I clenched and unclenched my fists as I stood, back bent, over the crib where the newest member of our household lay sleeping peacefully. I watched the rise and fall of that tiny chested eight-pound and one-half ounce baby sister of ours and suddenly I felt an intense anger surging over my entire being; all five-foot-eleven and one-half inches of me. How could God allow such a thing? How? My fists by now were knotted into tight, white-
knuckled balls so hard that I felt the pressure of the finger nails cutting into the palms of my hands.

Rose Ellen gave out a little sigh, for what reason I didn't have the vaguest idea whatever. Then a faint baby smile tugged ever so gently at the corner of her mouth and I wanted to scream. To shout, even, Why? Why, God?

A tear slid from the corner of my eye. I unclenched my fists and, with a hasty motion, I brushed it away. She looked so much like a rose; a delicate and fragile rose, this infant sister. She had pale pink complexion and satin-soft skin. Her name fit her perfectly; beautifully, even . . . Rose Ellen. She was not only lovely like the rose but, lying there so tiny, so helpless, so dependent, she was fragile like the rose, too. So, Rose fit my baby sister perfectly. And Ellen did also. Ellen sounded quaintly but comfortably old-fashioned to my ears. Yes, the name fit this tiny bundle of humanity and of flesh and blood as much as the perfectly-shaped fingers became her tiny hands. Her nose was tiny, tiny and slightly turned up, giving her a look of utter irresistibility, and her ears looked like two beautiful, pink lima beans. She was so perfectly shaped and formed. But . . . but . . Oh, no. No! It couldn't be. The doctor's diagnosis must be wrong. All wrong. It had to be. It just had to be!

"God, why? Why?" I asked aloud, trying to make myself believe that Rose Ellen was, now, and would always be, just as normal as all the rest of us . . . five, to be exact and explicit, not counting Mom and Dad.

I felt like sobbing. But sobbing, for a seventeen-year-old, isn't exactly the greatest thing to do. Especially when the seventeen-year-old is a boy. For so long as I can remember, I wanted a little sister. Not that I didn't like my brothers; I did, and I do. Deeply so. But somehow, with the arrival of each of my four brothers, I always longed (secretly) for a sister. But, coming to think of it, that was also the sentiment of my three brothers younger than I was. Marc didn't express his feelings, if he had any, as to preference of male or female; he was too little for such as that to concern him. After all, a three-and-one-half-year-old's mind is busy with thinking thoughts of his puppy, his toys and his parents. So for him, Rose Ellen's arrival meant merely that there was a tiny new baby who had come to live at our house and for Marc, be it boy or girl, he was satisfied with either one. Justin, however, and Kenny and
Jon, had been ecstatic with joy at hearing that, finally, a baby sister had arrived to live at our house.

Thinking back now to Doctor Murphy's declaration that Rose Ellen was blind and may even be retarded to some extent, brought fresh tears to my eyes. I recalled the look of horror on Justin's face at hearing the words. "Blind!" my fifteen-year-old brother had exclaimed in shock "Blind!" Again he repeated the horrid word.

"And possibly retarded!" I had added with equal disbelief and horror. It was as though a sentence of death had been pronounced upon my beautiful but helpless sister. The much-longed-for, long-desired sister.

Kenny, almost twelve, and Jon, closer to eight than seven, took the news in stride and, after a pitying look at Rose Ellen and a lingering caress upon her petal-soft cheeks, each raced outside to resume their game of ball playing. They adjusted to, and accepted, the situation in true boyish fashion, stating that "Jesus can make Rose Ellen well." Justin too, accepted the fact with a quiet faith, so indicative of him and his spiritually mature self.

"Oh God!" I cried over my sister's softly heaving body. "I thought You loved little children! You said the kingdom of Heaven was made up of these. Surely . . . surely . . . You could have prevented this! Why, God? Why did You allow it to happen? It's cruel. Cruel! Rose Ellen doesn't deserve this. She has the right to see and . . . and to be normal, just like other people."

My fists were clenched again, I realized with a sudden, shuddering fear. Never, not ever, in all of my life had I felt angry with God. Nor had I ever charged Him and His Wisdom foolishly either. To me, and to my way of thinking and my careful upbringing, God did nothing but what was for our good and for His glory. And now, operating upon that premise . . . that deeply-instilled and ingrained thought . . . I could see nothing at all for either our good nor God's glory. Nothing whatever. Everything was darkness and despair from my spectrum of the scenario. It was as though we had suddenly been plunged into a tunnel of such darkness and gloom and horror as to never see light again.

Tears spilled from my eyes now. I let them fall freely, not bothering to wipe them away. I was sobbing. Not merely because of Rose Ellen's condition, either; my heart smote me for my attitude toward God. My charges
against Him! Him, the friend of sinners; the sacrificial Lamb of God Who "taketh away the sins of the world"! I, a mere creature-worm of the dust, fashioned, formed and molded by Him, was accusing and charging the Creator-Fashioner, foolishly. Yea, more than foolishly; wickedly!

A shudder tore my mannish frame and a plea of mercy . . . a cry from the heart . . . escaped my lips. My eyes became hot-flowing pools of penitent tears. "Forgive! Forgive me!" I cried in anguish of soul and heart and mind. "I deserve Your judgment; Your wrath, my God. But, please, have mercy upon me! I'm sorry, dear God. Sorry! Forgive me, please! Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation. . . ." An overwhelming, overflowing joy flooded and filled my soul. I was fully, completely and wondrously restored. My horrible sins were forgiven. I rejoiced with an inexpressible joy in my soul.

When I was able to contain myself, I heard His Voice. Oh, how comforting, how gentle and wonderful it was! "Son," He said.

A wave of fresh glory swept over me. Son! He had called me son! After the way I had treated Him and reacted to the news about my innocent sister! Son!

I was humbled. Humbled! Such Love! Such pity! Such mercy! For me. Me. With hands raised toward Heaven, I gave vent to my feelings with a shout of victory and freedom. I was liberated. Set free.

"Son." His Voice arrested my attention. "You wanted a sister, didn't you?"

"Yes, dear Lord. Yes."

"I sent her, didn't I?"

"Yes, You did. I. . . ."

"What is the ultimate purpose of life, Jason?" He asked gently. Softly.

"To learn to love God with one's entire being: Body, soul, mind and strength," I remarked upward.
"Does one have to be able to see to love Me; to serve Me with all of his heart?"

The question, while arresting my most careful attention, was so simple, so elementary, and so simply asked, as to make me hang my head in shame. In that moment of time, with the question illuminating my heart and mind and the Questioner's very presence lingering sweetly in the room, I knew that Rose Ellen's condition was no mere happening: God had known before her arrival into our family that my sister was blind. It had come as no surprise to Him: He had fashioned and created the tiny little bundle of humanity lying before me. And, in terms of eternity, it made no difference if one was imperfect in body. The all-important thing was for one to be a child of God and to make Heaven his home.

I touched Rose Ellen's cheek ever so lightly. A lovely half-smile spread across her face. It was like a sunbeam had caressed me: For the first time, since I heard and knew what the doctor had said, the sun began to shine for me, regarding my sister. Tears began flowing down my cheeks. "Jason. . . ."

I jerked to attention. I hadn't heard my mother come into the room. I turned and looked at her.

"God doeth all things well," Mother was saying. "I have been praying much for you. Bitterness is a dreadful thing to harbor in one's heart, It's deadly, Jason."

I put my hands upon my mother's shoulders. With tears of joy running down my cheeks, I exclaimed brokenly, "It's all gone, Mother. Every bit of it, gone! I repented and confessed; I'm forgiven. Restored. My soul found its forgiveness and peace in Jesus. And, yes, God does do all things well. Perhaps I can't understand the why of this, nor the wherefore either, but I am convinced of His All-rightness in spite of my failure to comprehend."

Tears ran down my mother's cheeks. I knew it had to have been a grievous and burdensome thing on both her and Father, as well. Yet neither ever stated as much nor hinted at such. I alone was the sole accuser-complainer. But not anymore. No, not anymore; I was changed. Converted.

"We have so very much to be thankful for," my mother was saying between broken sobs. "The doctor called this afternoon. He said the latest
tests on Rose Ellen are conclusive: She is perfectly normal mentally. There is no retardation whatever. We are truly blest! In spite of her blindness, Rose Ellen will grow and develop normally in every other way, the Lord willing. And, Jason, she, too, will grow up to love the Lord and Savior just as all of you children have..."

"Until bitterness drove Him out of my heart," I reminded my mother sadly.

"We must forget those things which are behind, Son. You have begun anew in Christ. Your father and I need your help more than ever now. And Rose Ellen needs your help, too. Your love, Jason. Your strength."

I was crying unashamedly now. With my arm around Mom's shoulders, I squeezed Rose Ellen's tiny hand, saying brokenly, "By God's grace, I'll help you in every way possible, Mother. And... and Rose Ellen too."

She left the room then, and I stood, alone, over the crib. Sightless people, I had read, had been endowed by God with numerous other acute sensibilities. Rather, I guess I should have said their other senses seemed greatly heightened and accentuated.

With a new awareness and a sense of awakening, I saw great possibilities for this tiny little sister of mine. Hadn't a Fanny Crosby blest an entire world with her poetry and her songs? The secret was entirely upon an individual yielding his or her life, with no reservations whatever, to Christ.

To this end, by the grace of God, I dedicated myself to do all within my power to help to guide my sister. I knew that after I had had my personal Pentecost and had died out completely and entirely to self, this would be a willing and a pleasant thing to do. Help my sister, I mean; but not stifle her God-given talents and abilities by being over-helpful.

Suddenly, a song filled my heart. I felt happy and light. The ways of God were past finding out. I was thankful that I didn't know the answer to all His whys. Nor His ways. He knew; that was all that mattered. And always, it was the best. His knowledge was perfect. Infinite. I knew I could rest forever in this confidence. I had learned an invaluable, never-to-be-forgotten lesson. My sister was God's instrument of teaching.