

NATURE

AS OUR LESSON BOOK



“But ask now the beasts and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.” Job 12:7-8.

How can man find out the character of God or learn the secrets of God? The character of God is revealed in His writings, and all these secrets of God cannot be found out without God’s help, of how sin entered into the world, the incarnation of Christ, the resurrection of Christ and many other things. Man is not able to discover these truths with his own knowledge; it is a mystery, and for this reason proof is given by God in His Word. Around us are many great mysteries of God that man can not understand by his own knowledge. Some things that man thinks are simple, are great things of God.

Common to this age are people who live, thinking they are the rulers of themselves. They do not realize that this is wrong thinking. It is good to hear and obey that which is explained in the Holy Bible.

Meaningful Counsel

“Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength... where no counsel is, the people fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety... But he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise... But to the counsellors of peace is joy... without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established... Every purpose is established by counsel.” Proverbs 8:14; 11:14; 12:14,20; 15:22; 20:18.

In all things, listen and do God’s will and your success will be a cheerful experience. On this subject, there is a phrase in the Tamil language that says, the gooseberry tastes bitter first, and then you taste flavor. So the advice of God first tastes bitter to young people, and then they taste flavor afterwards.

For lessons that come from God and through His nature, it is our humble duty to give heed to it, for it is our duty if we expect to become worthy men. The Bible tells us if do not heed the God’s teaching, it is considered a great sin. Adam and Eve ate the fruit, rejecting the warning of the Creator, and because of this sin entered in this world.

Even if a man receives a high education, he should look upon himself that he is a man poor in knowledge and accept valuable advice from God. It is man’s nature to think or say that he is highly educated, and a brilliant scholar. God teaches us many lessons through nature. We have many sources from nature where we can collect knowledge; some examples are animals, birds, earth, and fish in the sea.

We Learn From Animals

Animals were created on the fifth and sixth day and we can learn from them. From the small ant to the big elephant, lessons can be learned.

Man has invented scientific devices to be able to detect earthquakes before they occur. At the same time the animals, who have no knowledge of these inventions are

able to sense an earthquake before it occurs and are able to escape from its destruction.

If we listen to the daily news, we hear of monkeys milking puppies, the dog milking the young lion, the cat and rat both milking together. What a wonder this is. Some animals are able to live together without any fear in this age of increased knowledge. But where has this type of love and unity gone from man? Why do we see brother against brother, and parents against children? In looking at mankind, Jesus speaks truth and peace and says the following, “And a man’s foes will be those of his own household” Mathew 10:36; Micah 7:6.

For those who understood the truth very well and have known the love of Christ, and turn away from it, it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the proverb, “The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and a sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” I Peter 2:21, 22; Proverbs 26:11.

Man must work very hard to receive his daily needs. Slothful hands refuse to labor. Because slothfulness casts one into a deep sleep, “He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand.” Proverbs 21:25; 19:15; 10:4 This type of person shows no interest in doing any work. “The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets. The slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.” Proverbs 26:13, 15.

From which source may these people receive knowledge? What is said about this in the Bible? "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." Proverbs 6:6-11.



Man can learn valuable lessons from a small ant. "There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid." Proverbs 30: 18,19. These are four things which are little on the earth, but they are exceedingly wise. "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; The conies are but a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet they go forth all of them by bands; the spider, taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces. Proverbs 30:24-28. These are lessons we can learn from animals.

We Learn From Birds

We can learn lessons also from birds. According to continual changes in the atmosphere, birds also change their dwelling places to other continents with a suitable atmosphere and stay there. Birds rise early in the morning and sing praises to the Lord who created them. Often an alarm is necessary for man to know that dawn has come. So likewise is the early

morning singing of the birds. While the birds rise and sing early in the morning, giving warning to man that it is dawn, the man may still be sleeping. "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open your eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread... And drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." Proverbs 20:13; 23:21.

Each different bird has different instincts. And from this man can learn. Sharing takes place in nature; in the life of a family of crows, they do not eat available food alone, but call others also to share it. We can learn from this practice. "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another." 1 Corinthians 11:33.

More than a man cares for his own children, our Lord heartily cares for His children. "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Psalm 34:10. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithall shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Matthew 6: 31, 32. "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" Matthew 6:26.

In this age of increased knowledge, technology related to communication is greatly increased. In past ages man used birds and animals as the medium of communication. Messages were carried by birds and animals. Looking at the birds flying, man was inspired to invent aircraft. "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as



the doves to their windows?" Isaiah 60:8

Oh living mankind! Please turn back to the past, as to how they lived together without any harm to one other in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve who were there, lived happily in communion with God and nature.

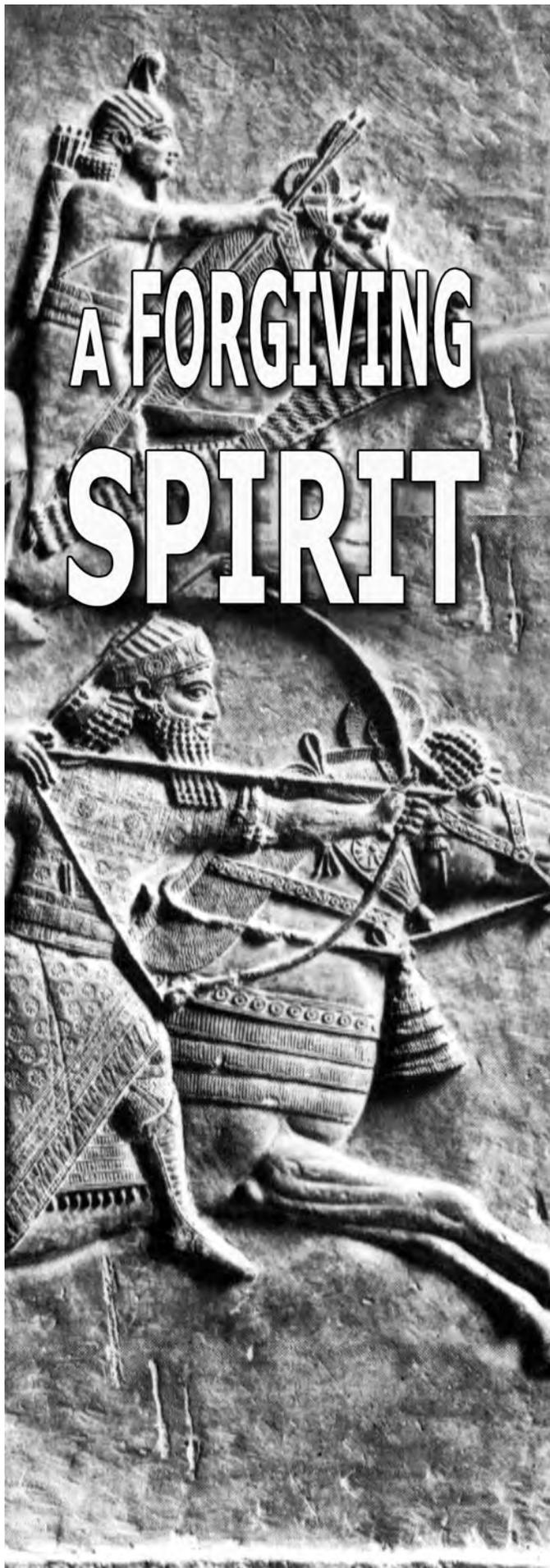
"Very happy were the holy pair in Eden. Unlimited control was given them over every living thing. The lion and the lamb sported together peacefully and harmlessly around them, or slumbered at their feet. Birds of every variety of color



and plumage flitted among the trees and flowers, and about Adam and Eve, while their mellow toned music echoed among the trees in sweet accord to the praises of their Creator." 1 sp, p. 25.

Soon we shall we again come together and live happily, as it was in Eden, praising God, living in harmony with nature. We need to be praying and longing for that expected day to come soon! **Amen!!**

S. Raj Israel, India



“Forgive us our sins; for we forgive everyone who does us wrong.”
(Luke 11:4)

Forgiveness should start first from among us. Jesus teaches that we can receive forgiveness from God only as we forgive others. If we are unforgiving, we cut off the channel through which alone we can receive mercy from God. We should not think that unless those who have injured us confess the wrong we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. They have a part to play, confess and repent of their wrong deeds, we should be ready to forgive them always, for this is the fruit of the spirit which comes from love.

However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries; but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God we are to pardon all who have done evil to us. In Jesus’ death, He was done wrong by His enemies, but even to that extent he pleads to the Father for their forgiveness. So our character should be that of Christ because we are His followers, we should follow every step taken by Him.

“God’s forgiveness toward us lessens in no wise our duty to obey Him. So the spirit of forgiveness toward our fellow men does not lessen the claim of just obligation. In the prayer which Christ taught His disciples He said, ‘forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.’ (Matthew 6:12) By this He did not mean that in order to be forgiven our sins we must not require our just dues from our debtors. If they cannot pay, even though this may be the result of unwise management, they are not to be cast into prison, oppressed or even treated harshly.” (COL 247)

ELISHA & THE ASSYRIAN ARMY

In Elisha’s closing ministry, the King of Syria sought to destroy Elisha because of his activity in apprising the King of Israel of the plans of the enemy. All the Syrian plans were revealed to the prophet of God, Elisha and this made the King of Syria angry. So, he sought from his servants who may be revealing his plans to the King of Israel, and he was told that it was Elisha.

The Assyrian King was determined to make way with the prophet; he sent his servants to spy where Elisha lodged. After learning where he lodged they came by night, and compassed the city. When the servant of the man of God was risen early, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots.

“In terror Elisha’s servant sought him with the tidings. ‘Alas, my master’ he said, ‘how shall we do?’ ‘Fear not,’ was the answer of the prophet; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.’ And then, that the servant might know this for himself, ‘Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see.’ The Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.’ Between the servant of God and the hosts of armed foemen was an encircling band of heavenly angels.” (PK 256)

As Elisha’s servant saw this, he was now without fear. Elisha again prayed to the Lord so that the band might be smote with blindness, and the Lord did according to the word of Elisha. So Elisha led them to Samaria. As they reached there, Elisha prayed to the Lord that their eyes could be opened, and their eyes were opened and they saw, and

behold they were in the midst of Samaria.

“And the King of Israel said unto Elisha when he saw them, my father, shall I smite them? Shall I smite them? And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou has taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? Set water and bread before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. And he prepared them a great provision for them; and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master.” (2 King 6:22 - 23, PK 257)

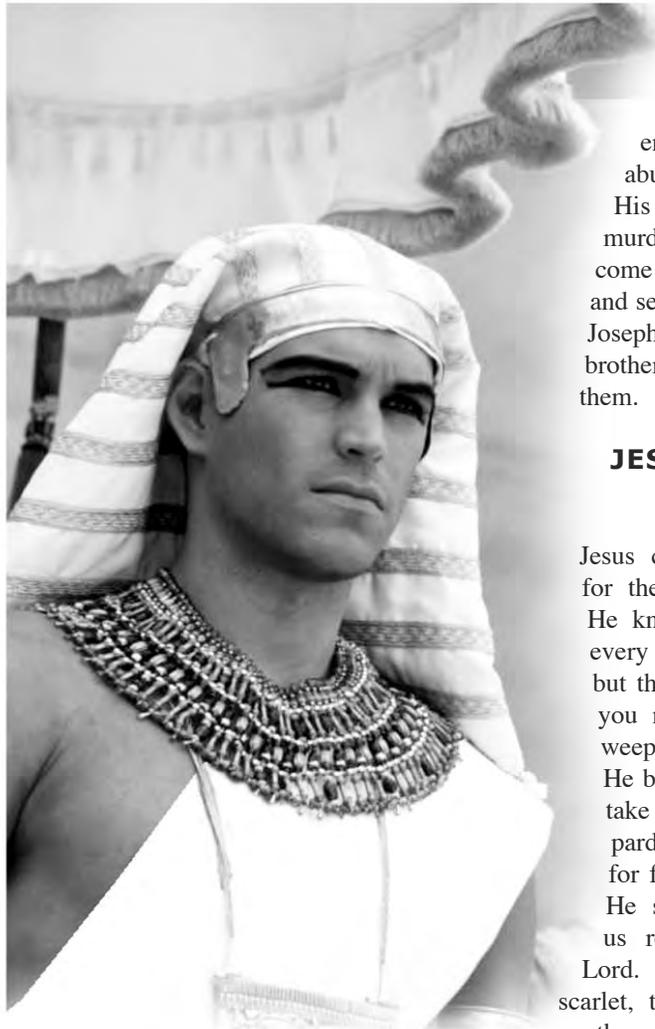
The enemies of Elisha were treated well; instead of being killed, the servant of God, Elisha, had compassion upon them and left them unharmed. He had power to destroy them all, because when he prayed to the Lord that they be smote with blindness, he could have killed them all. But he wanted them to learn that he was not doing his own will but God's. We are also to treat our enemies as Elisha did, to forgive and love them, not to count what they have done to us, or wronged us, but always to be forgiving, for this is the fruit of the spirit which comes from love.

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHER

“Please forgive the crime your brothers committed when they wronged you. Now please forgive us the wrong that we, the servants of your father's God, have done.” (Genesis 50:17 2nd Part)

These were Joseph's brothers pleading for forgiveness from their brother. They had done him wrong when they were still youths, but now being old people, they had come from their land because of famine. During the years since Joseph had been separated, his brothers were changed. Envious, turbulent, deceptive, cruel, revengeful, and unforgiving they were, but now when tested they were seen to be unselfish, true to one another.

While in Egypt, they were changed people from the old person to a new person. First, they asked for forgiveness from their old-aged father whom they had deceived for a long time, and their father forgave and blessed them. Now a part still remained for them to play, they were to ask for forgiveness from their brother. They feared that he might have delayed his revenge in



regard to their father, and that he would now visit upon them the long-deferred punishment for their crime.

After the burial of their father, fear filled their hearts, so they dared not to appear before him in person but sent a message; ‘Thy father did command before he died, saying, so shall ye say unto Joseph, forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their son; for they did unto thee evil; and now we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of God of thy father.’ This message affected Joseph to tears, and encouraged by this, his brothers came and fell down before him, with the words, ‘Behold we be thy servants. Joseph's love for his brothers was deep and unselfish, and he was pained at the thought that they could regard him as cherishing a spirit of revenge towards them. ‘Fear not, ‘he said, ‘for am I in the place of God.’... I will nourish you and your little ones.” (PP 239)

Joseph's life should be ours also for his patience and meekness under injustice and impression, his ready forgiveness and

noble benevolence toward his unnatural brothers, represents the Saviour's uncomplaining endurance and malice and abuse of the wicked men, and His forgiveness, not only of his murderers, but of all who have come to him confessing their sins and seeking pardon. So it is with Joseph, who gave pardon to his brothers and became a saviour to them.

JESUS' FORGIVING SPIRIT

Jesus calls us to come to Him for the forgiveness of our sins, He knows the circumstances of every soul. You may be a sinner; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He bids every trembling soul to take courage and he freely will pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. He says, ‘come now, and let us reason together,’ says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’ (Isaiah 1:18)

In the ministry of Jesus, we see how he healed and forgave many people of their sins. Even us, we are to forgive and follow the very steps of our Saviour Jesus Christ. The fact that we are under so great obligation to Christ, places us under the most sacred obligation to those whom he died to redeem. We are to manifest toward them the same sympathy, the same tender compassion and unselfish love, which Christ has manifested toward us. Selfish ambition, desire for supremacy, will die when Christ takes possession of the affections.

“Our Saviour taught His disciples to pray: ‘Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.’ A great blessing is here asked upon condition. We ourselves state these conditions. We ask that the mercy of God toward us may be measured by the mercy we extend to others. Jesus declares that this is the rule by which the Lord will deal with us: If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will forgive you: but

if you forgive not men, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses... We are dependent upon the pardoning mercy of God everyday and every hour; how then can we cherish bitterness and malice toward our fellow sinner! If in all their daily intercourse, Christians would be wrought in the church and in the world!" (ST 170)

Jesus alone cleanses from sin; He only can forgive our transgressions. He has pledged Himself to listen to the petition and grant the prayer of those who come to Him in faith. Many have a vague idea that they must make some wonderful effort in order to gain the favour of God. But all self dependence is in vain. It is only by connecting with Jesus through faith that we as sinners become hopeful, believing children. It is the same Jesus who forgave Mary who was looked upon as a great sinner. But Christ knew the circumstances that had shaped her life. Seven times she had heard His rebuke of the demon that controlled her heart and mind. She knew how offensive is sin to His unsullied purity, and in His strength she had to overcome.

We have also been called, only to accept that we are sinners. He is faithful to forgive us, as He forgave the woman who was brought to Him by the Pharisees and scribes accusing her of violating the Sixth commandment. "The woman had stood before Jesus, cowering with fear, His words, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone,' had come to her as a death sentence. She dared not lift her eyes to the Saviour's face, but silently awaited her doom. In astonishment she saw

her accusers depart speechless and confounded;

then those words of hope fell upon her ear, 'neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more.' Her heart was melted and she cast herself at the feet of Jesus, sobbing out her grateful love, and with bitter tears confessing her sins.

"This was to her the beginning of a new life, a life of purity and peace devoted to the service of God. In the uplifting of this fallen soul, Jesus performed a greater miracle than in healing the most grievous physical disease; He cured the spiritual malady which is unto death everlasting... In His act of pardoning this woman and encouraging her to live a better life, the character of Jesus shines forth in the beauty of perfect righteousness." (DA 462)

The same applies to us, for as He healed the physical malady and spiritual malady, He calls us to come to Him for forgiveness, for He shed His precious blood at Calvary for us. He is ready to forgive us, for our sins made His heart to break, for the heaviness of the sins, from the foundation of the earth to the end. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, filled the soul of His son. In all His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love.

He wants us to start a new life like the ones He healed and forgave of their sins. For even unto His death He forgave. He does not lessen the sense of guilt, He seeks not to condemn, but to save. He pities the weakness of the sinner and reaches to us a helping hand. Men hate the sinner, while

they love the sin. Christ hates the sin, but loves the sinner. This will be the spirit of all who follow Him. Christian love is slow to censure, quick to discern penitence, ready to forgive, to encourage to set the wanderer in the path of Holiness, and to stay his feet therein.

"The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His son into the world to be its Saviour." (COL 420)

"The souls that turn to him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No evil man or angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine nature. They stand beside the great sin bearer, in the light proceeding from the throne of God. 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.'" (Romans 8:33, 34. DA 568). **AMEN**
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What does the word NOTHING mean?

Nothing: means not a single thing – zero, nil.

Often in religious study and discussions we come across the word “nothing” and some have not taken this word “nothing” in its literal sense. They have interpreted it to mean “moderation.”

For example, many Christians see nothing wrong with drinking alcoholic beverages as long as it is in moderation, but the Bible clearly states in Proverbs 23:31, “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.” The word “not” is used here, but the meaning is clear that nothing, as far as alcoholic beverages are concerned, is to pass through our lips.

Many other counsels are given in the Bible, that are not fully heeded by Christians. In the Ten Commandments there are clear, “thou shalt not’s,” however some commandments are interpreted by citing situational ethics. Different situations and circumstances decide whether something is right or wrong. The most blatant one is killing. It is OK to kill in time of war, and the crimes go unpunished, but to do so outside the context of war is considered criminal. In some parts of the world such killing will bring about the death penalty to the murderer.

How do we, ourselves, interpret some of the counsels in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy where the word “nothing” is used? Are we in danger of changing these “nothing’s” into “moderations”?

For example, we can read in Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 180, “Nothing should be eaten between meals, no confectionery, nuts, fruits, or food of any kind.” Nothing – not even a crumb. While cooking, it is easy to take a taste occasionally, or to lick off the serving spoon. Nothing means nothing, zero. Why did God say “nothing” in this context? It was not merely to prohibit us from indulging in some of life’s pleasures, rather it was to inform us of one small, but important, instruction on how to keep the body preserved in the best possible health. That is the reason all the health laws were given. Not prohibitions, but rather instructions on how to maintain the best function possible from the human machinery.

POSITIVE NOTHING’S

“I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.” Eccl. 3:14 When God speaks, nothing can change His word. It is a serious thought... When He states that the sinner will perish for his sin if he refuses to repent, it will happen. However when God turns around and states that the sinner can receive forgiveness when he repents and accepts Jesus’ sacrifice for His sins, his sins will be cast into the depths of the sea, never more to resurface. That is also for ever. Nothing can change God’s word. He is the same, “yesterday, today and forever.”

The word “nothing” does not always carry a negative connotation. When God is talking it can convey a very powerful, positive and encouraging message, such as: “And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children’s of Israel.” Exodus 9:4 Did even one single cow die? Not even one. Nothing means, not even one. God kept His promise.

“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” Amos 3:7. Wonderful promise is given here. Nothing will take us by surprise on this earth. We have been given privileged information regarding the future events to come about on this earth. God says He will do nothing without revealing His plans to His people through His prophets beforehand. What confidence we can have in Him!

“Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:” Jer. 32:17

Not only do we serve a God for whom nothing is too hard or impossible, He has also passed this gift onto His faithful followers. “And Jesus said unto them... verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you..” Matthew 17:20. “Throughout the history of God’s people great mountains of difficulty, apparently insurmountable, have loomed up before those who were trying to carry out the purposes of Heaven. Such obstacles are permitted by the Lord as a test of faith. When we are hedged about on every side, this is the time above all others to trust in God and in the power of His Spirit. The exercise of a living faith means an increase of spiritual strength and the development of an unfaltering trust. It is thus that the soul becomes a conquering power. Before the demand of faith, the obstacles placed by Satan across the pathway of the Christian will disappear; for the powers of heaven will come to his aid.” PK 595/6

Just contemplate this thought for a moment... “nothing shall be impossible unto you.” Jesus said, “nothing,” and He meant it. Does that mean we can overcome any and all sin? Yes, we can. Nothing is impossible. Does that mean, we can do anything that God asks us to do? Is anything too hard for us? No, nothing. In Christ we can do all that God requires of us.

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Hebrews 13:5 What a beautiful promise this is. Jesus has promised never to leave

us. Never... That means we can enjoy His presence forever, always. “Satan will exercise his power over them in temptations, in discouragements, in afflictions of bodily infirmities, hoping that he can cause them to murmur against God and close their understanding to His goodness, mercy, and love, and the exceeding weight of glory that is to be the reward of the overcomer. But God is leading these souls to more perfect confidence in their heavenly Father. His eye is upon them every moment; and if they lift their cry to Him in faith, if they will stay their souls upon Him in their perplexities, the Lord will bring them forth as gold purified.” 6T 156/7

TREASURES OF WICKEDNESS

Then on the other hand, the Lord lets us know that there is no profit under the sun in continuing a life of sin. Nothing.

“Treasures of wickedness profit nothing; but righteousness delivereth from death.” Proverbs 10:2. You may be rich in the eyes of the world, through the providence of Satan, by using wicked methods, but it will profit you nothing when Jesus comes. And also, “There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.” Proverbs 13:7. Our reward in heaven is greater than all the sacrifices we’ve made on this earth.

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Mark 8:36. The answer to this question is, nothing. This thought is worth contemplation also. Are we living according to God’s will without turning any “nothing’s” into “moderation’s”? If not, what will it profit us when Jesus comes?

WHEN ARE YOU NOTHING?

Mankind thinks they are so wise and intelligent, with all the modern inventions and conveniences they are inventing. They believe the evolutionary theory that was introduced by Charles Darwin in the 19th century, and think mankind is steadily rising to a higher level of intelligence. However in the eyes of God, it is exactly the opposite. What is this planet in the eyes of the universe? It is simply a speck in the vast expanse of the heavens where live a race of beings in open rebellion against their Maker. It could be seen as nothing.

Nothing of apparent importance, that is. It is a speck that has caused a lot of pain, sorrow and heartache, not only on this earth, but in the entire universe when they witnessed the sorrow and death of their beloved Jesus.

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.” Matthew 5:13. In Christ only do we have value. Without Christ, we are like the salt with no savour, which is good for nothing. “But if the salt has lost its savour; if there is only a profession of godliness, without the love of Christ, there is no power for good. The life can exert no saving influence upon the world. Your energy and efficiency in the upbuilding of My kingdom, Jesus says, depend upon your receiving of My Spirit. You must be partakers of My grace, in order to be a savour of life unto life. Then there will be no rivalry, no self-seeking, no desire for the highest place. You will have that love which seeks not her own, but another’s wealth.” DA 439

SOCIAL CONTACT

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.” I Corinthians 4:5.

This counsel is often unheeded. Gossip can create disruptions and disturbances in social circles and church settings. Second-hand information is often exaggerated and it is an unfortunate fact that many judge without knowing the true facts in situations. But we are told to judge, “nothing”, that means not a single thing, until we are positive of all the facts; positive that we have seen all sides of any situation, discussing facts with only those who were present in situations.

“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” Psalm 119:165. This Bible verse creates much difficulty for some people. It is one of the most difficult “nothing’s” to observe and accept. We often don’t take this “nothing” seriously, excusing ourselves that in certain situations it is perfectly normal to feel offended. In human relations we so easily offend others – often unintentionally. But,

what will offend God's true followers? Nothing. Think about it for a minute... not a single thing will offend you if your life is hid in Christ. Have you ever felt offended? Then fast and pray to renew your connection with Jesus. If you want peace in your heart, you must love the law of God, and not let a single thing offend you. How can we do this? It is not easy. Our feelings easily get wounded when we feel slighted or neglected, or someone speaks ill advisedly towards us – whether in anger or in a hurtful manner. While it is wrong on the person's part who offends his brother or sister, it is equally wrong to feel offended. Unless the feeling of being offended is immediately cast out, it will become sin. I used the word "sin" when I mentioned harboring offended feelings. Is it really sin? It certainly is. To harbour offended feelings means "self" has not died. Self is alive and you are upset that "self" has been ill treated in your eyes.

I urge everyone to read chapter 41 of the book Ministry of Healing where this concept is discussed in more detail. In the second half of this article, I want to quote a part of this chapter here since I believe it is of vital importance in preserving unity in God's church today. We need to read this over and over again and put into practice the words written in this chapter, since Satan is going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He wants to divide and conquer God's church since he knows his time is very short now, so it is extremely important that we band together in unity and love, to be strong enough to prevent Satan from frustrating the work of the Lord.

Early on in the chapter we can read, "The work of many a burden bearer is not understood, his labors are not appreciated, until death lays him low. When others take up the burdens he has laid down, and meet the difficulties he encountered, they can understand how his faith and courage were tested. Often then the mistakes they were so quick to censure are lost sight of. Experience teaches them sympathy. God permits men to be placed in positions of responsibility. When they err, He has power to correct or to remove them. We should be careful not to take into our hands the work of judging that belongs to God." Then the case of David and Saul is mentioned. Saul had definitely not been a good king in Israel and David had several opportunities to kill him. He had been promised that he would be the next king, however, he left the timing to God. God placed Saul on the throne and he would wait until God removed him.

This following section of the chapter is the key to this subject...

Forbearance Under Wrong

"We cannot afford to let our spirits chafe over any real or supposed wrong done to ourselves. Self is the enemy we most need to fear. No form of vice has a more baleful effect upon the character than has human passion not under the control of the Holy Spirit. No other victory we can gain will be so precious as the victory gained over self.

"We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. We are to live, not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls. As we become interested in

the salvation of souls we cease to mind the little differences that so often arise in our association with one another. Whatever others may think of us or do to us, it need not disturb our oneness with Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit. 'What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.' 1 Peter 2:20.

"Do not retaliate. So far as you can do so, remove all cause or misapprehension. Avoid the appearance of evil. Do all that lies in your power, without the sacrifice of principle, to conciliate others. 'If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' Matthew 5:23, 24.

"If impatient words are spoken to you, never reply in the same spirit. Remember that 'a soft answer turneth away wrath.' Proverbs 15:1. And there is wonderful power in silence. Words spoken in reply to one who is angry sometimes serve only to exasperate. But anger met with silence, in a tender, forbearing spirit, quickly dies away.

"Under a storm of stinging, faultfinding words, keep the mind stayed upon the word of God. Let mind and heart be stored with God's promises. If you are ill-treated or wrongfully accused, instead of returning an angry answer, repeat to yourself the precious promises:...

"So long as we are in the world, we shall



meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self, and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful, unless we become co-workers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory.

“We need not keep our own record of trials and difficulties, griefs, and sorrows. All these things are written in the books, and heaven will take care of them. While we are counting up the disagreeable things, many things that are pleasant to reflect upon are passing from memory, such as the merciful kindness of God surrounding us every moment and the love over which angels marvel, that God gave His Son to die for us...

“If we have a sense of the long-suffering of God toward us, we shall not be found judging or accusing others. When Christ was living on the earth, how surprised His associates would have been, if, after becoming acquainted with Him, they had heard Him speak one word of accusation, of fault-finding, or of impatience. Let us never forget that those who love Him are to represent Him in character.”

To preserve unity in the church, these paragraphs are key. In unity there is strength and Satan is seeking to divide and conquer God's people.

“Cultivate the habit of speaking well of others. Dwell upon the good qualities of those with whom you associate, and see as little as possible of their errors and failings. When tempted to complain of what someone has said or done, praise something in that person's life or character. Cultivate thankfulness. Praise God for His wonderful love in giving Christ to die for us. It never pays to think of our grievances. God calls upon us to think of His mercy and His matchless love, that we may be inspired with praise.

“Earnest workers have no time for dwelling upon the faults of others. We cannot afford to live on the husks of others' faults or failings. Evil-speaking is a twofold curse, falling more heavily upon the speaker than upon the hearer. He who scatters the seeds of dissension and strife reaps in his own soul the deadly fruits. The very act of looking for evil in others develops evil in those who look. By dwelling upon the faults of others, we are changed into the same image. But by beholding Jesus, talking of His love and perfection of character, we become changed into His image. By contemplating the lofty ideal He has placed before us, we shall be uplifted into a pure and holy atmosphere, even the presence of God. When we abide here, there goes forth from us a light that irradiates all who are connected with us...

“Instead of criticizing and condemning others, say, ‘I must work out my own salvation. If I co-operate with Him who desires to save my soul, I must watch myself diligently. I must put away every evil from my life. I must overcome every fault. I must become a new creature in Christ. Then, instead of weakening those who are striving against evil, I can strengthen them by encouraging words.’ We are too indifferent in regard to one another. Too often we forget that our fellow laborers are in need of strength and cheer. Take care to assure them of your interest and sympathy. Help them by your prayers, and let them know that you do it.”

In doing missionary work, there is also good advice.

“Regard yourselves as missionaries, first of all, among your fellow workers. Often it requires a vast amount of time and labor to win one soul to Christ. And when a soul turns from sin to righteousness, there is joy in the presence of the angels. Think you that the ministering spirits who watch over these souls are pleased to see how indifferently they are treated by some who claim to be Christians? Should Jesus deal with us as we too often deal with one another, who of us could be saved?

“Remember that you cannot read hearts. You do not know the motives which prompted the actions that to you look wrong. There are many who have not received a right education; their characters are warped, they are hard and gnarled, and seem to be crooked in every way. But the grace of Christ can

transform them. Never cast them aside, never drive them to discouragement or despair by saying, ‘You have disappointed me, and I will not try to help you.’ A few words spoken hastily under provocation--just what we think they deserve--may cut the cords of influence that should have bound their hearts to ours.”

We are all in this together. Let us work together rather and not find ourselves working against God's people.

“All who profess to be children of God should bear in mind that as missionaries they will be brought into contact with all classes of minds. There are the refined and the coarse, the humble and the proud, the religious and the skeptical, the educated and the ignorant, the rich and the poor. These varied minds cannot be treated alike; yet all need kindness and sympathy. By mutual contact our minds should receive polish and refinement. We are dependent upon one another, closely bound together by the ties of human brotherhood.”

“Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.” Matthew 10:26. There is nothing you can hide from God, no actions, no words, no thoughts or no motives. They will all be revealed one day.

May God help us to reach the high standard of sanctification set before us, where self will be put to death so that nothing anyone can say, or do, will offend us. Until we reach this point, we will not have peace in our hearts, however in Christ it is possible. Self needs to be crucified with Christ. Jesus said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48. Never was it said that Jesus was offended. He never was seen hurt, or upset because of what others did to Him. Rather He prayed, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”

Let us trust God when He uses a positive “nothing” and be very careful not to turn any of His “nothing's” into “moderation's.” “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Phil 4:13 The promise is that, in Christ, nothing will be impossible for us. Just believe it and act on His promise. **AMEN**

Wendy Eaton, Australia



**"GRIEVE
NOT THE
HOLY SPIRIT
OF GOD"**

The most terrible thing that any person, even a Christian can do, is to grieve the Holy Spirit. There are millions of professing Christians who have grieved the Holy Spirit and finally crossed the line of no return; and the terrible thing is that they do not know it.

The Jewish leaders in the time of Christ were leaders in the church of God and they had grieved the Holy Spirit and finally committed unpardonable sin. Yet they continued religious, thinking that they were the favourites of God.

The Adventist Church in 1888 was the very church of God, and the leaders had grieved the Holy Spirit and yet continued as leaders the following 26 years. "They began this satanic work at Minneapolis. Afterward, when they saw and felt the demonstration of the Holy Spirit testifying that the message was of God, they hated it the more, because it was a testimony against them. They would not humble their hearts to repent, to give God the glory, and vindicate the right. They went on in their own spirit, filled with envy, jealousy, and evil surmisings, as did the Jews. They opened their hearts to the enemy of God and man. Yet these men have been holding positions of trust, and have been molding the work after their own similitude, as far as they possibly could." Test. to Min., p. 80.

This means that there is a danger that even educated, experienced ministers of the gospel, leaders of God's church can grieve the Holy Spirit and drive Him away.

No one is outside the danger of grieving the Holy Spirit; children and young people can do it by carelessness. Any sin that we do grieves the Holy Spirit, and the more knowledge we have of the law of God, the more grievous our sin will be. There are private, secret sins that only God sees; but then there are open sins that can cause others to be tempted, and one of them is gossiping.

GOSSIPING

"Those who do evil with their gossiping tongues, who sow discord by selfish ideas and thoughts by any jealousies, evil surmisings, or covetousness, they grieve the Holy Spirit of God, for they are working at cross-purposes with God, instead of answering the purposes of Christ, instead of answering the prayer of Christ that His disciples may be one as He is one with the Father. They are working entirely in the lines the enemy has marked out." Letter 20, 1899, pp.7, 7a (To Philip Wessels, February 3, 1899).

"For Christ's sake, for your soul's sake, I entreat you, do not talk of the deficiencies of your brethren! Go to work for yourself. Do not any longer grieve the Holy Spirit of God. The question is asked, 'Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?' and the answer is, 'He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth no with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.' (Psalm 15)" Manuscript Releases #1444, Book 20.

"God admonishes His people: 'Wherefore laying aside all malice,

and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

"The sin of much talking is not small. Words bitter as gall may be spoken in the heat of satanic passion; but when the sin is realized, why is it not acknowledged? It may be that some have cultivated a spirit of evil surmising, and have communicated their suppositions to others. But those whose hearts are right with God will say: I cannot hear these evil reports. If you know evil of your brethren and sisters, go to them, in the spirit of Christ, and talk it over with them. Get it out of the way." R & H, Sept. 21, 1897.

If we see a brother committing sin, the counsel of Jesus is to talk to this brother in private and let no one else know about it. But how often it is the opposite.

Then sin of the brother is broadcasted behind his back and he himself knows nothing of it.

COMPLAINING

"When trials arise that seem unexplainable, we should not allow our peace to be spoiled. However unjustly we may be treated, let not passion arise. By indulging a spirit of retaliation, we injure ourselves. We destroy our own confidence in God, and grieve the Holy Spirit. There is by our side a witness, a heavenly messenger, who will lift up for us a standard against the enemy. He will shut us in with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Beyond this, Satan can not penetrate. He can not pass this shield of holy light." COL, p. 172.

"Jesus is their friend. All heaven is interested in their welfare, and their fear and repining grieve the Holy Spirit." Mind, Character, & Personality, vol. 2, p. 477.

"Dear Sister Marian: I keep your case before me, and I

am grieved that you are troubled in mind. I would comfort you if it were in my power. Has not Jesus, the precious Saviour, been to you so many times a present help in times of need? Do not grieve the Holy Spirit, but cease worrying. This is what you have many times talked to others. Let the words of those who are not sick, as you are, comfort you, and may the Lord help you, is my prayer. If it is the Lord's will that you should die, you should feel that it is your privilege to commit your whole being, body, soul and spirit, into the hands of a just and merciful God." The Retirement Years, p. 149.

Our complaining grieves the Holy Spirit, whatever the reason for it may be. Because old Israel murmured in the wilderness they could not enter into the promised land. "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me." Num. 14:29.

Even if we are sick and about to die, it is sin to complain about it. We must remember that, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Rom. 8:28.



NEGLECTING DUTY

Maybe we do not kill, steal or lie, but we can grieve the Holy Spirit by neglecting missionary work. The work of saving souls has been left to the people of God to do.

“O my brethren, will you grieve the Holy Spirit, and cause it to depart? Will you shut out the blessed Saviour, because you are unprepared for His presence? Will you leave souls to perish without the knowledge of the truth, because you love your ease too well to bear the burden that Jesus bore for you? Let us awake out of sleep. ‘Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

“The work is before us; will we engage in it? We must work fast, we must go steadily forward. We must be preparing for the great day of the Lord. We have no time to lose, no time to be engaged in selfish purposes. The world is to be warned. What are we doing as individuals to bring the light before others. God has left every man his work; every one has a part to act, and we cannot neglect this work except at the point of our souls.” R & H, March 22, 1887.

“Let your heart be drawn out in love for perishing souls. Obey the impulse given by High Heaven. Grieve not the Holy Spirit by delay. Resist not God’s methods of recovering souls from the thralldom of

sin. To every man, according to his several ability, is given his work. Do your best, and God will accept your efforts.” Test. Vol. 8, p. 56

“I would that all my brethren and sisters would remember that it is a serious thing to grieve the Holy Spirit, and He is grieved when the human agent seeks to work himself and refuses to enter the service of the Lord because the cross is too heavy or the self-denial too great.” CH, p. 561.

“Again I call for the help that we ought to have had, the means we must have if anything is accomplished in this country. Let your minds be drawn out for perishing souls. Obey the impulse given by High Heaven. Grieve not the Holy Spirit by delay. Resist not God’s methods of recovering poor souls from the thralldom of sin. To every man was given his work. Then do the very best with the powers God has given you, and He will accept your efforts put forth with an eye single to His glory. To every man He has given His work according to his several ability.” The Home Missionary. Nov. 1, 1893.

Many professed Christians will be lost for neglecting the work of soul saving. By this neglect they grieve the Holy Spirit.

Every talent that we have must be put to use. The servant who did not use his talent was cast into outer darkness, and this is the condition of a person when the Holy Spirit departs from him.

this gift, then all will be lost. “I saw that all heaven is interested in our salvation; and shall we be indifferent? Shall we be careless, as though it were a small matter whether we are saved or lost? Shall we slight the sacrifice that has been made for us? Some have done this. They have trifled with offered mercy, and the frown of God is upon them. God’s Spirit will not always be grieved. It will depart if grieved a little longer. After all has been done that God could do to save men, if they show by their lives that they slight Jesus’ offered mercy, death will be their portion, and it will be dearly purchased. It will be a dreadful death; for they will have to feel the agony that Christ felt upon the cross to purchase for them the redemption which they have refused. And they will then realize what they have lost—eternal life and the immortal inheritance. The great sacrifice that has been made to save souls shows us their worth. When the precious soul is once lost, it is lost forever.” Test. Vol. 1, p. 124.

In the time of Noah the whole world had committed an unpardonable sin and were ready for the destruction. Today we are nearing the same condition. Few people still can be saved and for their sake the Lord has given us more time. “And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” Gen. 6:3.

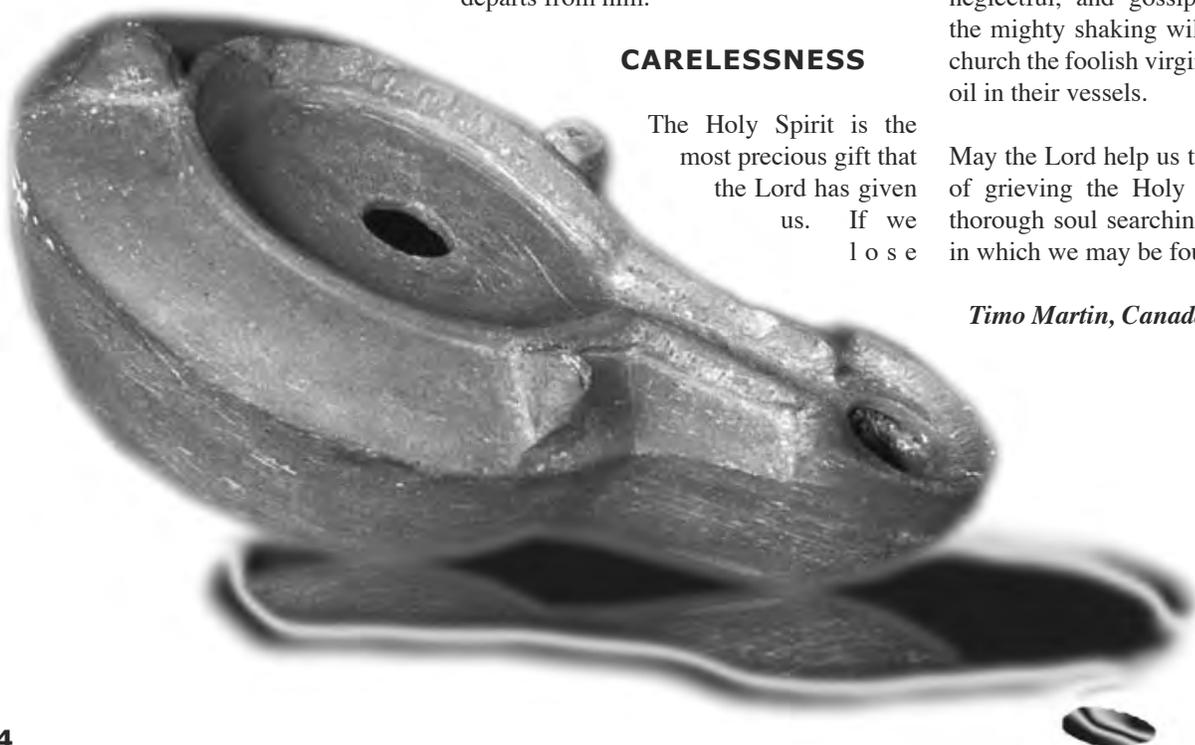
Suddenly the Spirit of God will stop striving with the careless, complaining, neglectful, and gossiping Christians and the mighty shaking will separate from the church the foolish virgins who had no more oil in their vessels.

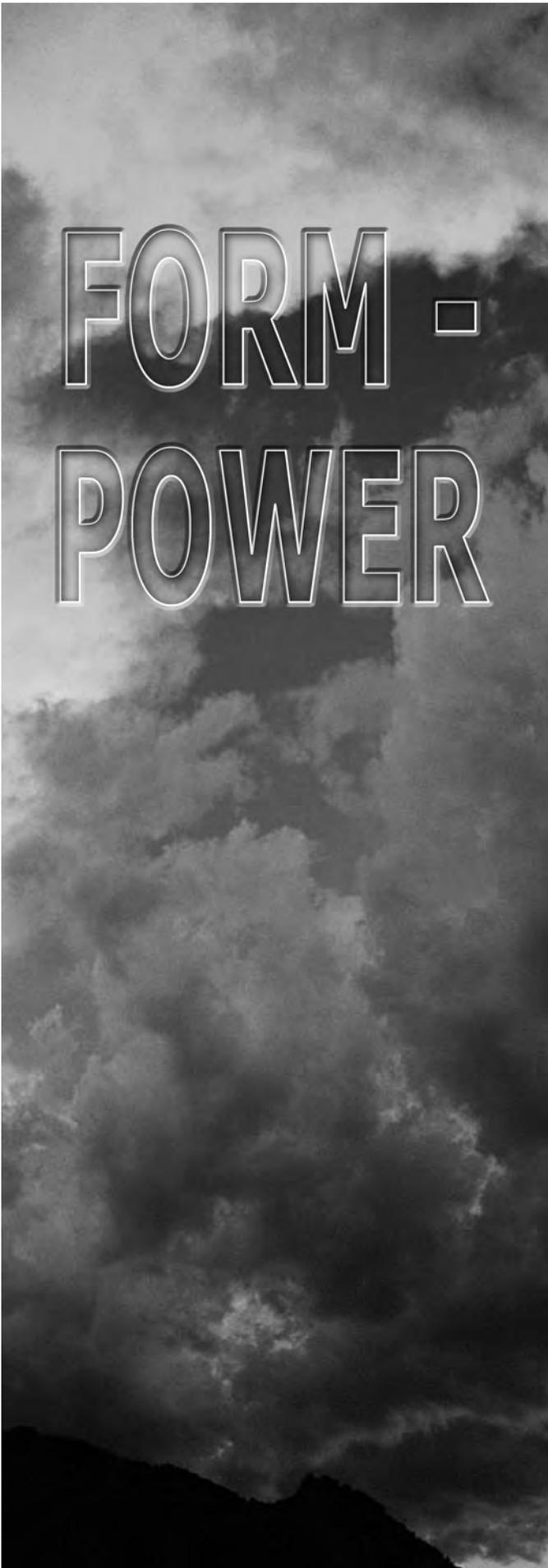
May the Lord help us to realize the danger of grieving the Holy Spirit and through thorough soul searching find out the areas in which we may be found guilty. **AMEN.**

Timo Martin, Canada

CARELESSNESS

The Holy Spirit is the most precious gift that the Lord has given us. If we lose





Many of us would have already many times gladly received the form of godliness rather than the power. Many of us would have settled happily (?) for a “normal” home, a “united” family, a “decent” job, a “respectable” reputation. But many of us have been thrown into unexplainable situations, and therefore a “normal” life has never materialized. And now, as we find our life gradually becoming more vitalized and spiritualized by the God of Heaven and earth, we find that those “normal” people in “normal” life situations are not really so happy or contented with their life; and our own lot seems much more bearable, yea, even desirable.

The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death.

As we see the world literally crumbling around us, the status quo that we have desired becomes more and more meaningless in light of eternal realities. Pity sometimes fills our hearts as we consider the souls in bondage to sin who are feeding on husks and literally garbage, when they might be dining on heavenly delicacies.

The power of God sometimes displays itself in unexpected and unexplainable ways. We find spirituality where we would least expect it. People everywhere are crying out for a power out of and above themselves... “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?” Rom. 7:24. such is the cry that has gone up from burdened hearts in all lands and in all ages. To all, there is but one answer, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world.” John 1:29. Many are the figures by which the Spirit of God tries to illustrate this truth, and make it plain to souls who long to be free from the burden of guilt.

If we just had enough money we could save the world! If we just had more men, we could save the world! Well, are the popular churches saving the world? Will giving a Bible and a Bible study to every soul in the world save every soul? Of course, we know the answer to that question. Yet there are hearts crying out all around us for something that they have not. If we had the key to their hearts we could begin to lead them into a saving relationship with their Creator and Redeemer, Lover and True Friend. Give us the key, O Lord.

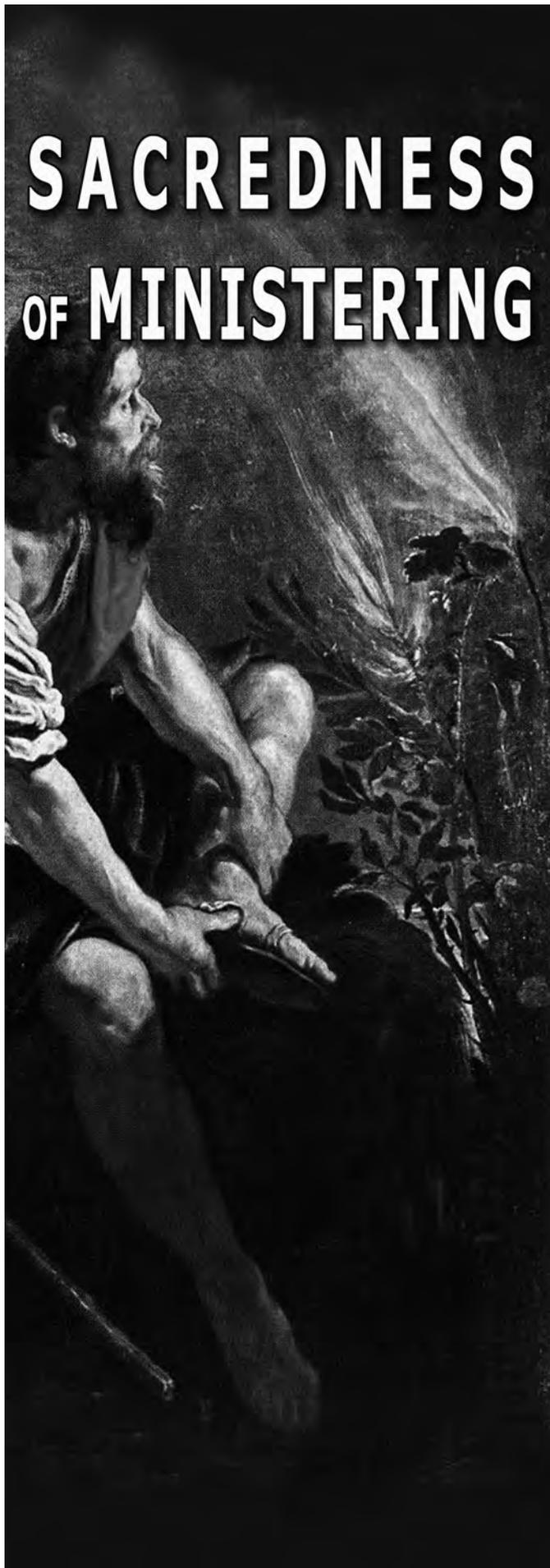
“Prayer is the key in the hand of faith...”

All power is at our command; we have only to ask. “As we see so little burden of the work resting upon ministers and people, we inquire: When the Lord comes, shall He find faith on the earth?” “It is faith that is lacking. God has an abundance of grace and power awaiting our demand. But the reason we do not feel our great need of it is because we look to ourselves and not to Jesus. We do not exalt Jesus and rely wholly upon His merits.”

FAITH. What is it?

AMEN

Sis. Kathleen Ross, Alberta, Canada



INTRODUCTION

Jesus gave His precious blood to save every single soul on this planet. The prince of this world has thousands of snares to keep souls in his hands. There is a great need of really consecrated people who have experienced salvation, who are dressed in Jesus' robe of righteousness, who know the enemy and his shrewdness and are alert and watchful at all times, who are not prejudiced and can understand the value of a soul because they know how precious they themselves are in the eyes of their Saviour.

Many souls are perishing daily without the knowledge of their Redeemer, many others are waiting for someone to approach them and bring them some word of comfort and hope, and many are calling and pleading to be visited and led to the truth.

Our responsibility and duty towards God and our fellowmen is proportionate to our personal experience with the God of love and mercy. It is not an office in the church or a manual with certain instructions on how to fulfill that office what triggers us to be of service and minister to others, but a call that comes from above, a flame that burns in our heart, an inner need to share the light that has dissipated the darkness that surrounded our own life and kept us in bondage.

A SOLEMN CALL

“God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thy standest is holy ground.” Exodus 3:4, 5.

There is a close relation between the divine call for service and the sacredness of the work. Actually, the work is sacred because there has been a divine call. Therefore, whoever has not heard the voice of the Lord calling him, cannot really understand the sacredness of his mission. He who has, will walk in the fear of the Lord and look for an even closer relation with His Master.

One of the examples that better illustrates the sacredness of the call to minister is the case of Moses. The moment one hears God's voice and answers positively to His call, one enters into holy ground. Not even a grain of sand from the outside world may be brought to His holy presence. Moses approached the burning bush with awe.

MAN'S ANSWER TO THE CALL

What was Moses' reaction once he heard his commission? “Who am I?” (Exodus 3:11), he asked. Is God really interested in answering that question? No, He does not care who we are, He knows quite well we are just dust, but He knows what He can make out of us and through us if we become empty of self. As the answer to Moses' question He just gives His servant a promise: “Certainly, I will be with you.” (Exodus 3:12).

The Lord explains his mission in full detail but his servant has many objections: “they will not believe me” (Exodus 4:1); “I am not eloquent.” (Exodus 4:11) Do we also present excuses when the Lord calls us to leave everything behind and follow Him, to become His spokesmen, His priests, even the leaders of His people?

The Lord does not call us so that we work for Him, as we may believe and do, but to work in us and through us. He wants to sanctify the talents He gave us and use them for the construction of His kingdom. He remains the Leader, the Architect, the Shepherd, the King, the Head of the church and of His people.

MEN CHOOSING MEN

There is a wonderful allegory in the Bible that refers to the choice of someone to occupy a position of leadership. It is found in Judges 9: 8-15. The trees gathered to anoint a king and their first choice fell upon the olive tree that refused the honor because he did not want to lose his fatness - the wonderful fruit that produces the best oil, and besides he could not conceive the idea that he would have to rule over the other trees. The fig tree was the next one to be invited to take such an honorable position, but he refused alleging he did not want to lose his sweetness and be promoted over the other trees. Finally the vine was asked to be king but his answer was similar to the one of his friends; he was not ready to leave his wine that gave joy to God and man and to be promoted over the other trees. All of them, fruitful plants, with the most delicious fruits, all of them not willing to be put above their fellowmen and at the same time afraid of the trials that might spoil their good fruit. Finally, the trees turned to the bramble, a thorny bush, that not only accepted but asked them to put their trust in his shadow and threatened to devour with fire those who would not do so, even the cedars of Lebanon, the most prominent trees!

What was the criteria used by those who had the right and privilege to choose? They judged from the fruits. Why did all those fruitful plants refuse the privilege of the position offered them? They thought they had to rule over their brethren and they were afraid of not being fruitful any longer. Carrying a responsibility is a burden that no man can do alone, "Without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5.

What is our attitude when chosen for a position of leadership? Do we feel unable as Moses did? Do we say, who am I to be promoted above my fellowmen? Are we afraid our good fruit will be spoilt and our production will diminish? Are we afraid of trials? Do we avoid responsibilities and

contribute to the fact that a bramble has to be chosen due to the scarcity of brave men dependent on God and ready for sacrifice? Are we maybe like the bramble, thirsty for power and completely unaware of our shortcomings, offering people to abide under our shadow when we do not even have foliage?

GOD'S ATTITUDE

One of the greatest gifts God has given man, besides the gift of life, is to be able to live that life freely by exercising his right of choice.

Our attitude may provoke the anger of the Lord, "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses" (Exodus 4:14), but His love is mightier than all our fears and objections; and if He has chosen us from the womb of our mother, as He did with Jeremiah, He will fulfill His plan with us in spite of ourselves and our weaknesses

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"

(Sampson's case). The Lord does not impose His ways on us; He gave us free will to exercise it in all circumstances, but He who can read the heart of man knows very well whether we want to serve Him or just to get some glory for ourselves. If we do want to serve Him with our whole heart, He will not allow our insecurity, due to our lack of faith, to get in the way. To look at self is no help, on the contrary, it is discouraging. Our motto should at all times be, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4: 13).

GUIDED BY THE LORD

God instructs the leader of His people step by step. First, Moses is sent to deliver God's people from bondage and then he is given the tables of the law. This sequence is very important when working with souls; first they have to be shown the way to freedom from the bondage of sin (Jesus Christ - the blood of the Lamb on the post of their doors) and only after can the law be presented to them as a fence, a protection, an assertion of their freedom in Christ.

Moses becomes an instrument of God; he is

the Lord's spokesman. What is the reaction of the people when they see that Moses is appointed by the Lord? "And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All the Lord hath spoken we will do." (Exodus 19:7, 8) When people see that their leader is a man of God, they trust him and follow his instructions.

A holy call and a sacred mission go hand in hand. Did Moses ever forget that he was constantly in the presence of the Lord? "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." (Hebrews 11:27).

Here we are given two elements that are needed in the sacred work of dealing with souls: faith and endurance. Why faith? Because "without faith it is impossible to please God," and also because without faith

we shall not allow God to work miracles; we shall be an obstacle to His plans; we shall be doing things our own way.

Why is endurance important? Because "he who endures until the end will be saved." Every person who consecrates his life to the Lord and enters into His service will have to face hard trials since the enemy of souls will make out of him the target of his poisonous darts. But the Lord allows these trials because they have a purpose in the formation of man's character, "... the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1:3, 4). Every one who enters this sacred work has to be an example in faith and endurance and walk as Moses did, like in the presence of the Lord at all times.

A CONSECRATED MINISTER

God always made a special distinction between His consecrated men and those who were not. His priests were not common men; they could not behave like ordinary men and they had to minister unto the Lord in an acceptable way. "But let none come

into the house of the Lord, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall go in, for they are holy; but all the people shall keep the watch of the Lord.” (2 Chronicles 23:6).

Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, dared offer strange fire before the Lord and were devoured by the flames. (Leviticus 10: 1). “For our God is a consuming fire.” (Hebrews 12:29).

In Psalm 2:11, we find how we should serve the Lord, “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.” Why with fear? Because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and wisdom is better than rubies. (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 8: 11).

The prophets were holy and wise men; people knew they were appointed by God and went to consult them. God’s priests have to be more knowledgeable than common people; they should know the Lord and be anointed with His Spirit, “the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.” (Isaiah 11:2). They are messengers of God and people expect to hear the truth from their lips. “For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth.” (Malachi 2:7). The law of God is just, holy and good (Romans 7:12), an expression of God’s character. When the prophet Isaiah had a vision of God in His throne, he was in dismay and exclaimed, “Woe is me! For I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips” (Isaiah 6:5). It was necessary for a seraphim to clean his lips with a burning coal from the altar. How important the words of a man consecrated to God are!

The Psalms tell us to rejoice with trembling. The fear of the Lord never abandons His servant. Being aware that he is at all times in the presence of the Lord and conscious of the sacredness of his mission, he carries the souls entrusted to him on his chest, as precious stones, into the sanctuary. There is no room for idleness, laughter, jokes or light talking.

A sacred work can only be performed by sacred and fully consecrated people. The priests had to be always purifying themselves, “And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified



the people, and the gates, and the wall” (Nehemiah 12:30). Before they entered the tabernacle they had to wash their hands and feet in the laver, they had to sacrifice a victim for their own sins because only the blood of Jesus could atone for their sins.

The work of a minister does not end when he steps off from the pulpit, on the contrary, what he preaches will be corroborated by his attitude and conduct. The eyes of the people are always fixed on him, attentive to his words and deeds. He has to testify with his life that he believes what he preaches. Usually, the test comes as soon as the minister finishes his sermon, the reason why he has to be always vigilant. A priest from whose lips the people receive the law, should have the law written in his heart, should have experienced the new birth; he should not be asking for a new heart in his prayers but rather praying in the Spirit.

The priests were the ones in charge of carrying the ark of the covenant, specifically the Levites, and more specifically the Kohathites. They carried the ark, the table of shewbread, the candlestick and the altars; in other words: the law, the word, the light, prayer and sacrifice. It was a very solemn duty!

There must be solemnity in all the conduct of a minister and that is only possible if he has had a close encounter with the Lord, if

he has heard His voice calling him, if he is newly born, if he is aware of the sacredness of his mission. If that is the case:

- a.) He is distrustful of self
- b.) He knows the value of a soul
- c.) He walks in the Spirit
- d.) His speech is with authority (the one given by the Spirit)

In God’s eyes we are all ambassadors of His kingdom. We do not belong to this world; we are aliens down here; we are representatives of a country beyond the skies. An embassy is considered a piece of the territory it represents in a foreign country. Thus, the church of God and His people should be ruled by the principles of heaven and represent God’s heavenly kingdom on earth. We have a citizenship that is not of this world, “for our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 3:20). Our language is foreign to the inhabitants of this planet whose voices have become as “sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal” (1 Corinthians 1: 13). God’s children speak the language of love which many times has no words, only gestures that express kindness, tenderness, mercy, sympathy.

The citizens of heaven on earth have their own constitution, they are ruled by the divine moral law, the Ten Commandments

(Exodus 20:1-17) and they have a national holiday, which they keep, independent of the fact that they are in foreign territory, as all earthly embassies do. This day is the Sabbath day of which our Lord and King says, "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." (Ezekiel 20:12). All transactions in this kingdom, all exchanges are done in one currency, "ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men." (1 Thessalonians 5:15). Among those who are one in Christ there are no Greeks or Jews, they do not identify themselves with a nation, but nevertheless they have a flag, "his banner over me was love." (Songs 2: 4) and they also have a national anthem, that as most anthems depicts the trials and ordeals their Hero went through to finally set them free, "And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." (Revelation 15:3) All nations and even all regions in a country have a national costume and the citizens of heaven, God's representatives on earth, do not fall short of it. "... he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness..." (Isaiah 61:10).

The priests were anointed with the purpose of being sanctified. "And Moses took the anointing oil... and he poured the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him." (Leviticus 8:10, 12). Every minister of the kingdom above, every ambassador of God on earth should be able to say together with our Lord Jesus Christ, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn..." (Isaiah 61:1, 2).

In Deuteronomy 10:8 are pointed three things the priests were exclusively to do, "to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto him and to bless in his name..." Was this only valid for that time, for the tribe of Levi? The verse answers this question, "unto this day."

Apostle Paul, that man chosen by God to preach the gospel of salvation to the gentiles, was well aware he had been called and separated for a special solemn mission and in the introduction of many of his epistles he mentions this fact, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God" (Romans 1:1); "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised him from the dead)" (Galatians 1:1); "Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness." (Titus 1:1)

It is of fundamental importance to have been called by God to the ministry, to have been separated, elected, and anointed with the Holy Spirit. The Greek word "ierapostolos" (ierapostolos) specifies that the mission is sacred, thus clearly establishing the kind of work involved in dealing with souls.

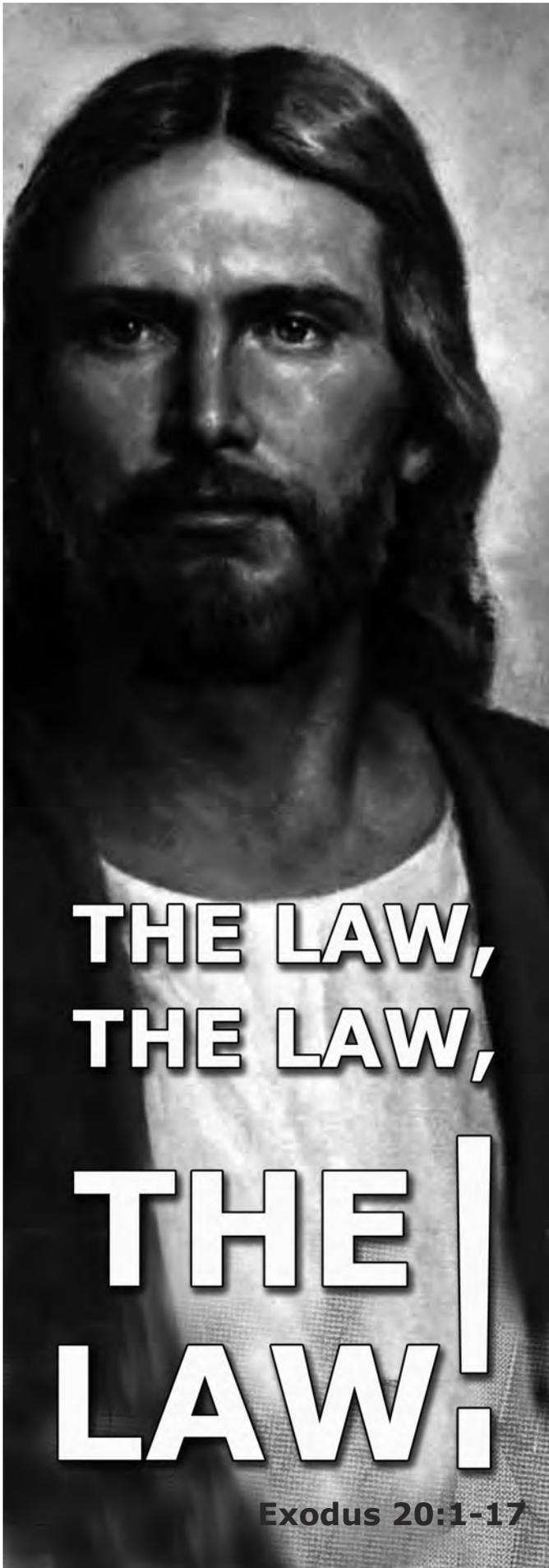
The young Samuel who had been consecrated to the Lord by his mother from his early years, slept by the ark of the covenant. When the Lord called him personally, he arose and went to Eli, the high priest; he did not recognize the voice of his Lord calling him. Why? "Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him." (1 Samuel 3:7). This can be the case of some people still today. How important it is to know the Lord before we even attempt to introduce Him to others, to have a revelation of His word and not just an intellectual knowledge of it. On the other hand, the sons of Eli, who also served in the sanctuary, "were sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord" (1 Samuel 2:12) (and did not care to know Him), therefore they blasphemed His name and defiled the temple.

Today, when the message of salvation has to reach "every nation, kindred and tongue and people" (Revelation 14:6), the Lord needs men who are fully consecrated and able to declare, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." (John 4:34).

May the Lord Himself choose, separate and anoint His servants with His Spirit so that His work may soon be finished and we may go home for life and eternity. **AMEN.**

Teresa Corti





Exodus 20:1-17

What is the Law? Well, it is many things. For one, we can say it is the “mirror of our soul.” In fact, it was written by the hand of God on two stones. Why two stones? When we speak of God we naturally speak of the Law, two entities, joined into one. Furthermore, a stone can be considered to be eternal; the Law, God’s Law, The Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17), however, is eternal.

But what do people glibly say? Even many professed Christians? “All I hear is the Law, the Law, the Law. Don’t talk to me about the Law. Just let me live my Christian life.!” They even go further and say, for example, “we are not interested in the Law, but in love. Let’s forget about the Law and just love one another!”

The first commandment of the Law, however, “thou shalt have no other Gods, before me”(Ex. 20:3), is the beginning of one’s faith, the first step on a believer’s journey, but, many cannot recite it, and fewer can really explain it. Furthermore, if you say that your home is a Christian home, do you have the Law framed on the wall? Many homes have, however, “Home Sweet Home” framed and prominently displayed at the entranceway.

The first commandment, often, is not only the first of Gods’ Law, “thou shalt have no other Gods before me,” but, it can be said, it is the first transgression of man. Why? Because man, by not observing it, is not, therefore, in harmony with the Law of God.

How often, now, do we say lies, steal, covet, commit adultery? Yet, we think we keep the Law. In fact, how many believe truly that the Bible, in fact, is the word of God? If we believe it is, then we must do it! Right? Do what it says. I’ve entered many Christian homes, but in very few see the Law of God framed on the wall, or any other signs of being in a Christian home. Deut 6:4-9, tells us clearly our duty in this matter... “to teach the Law, to be in our heart, talk the Law, bind them, write them, post them on our house and gates.” Children enter a Christian home and immediately look up at the Law and say, “what is that?” It’s the first step. It’s easy. It’s the first step with God toward the Law of God, seeing it, reading it, hearing it, delighting in it, and then doing it.

We say we believe, and keep the Law, but, really don’t . For many it is not a “delight”, but “impossible”, a “yoke”, “ancient”. Consequently, many reject it or even deny its validity. What happens then? The results are written in Hosea 4:6, “my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” This was manifested because of Israel’s willful ignorance. They forgot the Law of God.

God tells us how to behave, how to conduct our daily lives. Israel rejected this code of conduct, the Law, this standard. They fell because of three reasons: 1. they did not do the will of God although they knew it! 2. they believed only in the liturgical law, and not the spirit of the Law, the spirit of God. Do we know it? 3. many know the Law merely (Math 5:29), but, no, no! It’s not enough! What do we need to know and do, then?

Many, however, know what “not to do”, a Law to them of

"don'ts." What happens then? Well, this develops into character traits, or an undesirable pattern, that is indelibly seared into our conscience, and daily conduct; a stamp of character that is the only individual mark that we will take with us to heaven.

What is your character like? Are you satisfied with it? Even with all of its flaws? Is your character like Jesus Christ's? Are you striving for this goal? Or just indifferent? If you have no interest or are drifting, then you didn't learn the Law of God, or forgot it.

The Law is our basic guide, a pillar of our faith, His character. The Law is beckoning, waiting to say something and do something in your life (Rom 2:17-27). But, we read, "they're hard words" (John 6:60), and, "many disciples turned away". For many today these are "hard words". The Jews were just as guilty as the gentiles in their ignorance.

Do we keep the Law, or even think about it? Is it your standard for living? We see other signs of the Law, in Rom 3:20; "It's a mirror of our lives"... our souls... if we keep it, how we keep it.

What are you interested in having the Law do for you, your character? What is the biggest desire and goal for you in this perilous life? Here are some answers: a new heart, to keep the Law, to love man, to see Jesus, to change character, to prosper, and more.

But, we often see God in a different way, the Sabbath in a different way, our brethren in a different way, humans in a different way. But, Jesus is not hard to understand. We were all created, firstly, under one universal Law. Laws are made by all governments, and often harder to keep than God's Law, but we still respect them. So, moreover, there is the law of the universe, man's civil laws, private laws, family laws (I like this). When God created the world, a Law was firmly established and implemented. But, in heaven there were many angels that felt they wanted to be freed from its "slavery," and followed Satan, one

third of the angelic host. Was the Law too hard? No! Was the heavenly Law of God too hard? No! We'll be freed from the "slavery" of sin and suffering by the Law. In heaven the Law existed before Adam, and Moses. It was in the heart of the angels.

We said the Law is love, "If you love me you'll keep my commandments." (John 14:15) If one "loves", what is so hard? Anything is possible! If there is real love in the heart, all can be done. Lucifer, however, wanted to be like God, as God, God's position. As long as the Law existed, Satan not only wanted His (Jesus Christ's) character, but His power, as an equal, and over-and-above God!

Whoever doesn't want the character of God destroys the Law, tramples on it. The Law simply says, "don't sin". If one doesn't accept the Law, he rejects Jesus Christ. What does the Law do to one? The Law throws me down to earth, into the dust, then causes me to raise my eyes to Jesus Christ, and give thanks. But, the Apostle Paul never says the Law was erased, or done away with. But, the liturgical law, the law "nailed to the cross," are in fact one and the same, and are mistaken and confused with the Law, the Ten Commandments.

Paul, again, tells us in Gal 5, that we are debtors "to do the whole Law," (Ten Commandments), (v-3), and that the "Law is fulfilled in one word: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (v-14). He continues, that, "we walk in the spirit, not of the flesh" (v-16), but in the "fruit of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (v-22, 23)

John writes, furthermore, that, "we know Him if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him." (John 2:3-5). He continues, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous (burdensome). (1 John 5:3)

What's the love of God, therefore? To keep His commandments. If it is hard or burdensome, it's "Ego." In our humble faith, we can have the victory, the faith to keep the Law.

For salvation, and to reach the coveted goal of salvation, we need to do four things: 1. realize that we are sinners. 2. that the Law reveals this to us. 3. to reach for Jesus Christ, who frees us from sin. 4. know that the church teaches us how to develop our character unto holiness.

Now then, if we let go of the gleaming Law in our lives, the link to heaven is broken; a lacking, a void exists and we're "weighed in the balances." Harmony with God is altered and weakened.

It is here, therefore, that the righteousness of Jesus Christ enters to cover and bolster us. But, we need to do something, not idly wait for miraculous "happenings". We need to abandon voluntary sin, and to repent, "for if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." (Heb 10:26) Here, therefore, is the battle! He is ready, however, to help us, nurture us, when, and if we repent of all. It's here where we desperately need the Holy Spirit to show us that Jesus truly and willfully saves, by

approaching Him.

Jesus Christ says, "be ye perfect as my Father is perfect." (John 17: 23)(Math 5:48) But, how can we be perfect in a world rife with sin, peril, and wickedness? Look to Jesus Christ. Lean on Jesus Christ. Isn't Jesus Christ the Law? Forever? His character? His example? Go, therefore, in the spirit of the Law.

But, always, unfortunately, we have an idol bigger than God. Also, an ego that

just doesn't die! We can try to remove it, but can only push it aside. An early American idiomatic expression says, "put it on the back burner." Moreover, we all have a "bad-old-heart". We stubbornly, and tenaciously want to live as before. No change in our ways, and habits, it seems, but living in and for self.

Our main interests seem centered in our problems and the problems of the world, rather than realizing that trials are for our own good, perfecting and testing our character, and maturing our faith spiritually.

But, by grace we know the spirit of the Law, the spirit of Jesus and eternal life. We live, however, steeped in our stifling problems and trials. Yet, we want to be free of them. If we continue to dwell on them and struggle with them, and keep looking back, we'll never
r e a c h

heaven and the Kingdom of God.

Walk, therefore, in Jesus, keep the Law, pray fervently, Do as He has told us, listen to His voice (the Bible), and "be still and know that He is God".

You cannot speak regarding Jesus without the Law. Nor can you speak regarding the Law without Jesus. Think about this! Jesus had to die for the Law so it would not change. With the grace of Jesus Christ, we can be saved.

Can we, finally, keep the Law, the Ten Commandments? Yes, yes, we can, with prayer. Here is the battle! Prayer! We can, however, keep the Law, if we want to. Here's another battle! What else? Is it too hard to keep the Law, as so many ignorantly believe? No! No! For, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil 4:13)

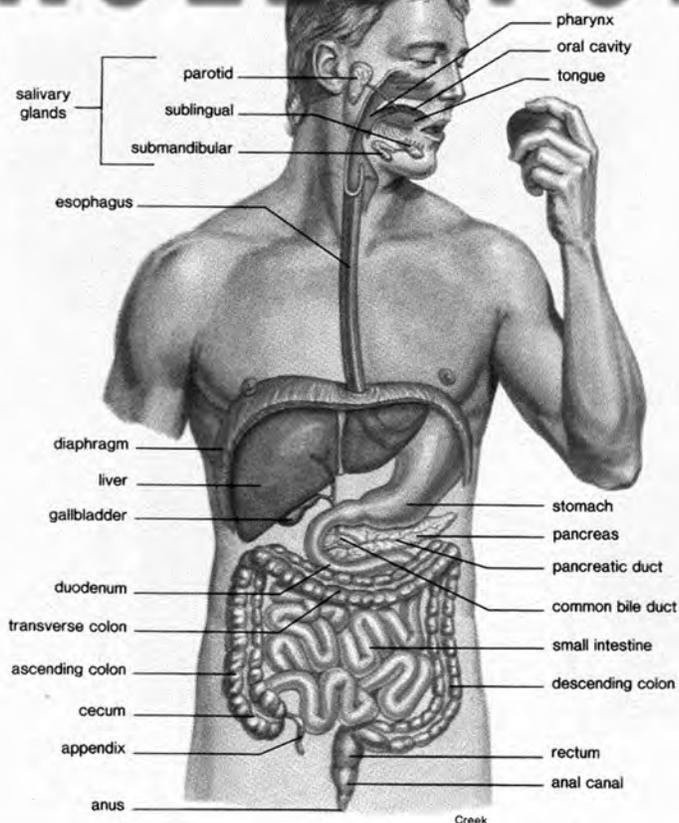
Jesus Christ gives us the coveted power we need.



When weak, and discouraged, kneel and pray... to keep The Law, The Law, The Law!
AMEN.

John Theodorou, U.S.A.

RULES FOR EATING



water. (Hunger pangs after a full meal is probably a sign of indigestion).

1. Eat slowly; no drink is necessary with meals. Chew the food thoroughly so it will be well mixed with saliva. Digestion begins in the mouth. Chew the food well so that it swallows itself.
2. Do not drink with meals. Food should not be washed down. The more liquid there is taken in the stomach with meals, the more difficult it is for the food to digest.
3. Drink plenty of water on arising and between meals. Water is the best liquid possible to cleanse the tissues, and purify the blood. Try two glasses of hot water on arising—it is easy to get down. Drink some water a little time before meals.
4. Eat sparingly “for strength, and not for drunkenness.” Eccl. 10:17. The benefit you derive from your food, does not depend so much on the quantity eaten, as on its thorough digestion. Neither does gratification of taste depend so much on the amount of food swallowed, as on the length of time it remains in the mouth. Overeating clogs the machinery and weakens the power to resist other passions.
5. Eat at regular intervals, allowing 5-6 hours to elapse between meals. Do not eat a morsel between meals. This is a bad habit to overcome once started. When hungry between meals, look at the clock. If it is not time to eat, take a big drink of life-giving cool

6. Do not eat before going to bed. The stomach must not be constantly at work, but must have periods of rest. When you retire, the stomach should have its work all done so it may rest with you. If you feel that you must eat, take a drink of cold water, and in the morning you will feel better for having not eaten.

7. Do not eat when emotionally upset or overtired or in pain.

8. Two meals a day are better than three—but if a third meal is to be eaten at all, it should be light, and several hours before going to bed.

9. Foods that are too hot or too cold should not be eaten. Very hot soups and such foods tend to debilitate the stomach and are best partly cooled. Very cold foods require the vitality of the system to warm them until they are the same temperature as the stomach before the work of digestion can be carried on.

10. Eat more raw fruits in their natural state. Include in the diet more raw fresh foods and less cooked foods. At least ½ of the foods we eat should be raw. Avoid spending precious hours trying to “doctor up” foods that are more wholesome in their natural raw state.

11. Eat raw vegetables or raw fruits before the main course. This will stimulate and assist digestion and help avoid overeating of cooked foods. Even fruit should not be eaten after a full meal of other foods. Do not mix fruits and vegetables at the same meal.

12. It is not well to take a variety of food at one meal. Three or four dishes are plenty.

DON'T GIVE UP



CHILDRENS CORNER

Francisco lived in the countryside of Peru and he was a terror to all who lived around there. He was clever, and no matter how many crimes he committed, he always managed to get around the law. You see, no judge dared to convict him. The judges knew that if they did, their families would be the victims of the next wave of terror. Fear reigned supreme in the village and extended out into all the countryside around.

One day a boat captain and his wife

arrived and announced that there would be some

evangelistic meetings and health clinics. Francisco felt that his superiority was being challenged. He spread the word around that anyone who went to the boat for treatment or who attended the meeting in the evening would be sorry.

Pedro, the boat captain, knew nothing of Francisco's threats, and he went about setting things in order. His wife, Alicia, was a bit surprised when no one came to ask for medicine or treatments, but her last few weeks had been so busy she was rather glad to have some quiet time.

Pedro set up the small platform and ran extension cords from the boat's generator to the shore so that he could use his projector. He whistled as he worked, unaware of the fact that the few people who showed up to watch would not dare to come hear him preach.

Pedro was naturally friendly, and during the course of the afternoon when small

boys gathered to watch

curiously, he told them that his wife would tell them stories that night. He also told them about the beautiful colour pictures he would show them, and the songs they would learn. "Hurry home and tell your parents to be sure to come and bring you along," he called after them as they ran back into the forest.

Pedro ate his simple supper by the window of the boat and wondered why not one soul had shown up yet for the evening meeting. Usually he had to hurry through his supper and be on hand to see that no one disconnected the projector or played with the folding

organ.

"Strange no one has come," he said to Alicia as he finished his beans and rice. "But maybe these people actually eat at the same hour we do for a change."

Alicia smiled as she cleared the table, but by now a cold fear clutched at her heart. Suppose no one came at all? Suppose these people were superstitious and cruel? She had heard of some of the river folk who met outsiders with bows and arrows and who put poison into the water or tried to kill them in other ways. But these people don't look as though they would do that, she thought. Surely it is just my imagination.

It was getting dark now and not a soul was in sight anywhere. "This will bring them out," smiled Pedro as he started up the record player. "They'll hear the music and come."

But no one did. Pedro peered out into the music-flooded forest. He thought he could see shadows flitting about from tree to tree, but he couldn't be sure. As the music floated through the darkness he walked over to Alicia. "Pray, Alicia. This could be a trick. They may be waiting for darkness to begin their foul play, if there is to be any."

But somehow Pedro felt that there was to be no foul play. Perhaps the people were more shy than the villagers upstream. He couldn't be certain, but he had a feeling that there were people peering from behind the trees and through the bushes. "I am going to preach anyway," he told Alicia. "I am even going to show the pictures, just as though there was a large audience."

Alicia played the organ and Pedro sang lustily and then prayed, hoping that people would come. Then he showed his slides. Still no one came.

The sermon Pedro preached to empty space was powerful and convincing. He felt sure it was not falling on deaf ears, even though he could not see any listeners.

The next night was the same. And the next. And the next. Alicia was discouraged and telling Pedro to give up and move on to another village, but Pedro

refused to give up. On the fifth night Pedro made an announcement. Anyone who was ill, any who had ulcers or sores or needed medical attention of any kind, could come to the boat and be treated. "It's free," he announced, looking steadily into the "eyes" of his audience, which so far as he could discern was only a cluster of trees.

Daylight was just piercing the darkness when Pedro awoke the next morning. Something had awakened him, though he couldn't tell what. He sat up in bed and looked out over the river, where a few clouds in the eastern sky were turning rosy, and the birds were beginning

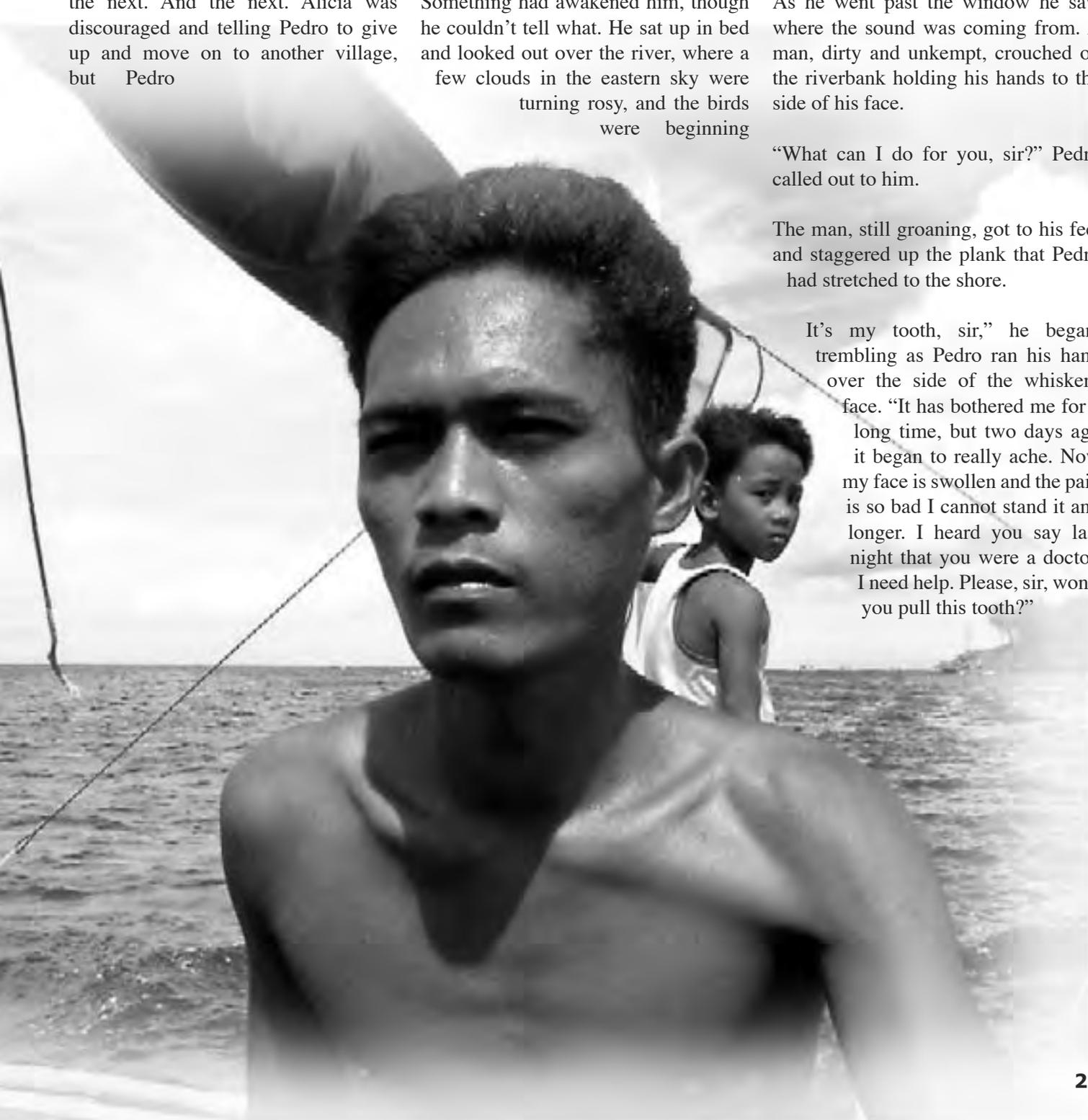
to sing their morning songs. A splash on the river somewhere nearby told him that a crocodile had slipped into the still waters. Pedro stretched and inhaled the cool morning breeze. It wouldn't be long, he knew, until the sun would come up and turn the morning's freshness into a sauna bath.

Then he heard it. It must have been what had wakened him. A low moaning. Pedro jumped out of bed. As he went past the window he saw where the sound was coming from. A man, dirty and unkempt, crouched on the riverbank holding his hands to the side of his face.

"What can I do for you, sir?" Pedro called out to him.

The man, still groaning, got to his feet and staggered up the plank that Pedro had stretched to the shore.

"It's my tooth, sir," he began, trembling as Pedro ran his hand over the side of the whiskery face. "It has bothered me for a long time, but two days ago it began to really ache. Now my face is swollen and the pain is so bad I cannot stand it any longer. I heard you say last night that you were a doctor. I need help. Please, sir, won't you pull this tooth?"



“I am not a doctor,” Pedro hastened to explain, but my wife is a nurse and she has had a course in tropical medicine. However,” he added thoughtfully, “I don’t think she has ever pulled a tooth.”

The sufferer moaned in agony.

“Sit here,” Pedro commanded, realizing that the man truly needed help. “Tell me what your name is so I can write it in the records.”

The man bowed his head, ashamed. “My name is Francisco,” he said softly. “You may have heard of me.”

“No, I haven’t.” Pedro laughed wryly. “No one has come near enough for me to get acquainted. I haven’t heard anything.

“Well, I am the reason no one comes to your meetings,” Francisco confessed, brushing his bushy moustache thoughtfully. “I am the terror of this country, and I threatened anyone who came near your boat.” He sat down on the chair Pedro offered. “But if you will pull this tooth I promise to change all that.”

Pedro hurried down to the living quarters of the boat and awakened Alicia. “You’ve got to come and pull a tooth, dear. Come on, get up. Where are those old forceps we used to have?”

“I have no idea. I never use them, and I don’t know how to pull teeth.” Alicia tumbled out of bed, muttering about the early hour.

“Well, you’ve got to find the forceps. This man has a terrible toothache, and he is the key to our success here.” Alicia fumbled around in some drawers and finally came up with several

forceps. “I don’t know a thing about them,” she said. “They were here with the medical supplies when we took over the boat. I don’t know which is for the top or the bottom and I’m not dressed. And-- Pedro, you do it. I’ll come up and give the injection, though I haven’t the slightest idea where to give it.”

While Alicia dressed, Pedro found the syringe and the Novocain. He sterilized the forceps as best he could and arranged his meager tools on a sterile bandage. Alicia administered the Novocain, not at all sure she was doing it right, and then she



handed the forceps to Pedro.

Up to this moment Pedro had thought the morning was delightful. Suddenly he was perspiring – a cold, clammy perspiration – and his hands were shaking. “I’m no dentist,” he objected.

“Neither am I,” laughed Alicia. “I’ve

never even seen a tooth extracted. Just get a hold of the tooth and pull I guess.”

Pedro finally got a firm grip on the tooth. He pulled and he tugged, and finally the tooth began to budge just a bit. Then the forceps slipped. Pedro looked at his patient sitting there so calmly, his countenance radiating confidence and trust.

“Don’t mind me,” Francisco said when he saw the beads of perspiration trickling down Pedro’s face. “I can take it. You just get that tooth out of there.”

Finally, after a considerable struggle, the tooth was out. Alicia stuffed sterile gauze into the wound, and they sent Francisco on his way. He went down the gangplank muttering through the gauze. “You’ll have a crowd tonight.”

They did! And Francisco himself became the first convert from the evangelistic meetings. The Lord used his toothache to reach him with the gospel and it is a good thing that Pedro did not give up when no one came to his meetings the first few nights.

Sometimes it may appear that there are no results for our work and we are tempted to give up, but Paul wrote, “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Gal. 6:9. Don’t give up. Keep on doing the work the Lord places before you.