

trines are true, that the Lord God is raining down righteousness upon his people, and that he will continue to do so until that perfect day when they know all things and become as he is. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder John H. Groberg of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

He will be followed by Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder John H. Groberg

My dear brothers and sisters, I ask for your faith and prayers that the Lord's Spirit might touch our hearts as together we consider an item vital to our happiness here and hereafter.

One of the greatest needs of mankind generally and of all of us individually is to have more and stronger faith in our Creator. To know that he is literally our Father and that he is kind and just and understands us and knows our needs is one of the greatest treasures we can possess. This treasure is obtained by faith—strong faith.

Faith to be tested

Now it may seem easy to have faith in God when things are going well. But the law of growth requires constant effort and stretching. Thus, in order to have our faith strengthened, it must be stretched and tried and tested.

One of the areas of testing that comes to many of us is when something occurs over which we apparently have little or no control and which to us seems unfair.

For example, I have always been moved as I have seen those who are required to operate on less than their full faculties. I, along with some of you, have asked the question, Why? On many occasions when an accident has occurred, or a terrible illness, or an un-

timely death, or when a mentally retarded or physically handicapped child has been born, or some other seemingly difficult-to-explain situation has taken place, people have come to me and to others wanting reassurance.

I, along with you, have taken great consolation in the scriptures as they tell us that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father knowing. (See Matt. 10:29.) We believe the scriptures, but when it happens to *our* loved one or *our* friend, the question of why still rings. I do not have all the answers, but hopefully the following experience, which happened several years ago, may be helpful to some who are still battling the question of why.

Help for stricken infant

On a small Pacific island an infant girl was born to a faithful family. They called her Felila. There was happiness and joy as this grateful spirit made her debut into mortal life, but soon there were problems. Her head was abnormally large. The doctors diagnosed it as hydrocephalus. The questions of brain damage, of normalcy, of other problems all raised their haunting heads. After much fasting and prayer the elders quorum president approached the branch president, who in turn talked with the district president, who after adequate

checking came to me as the mission president to see if there were some additional help available.

The medical authorities were consulted, and it was determined that there was little if anything they could do locally. Letters were written, information was sent back and forth, x-rays were taken and analyzed. There was so much to do—so many questions to be answered, so many pieces to fit together. Finally after exasperatingly long delays, things began to fall into place. A family in Salt Lake agreed to accept full responsibility for the infant, even if it meant years of outpatient care; the doctors agreed on the possibility of her eventual recovery; the hospital accepted the case on a service basis; funds were raised for her air fare; some local travelers arranged their schedules to bring her right to the hospital. But there were other problems—visas, health certificates, reservations, passports.

All during these trying days the family, and the elders quorum, and even the whole branch continued to fast and pray. The time of departure of the infrequent airplane grew near.

One morning, amidst myriads of other pressing matters, I had the strong impression that I must take the time *now* and put forth the extra effort required to get everything done so she could go. I got on the overseas telephone. The consulate finally agreed to issue a visa; the airlines made a special reservation; the passport people agreed to waive the normal regulations; others gave that extra effort and cooperation; and soon all was in order.

Normally I would have sent someone to bring the family in to sign the final papers, but again I felt strongly impressed that I should personally go and see the branch president. I located him in the early afternoon near the school where he was teaching. He was standing alone outside as though he were waiting for me.

Excitedly I ran up to him: "Guess what? It's all set. Miraculously everything has worked out and Felila can

leave tomorrow. Please get word to the family immediately."

Felila called home

His calm, penetrating gaze quelled my exuberance. "It's true," I said. "I know it's been long and there have been lots of disappointments, but she really is going now. What's the matter?"

His steady gaze seemed to penetrate my very soul. Then softly in his liquid native tongue he informed me that when all the preparations had been made, when the hearts of so many had been stretched in service, when the goal of unity and selflessness had been achieved in those many hearts, when all had made the final commitment of others above self, at the height of all this activity that very morning, little Felila had quietly and unobtrusively slipped away—gone to that better care which so many had fasted and prayed and worked so long and hard for her to receive.

Gone? This morning? But all that work, all that time, all that fasting and praying and those strong feelings. Gone? No!

Without once shifting his gaze, he, having more faith than I, offered a few words of truth and encouragement, then quietly turned and rejoined his class.

Life is eternal

And I was left alone, or so it seemed. I moved slowly and heavily down that dusty trail. Why? Why? After all that work and that strong faith of so many and those impressions, why?

I sensed the brightness of the sun and felt the warmth of the breeze as it lazily tossed the palm leaves and slowly shifted the silent clouds against the clear blue sky. A feeling came over me. I realized that the earth was beautiful, that life went on and was eternal. And while I cannot describe fully what happened next, part of the experience is proper to relate. The best explanation is contained in the phrase, "I was over-

come by the Spirit." It was as though one took me by the hand and led me to a high place and stood by me and said, "Look." And I looked and beheld such beauty and magnificence as man cannot conceive. And I heard a voice, such a tender, compassionate voice—yet so unmistakably powerful—that all nature stood still and listened and obeyed.

"Come home, Felila, my daughter. Come home to the care your loved ones have sought for you. I have heard their prayers and have known their fasting and love for you, and I answer. Come home, my daughter. You have finished your mission in life. Hearts have been softened; souls have been stretched; faith has been increased. Come home now, Felila."

He knew her! He knew her name. He knew all about her and about all those others. How perfect our Father's love! He had heard the prayers. He had done what was best. He knew everything—which thing, though I believed, I never had supposed. In some marvelous way, which is beyond our mortal comprehension, he knows and understands all things.

My questions as to why—as to justice and reasons—were all at that moment completely swept away. They were so irrelevant, my questioning so totally out of place, like one trying to dig the Grand Canyon with a teaspoon.

Total and complete justice

Oh, how we must remember the words of Jacob as he said:

"Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God. . . .

"Seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand. For behold, ye yourselves know that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in

great mercy, over all his works." (Jac. 4:8, 10.)

I testify that there is total and complete justice in eternity. God's dealings with man have no tinge of partiality or of favoritism or of capriciousness or of anything less than complete consistency and balance and perfectness.

Some say, "But it has been years. We have fasted and prayed so long and so hard. What does the Lord expect?"

There may be many answers. I give only one. That is: He expects more, and it will be for your eternal benefit and blessing. That I know. As we begin to comprehend eternity, we gain a whole new catalog of values.

The Lord understands

To you who have the responsibility and the privilege and the opportunity of caring for others, may you through those long hours and days and years ever know, as I know, that the Lord understands.

Do not be discouraged; do not attempt to counsel the Lord. He determines, not you. He knows hearts and souls and needs. He measures intents and knows spirits.

Caring is all-important—the intensity, the duration, the amount, the quality, the extent. For in God's wisdom, caring creates faith.

Oh, may we all have a little Felila in our lives—and there are so many: the retarded, the infirm, those needing special help, both spiritually and physically, the aged, the infants,—all these to soften our hearts in love, to stretch our souls in tenderness, to confirm our worth in caring for others, and above all to strengthen our faith in him who knows all, even him who in caring totally gave his all, and in giving his all, lives forever, and in living forever, rules eternally, and in ruling eternally, cares omnipotently, whose coming and going is one eternal round I pray in his name, even the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.