

There is no power on the earth like it. Its authority extends beyond life, through the veil of death, to the eternities ahead. It is everlasting in its consequences.

### **"Fitly framed together"**

These great God-given gifts are the unshakable cornerstones which anchor The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as well as the individual testimonies and convictions of its members: (1) the reality and the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God; (2) the sublime vision given the Prophet Joseph Smith of the Father and the Son, ushering in the dispensation of the fulness of times; (3) the Book of Mormon as the word of God speaking in declaration of the divinity of the Savior; and (4) the priesthood of God divinely conferred to be exercised in righteousness for the blessing of our Father's children.

Each of these cornerstones is related to the other, each connected by a foundation of Apostles and prophets, all tied to the chief cornerstone, Jesus Christ. On this has been established his Church, "fitly framed together," for the blessing of all who will partake of its offering. (See Ephesians 2:21.)

So undergirded beneath and fitly framed above, it stands as the creation of the Almighty. It is a shelter from the storms of life. It is a refuge of peace for those in distress. It is a house of succor for those in need. It is the conservator of eternal truth and the teacher of the divine will. It is the true and living Church of the Master.

### **Testimony**

Of these things I give solemn testimony, bearing witness to all within the sound of my voice that God has spoken again to open this final glorious dispensation; that his Church is here, the Church which carries the name of his Beloved Son; that there has come from the earth the record of an ancient people bearing witness to this generation of the work of the Almighty; that the everlasting priesthood is among men for their blessing and the governance of his work; that this is the true and living Church of Jesus Christ, brought forth for the blessing of all who will receive its message; that it is immovably established on a foundation of Apostles and prophets, with cornerstones of unshakable firmness put in place by him for the accomplishment of his eternal purposes, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.

Of such was the faith of our fathers. Of such is our faith. "Faith of our fathers, holy faith. We will be true to thee till death!" ("Faith of Our Fathers" in *Hymns*, 1985 ed.). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The Choir sang "Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still" without announcement.

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### **President Hinckley**

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still."

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

## **Elder James E. Faust**

With a prayer in my heart for understanding, and with some timidity, I speak today concerning parents and children with special problems. I do so

because I am persuaded that these extraordinary challenges are, as the Savior himself said, that "the works of God should be made manifest"

(John 9:3). How these challenges are met can often be the expression of the very essence of the gospel of Christ.

### **The special ones**

It is a common sight in our congregations to have a small group of people near the front who communicate by the graceful motion of the hands as well as by the Spirit. They are people who cannot hear. Always some kind and gifted soul sits in front of the group and lovingly converts the sounds and syllables into distinguishable motions.

Recently in a large meeting, we were touched to observe the hearing-impaired members singing the hymns in parts through the motion of their hands. When the bass and tenor parts were sung, the hands of the sisters were motionless; when the soprano and alto parts were sung, the hands of the brethren were still. To me it was a very touching sight.

Those who are without hearing are some of the special ones among us, as are the people who do not have sight and those who have other physical or mental limitations.

### **Superhuman nurturing care**

I wish to say a word of appreciation for those among us who struggle with handicaps, and impart a message of comfort to their families, especially to the parents. Where in all of the world is the son or daughter of God who is totally without blemish? Is life not worth living if it is not perfect? Do not the people with handicaps also bring their own special gifts to life—and to others who are free of those handicaps—in a manner that cannot come in any other way? There is hardly a family without one of its members who might be considered physically or mentally diminished. I have a great appreciation for those loving parents who stoically bear and overcome their anguish and heartbreak for a child who was born with or who has developed a serious mental or physical infirmity.

This anguish often continues every day, without relief, during the lifetime of the parent or the child. Not infrequently, parents are required to give superhuman nurturing care that never ceases, day or night. Many a mother's arms and heart have ached years on end, giving comfort and relieving the suffering of her special child.

The anguish of parents upon first learning that their child is not developing normally can be indescribable. The tearful concern, the questions about what the child will and will not be able to do are heartrending: "Doctor, will our child be able to talk, walk, care for himself?" Often there are no certain answers but one: "You will have to be grateful for whatever development your child achieves."

### **One day at a time**

The paramount concern is always how to care for the person who is handicapped. The burden of future nurturing can seem overwhelming. Looking ahead to the uncertain years or even to a lifetime of constant, backbreaking care may seem more than one can bear. There are often many tears before reality is acknowledged. Parents and family members can then begin to accept and take the burden a day at a time.

Said one great mother of a severely handicapped child: "I gradually began to take only one day at a time, and it didn't seem so hard. In fact, at the end of each day I would thank the Lord for the strength I had to get through that day and pray that tomorrow would be as good. That way I learned to love him and appreciate his place in our home."

### **Challenge in Jesus' time also**

A missionary writing to his parents said of his severely handicapped younger brother: "Mom, kiss Billy every day for me. In one of the discussions we learned that my little brother is an automatic winner of the kingdom of God. I only pray that I too may live with my Heavenly Father and see my

little brother and talk and converse with him. He's a special gift, and we are truly blessed."

The challenge of having handicapped people is not new. Many have questioned why some have such limitations. It was so in the time of Jesus:

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

"And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:1-3).

### Loving care and attention

How are the works of God manifest in these, our handicapped brothers and sisters? Surely they are manifested greatly in the loving care and attention given by parents, other family members, friends, and associates. The handicapped are not on trial. Those of us who live free of such limitations are the ones who are on trial. While those with handicaps cannot be measured in the same way as others, many of the handicapped benefit immensely from each accomplishment, no matter how small.

### Adjust and compensate

The handiwork of God is manifest with respect to the handicapped in many ways. It is demonstrated in the miraculous way in which many individuals with mental and physical impediments are able to adjust and compensate for their limitations. Occasionally, other senses become more functional and substitute for the impaired senses in a remarkable way. A young friend greatly retarded in speech and movement repaired a complicated clock although she had had no previous training or experience in watch or clock making.

Many of the special ones are superior in many ways. They, too, are in a life of progression, and new things un-

fold for them each day as with us all. They can be extraordinary in their faith and spirit. Some are able, through their prayers, to communicate with the infinite in a most remarkable way. Many have a pure faith in others and a powerful belief in God. They can give their spiritual strength to others around them.

### Afflictions are temporary

For the handicapped, trying to cope with life is often like trying to reach the unreachable. But recall the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith: "All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 354). Certainly, in the infinite mercy of God, those with physical and mental limitations will not remain so after the Resurrection. At this time, Alma says, "the spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame" (Alma 11:43). Afflictions, like mortality, are temporary.

Surely more sharing of the burden will contribute to the emotional salvation of the person who is the primary caregiver. Just an hour of help now and then would be appreciated. One mother of a child who is handicapped said, "I could never dream of going to Hawaii on a vacation; all I can hope for is to have an evening away from home."

The Savior's teaching that handicaps are not punishment for sin, either in the parents or the handicapped, can also be understood and applied in today's circumstances. How can it possibly be said that an innocent child born with a special problem is being punished? Why should parents who have kept themselves free from social disease, addicting chemicals, and other debilitating substances which might affect their offspring imagine that the birth of a disabled child is some form of divine disapproval? Usually, both

the parents and the children are blameless. The Savior of the world reminds us that God "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45).

### Love for handicapped

May I express a word of gratitude and appreciation to those many who minister with such kindness and skill to our handicapped people. Special commendation belongs to parents and family members who have cared for their own children with special needs in the loving atmosphere of their own home. The care of those who are diminished is a special service rendered to the Master himself, for "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . , ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

Parents of handicapped children are occasionally embarrassed or hurt by others who awkwardly express sympathy but cannot know or appreciate the depth of the parents' love for a handicapped child. Perhaps there is some comparison in the fact that there is no less love in families for the helpless infant who must be fed, bathed, and diapered than for the older but still dependent members. We love those we serve and who need us.

### Tolerance for differences

Is it not possible to look beyond the canes, the wheelchairs, the braces, and the crutches into the hearts of the people who have need of these aids? They are human beings and want only to be treated as ordinary people. They may appear different, move awkwardly, and speak haltingly, but they have the same feelings. They laugh, they cry, they know discouragement and hope. They do not want to be shunned. They want to be loved for what they are inside, without any prejudice for their impairment. Can there not be more tolerance for differences—

differences in capacity, differences in body and in mind?

Those who are close to the handicapped can frequently feel the nobility of the spirits who are confined in differently shaped bodies or who have crippled minds.

### To parents of the wayward

May I also say a word of comfort for the anguished parents of children who have lost their way and have turned a deaf ear to parental pleading and teaching. While much of the time most children follow in their parents' footsteps—obedient to their teachings, reciprocating their love—a few turn their backs like the prodigal son and waste their lives. The great principle of free agency is essential in fostering development, growth, and progress. It also permits the freedom to choose self-indulgence, wastefulness, and degradation. Children have their agency and often express it when very young. They may or may not follow the teachings and wishes of their parents. Most parents do the best they know how, but also understand well the words of Lehi: "Hear the words of a trembling parent" (2 Nephi 1:14).

We are indebted to Elder Howard W. Hunter for these wise words: "A successful parent is one who has loved, one who has sacrificed, and one who has cared for, taught, and ministered to the needs of a child. If you have done all of these and your child is still wayward or troublesome or worldly, it could well be that you are, nevertheless, a successful parent. Perhaps there are children who have come into the world that would challenge any set of parents under any set of circumstances. Likewise, perhaps there are others who would bless the lives of, and be a joy to, almost any father or mother" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1983, p. 65).

As caring parents we do the best we can. I am hopeful that in parenting God will judge at least partially by the intent of the parental hearts. Children have so much to learn. Parents need to

teach their children so many things. They are commanded to teach their children specifically "the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old" (D&C 68:25). But, having lived by these truths and having taught them in their home, parents cannot always ensure their children's good behavior. Said Ezekiel, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son" (Ezekiel 18:20).

Parents have the obligation to teach, not force, and having prayerfully and conscientiously taught, parents cannot be answerable for all their children's conduct. Obedient children do bring honor to their parents, but it is unfair to judge faithful parents by the actions of children who will not listen and follow. Parents do have the obligation to instruct, but children themselves have a responsibility to listen, to be obedient, and to perform as they have been taught. Parents are parents and usually serve their children more than the children serve their parents. To concerned parents I would paraphrase Winston Churchill: "Never give up, never give up, never, never, never."

### The works of God

I do not have any foolproof formula for the nurturing of children. Beyond being a good example and teaching faith, it is essential to give children unreserved love, to give measured discipline, and to try to instill self-mastery in them. A great mother who scrubbed floors to help her children through school said, "I taught my children to pray, to have good manners, and to work." The Lord reminds us that we should continually teach repentance, faith in Christ, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. (See D&C 68:25.)

The works of God are manifest in so many ways in the challenges of parents and children, especially to those who are handicapped and to those who have lost their way. For those who have asked, "Why did this happen to me?" or, "Why did this happen to my child?" there is assurance that the difficulty will not last forever. Life on this earth is not long. Caring for the unfortunate and laboring with the wayward is a manifestation of the pure love of Christ. For those who carry such a challenge in this life, God himself provides a response. That response is patience and the strength to endure. It lies, as Paul and Job testify, "in hope of eternal life, . . . promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2), "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7).

I bear witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world and the Redeemer of mankind. I testify that through obedience to His commandments we may enjoy the strength to triumph over every challenge of this life. May God grant this peaceful sustaining influence to all and especially to those in greatest need. I so pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "I Am a Child of God," following which we shall hear from Elder Royden G. Derrick of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The choir and congregation sang "I Am a Child of God."

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### President Hinckley

Elder Royden G. Derrick of the First Quorum of the Seventy and President of the Seattle Temple will now address us.