p. 130)

My message was then, and is now, an appeal to those who are not at peace, those whose lives are touched with bit-

terness, with hostility, or with resentment. It is a plea to those who anxiously struggle with worry, or with grief or disappointment, with guilt, or with shame.

We see so much unnecessary suffering, so many who cripple themselves spiritually carrying burdens which could be put down. Many suffer from real misfortune and injustice. Sadly, some only imagine that they do. In either case, self-inflicted penalties soon become cruel and unusual punishment.

Problems of self-justification

If the burden is guilt, then repentance is the Balm of Gilead.

Some, however, seek to cure guilt with self-justification, a quack medicine which only covers the symptoms; it will never cure the cause. Self-justification leads one to blame another for his mistakes.

For example, when you seek financial gain, you may be tempted by others to miscalculate, even ignore, risks. When things go wrong—and they can go wrong even in carefully managed affairs—some look for others to blame. They want some “deep pocket” to make them whole. They want someone else to carry their responsibility like the scapegoat of Old Testament times, which was ceremonially burdened with the sins of others and left to wander in the wilderness.

They have little difficulty finding some attorney willing to act as high priest in transferring their responsibility to someone else. They file suit with little or no merit, intending to force others to settle in order to avoid the unconscionable cost of defending themselves in court.

There is no dishonor in appealing to a court of law for either justice or protection. I refer to those who do so to justify themselves and shift their own responsibility to someone else.

Such efforts are successful often enough to permit self-serving lawyers to convince yet another client that he

need not honor his own commitments. The word *integrity* becomes tarnished by counsel and client alike. And there follows that long trail of acrimony with brother against brother over property or money.

Be careful lest you yourself become the goat and carry unseen spiritual burdens into the wilderness. More serious by far than the loss of property or money are the unseen spiritual penalties which accrue like interest on a debt which one day, in the eternal scheme of things, must surely be paid.

More painful to be the offender

I read somewhere of a young couple who settled in the wilderness. While the man cleared the land, his wife tended things about the homestead. Occasionally, the cow would get into the garden, and the husband would complain.

One day, as he left to get supplies, he said in a sarcastic way, “Do you think you’ll be able to keep the cow in while I am gone?” She thought she could; she would try.

That night a terrible storm arose. Frightened by thunder, the cow escaped into the woods. Several days later the husband returned to an empty cabin and an apologetic note: “A storm came up, and the cow got out. I am so sorry, but I think I can find her.”

He searched; neither had survived. The author concluded the incident with these words:

*Boys flying kites haul in their
white-winged birds;
You can call back your kites, but
you can't call back your words.
“Careful with fire” is good advice,
we know;
“Careful with words” is ten times
doubly so.
Thoughts unexpressed will often
fall back dead.
But God Himself can't kill them,
once they are said!*
(Will Carleton, *The First Settler's
Story*)

It is painful to be the victim. But have you not yet learned how much more painful it is to be the offender?

How precious is that spiritual balm of Gilead, for there is a spirit in man.

“John, leave it alone”

There are spiritual disorders and spiritual diseases that can cause intense suffering.

If you suffer from worry, from grief or shame or jealousy or disappointment or envy, from self-recrimination or self-justification, consider this lesson taught to me many years ago by a patriarch. He was as saintly a man as I have ever known. He was steady and serene, with a deep spiritual strength that many drew upon.

He knew just how to minister to others who were suffering. On a number of occasions I was present when he gave blessings to those who were sick or who were otherwise afflicted. His was a life of service, both to the Church and to his community.

He had presided over one of the missions of the Church and always looked forward to the missionary reunions. When he was older, he was not able to drive at night, and I offered to take him to the reunions. That modest gesture was repaid a thousandfold.

On one occasion, when the Spirit was right, he gave me a lesson for my life from an experience in his own. Although I thought I had known him, he told me things about his life I would not have supposed.

He grew up in a little community with a desire to make something of himself. He struggled to get an education.

He married his sweetheart, and presently everything was just right. He was well employed, with a bright future. They were deeply in love, and she was expecting their first child.

The night the baby was to be born, there were complications. The only

doctor was somewhere in the countryside tending to the sick.

After many hours of labor, the condition of the mother-to-be became desperate.

Finally the doctor was located. In the emergency, he acted quickly and soon had things in order. The baby was born and the crisis, it appeared, was over.

Some days later, the young mother died from the very infection that the doctor had been treating at another home that night.

John's world was shattered. Everything was not right now; everything was all wrong. He had lost his wife. He had no way to tend both the baby and his work.

As the weeks wore on, his grief festered. “That doctor should not be allowed to practice,” he would say. “He brought that infection to my wife. If he had been careful, she would be alive today.”

He thought of little else, and in his bitterness, he became threatening. Today, no doubt, he would have been pressed by many others to file a malpractice suit. And there are lawyers who would see in his pitiable condition only one ingredient—money!

But that was another day, and one night a knock came at his door. A little girl said simply, “Daddy wants you to come over. He wants to talk to you.”

“Daddy” was the stake president. A grieving, heartbroken young man went to see his spiritual leader.

This spiritual shepherd had been watching his flock and had something to say to him.

The counsel from that wise servant was simply, “John, leave it alone. Nothing you do about it will bring her back. Anything you do will make it worse. John, leave it alone.”

My friend told me then that this had been his trial—his Gethsemane. How could he leave it alone? Right was right! A terrible wrong had been committed and somebody must pay for it. It was a clear case.

But he struggled in agony to get hold of himself. And finally, he determined that whatever else the issues were, he should be obedient.

Obedience is powerful spiritual medicine. It comes close to being a cure-all.

He determined to follow the counsel of that wise spiritual leader. He would leave it alone.

Then he told me, "I was an old man before I understood! It was not until I was an old man that I could finally see a poor country doctor—overworked, underpaid, run ragged from patient to patient, with little medicine, no hospital, few instruments, struggling to save lives, and succeeding for the most part.

"He had come in a moment of crisis, when two lives hung in the balance, and had acted without delay.

"I was an old man," he repeated, "before I finally understood! I would have ruined my life," he said, "and the lives of others."

Many times he had thanked the Lord on his knees for a wise spiritual leader who counseled simply, "John, leave it alone."

And that is the counsel I bring again to you. If you have a festering grudge, if you are involved in an acrimonious dispute, "Behold what the scripture says [and it says it fifty times and more]—man shall not smite, neither shall he judge; for judgment is mine, saith the Lord, and vengeance is mine also, and I will repay" (Mormon 8:20).

I say, therefore, "John, leave it alone. Mary, leave it alone."

Prayer

If you need a transfusion of spiritual strength, then just ask for it. We call that prayer. Prayer is powerful spiritual medicine. The instructions for its use are found in the scriptures.

One of our sacred hymns carries this message:

Ere you left your room this morning,

Did you think to pray? . . .

When your soul was full of sorrow,

Balm of Gilead did you borrow

At the gates of day?

Oh, how praying rests the weary!

Prayer will change the night to day.

So, when life gets dark and dreary,

Don't forget to pray.

("Did You Think to Pray?" Hymns [1985], no. 140)

Forgive others and yourself

Some frustrations we must endure without really solving the problem. Some things that ought to be put in order are not put in order because we cannot control them. Things we cannot solve, we must survive.

If you resent someone for something he has done—or failed to do—forget it.

Too often the things we carry are petty, even stupid. If you are still upset after all these years because Aunt Clara didn't come to your wedding reception, why don't you grow up and forget it?

If you brood constantly over a loss or a past mistake, look ahead—settle it.

We call that forgiveness. Forgiveness is powerful spiritual medicine. To extend forgiveness, that soothing balm, to those who have offended you is to heal. And, more difficult yet, when the need is there, forgive yourself!

I repeat, "John, leave it alone. Mary, leave it alone."

Purge and cleanse and soothe your soul and your heart and your mind and that of others.

The peace of a cleansed soul

A cloud will then be lifted, a beam cast from your eye. There will come that peace which surpasseth understanding.

The Lord said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

"If ye love me, keep my commandments.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:15-18).

I bear witness of Him who is that comfort, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Boyd K. Packer, for that impressive message.

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "O Divine Redeemer."

The benediction will then be given by Elder John K. Carmack of the First Quorum of the Seventy. This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The chorus sang "O Divine Redeemer."

Elder John K. Carmack offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 157th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 3, 1987, at 2:00 P.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by a Primary children's choir from the Sandy region. Patricia Swanson conducted, and John Longhurst was at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Monson made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

My beloved brethren and sisters, President Ezra Taft Benson has asked that I conduct this, the second general session of the 157th Semiannual Gen-

eral Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio, and many who are watching in stake centers throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

At the same time we express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

We note that Elders Franklin D. Richards and F. Arthur Kay are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

The music for this session will be provided by a Primary children's choir from the Sandy Utah Region, under the