

Tales of Wisdom I

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Everything God does is good

Sometimes we take a long time to understand the things that happen to us, especially al the time of these happenings. We complain, grumble, fight, retaliate and even falsify the truth just to justify ourselves. If we could accept in out hearts the word of Holy Spirit through Paul that says: “All things work together for the good of those who love God”, We would avoid the very many mistakes we make when trying to solve things in our own way, not having enough faith to believe that God will solve them for us.

It is told that, many years ago, in one of Africa’s kingdoms, a great king governed wisely. There was, in the king’s government, an official of great importance, and who was valued by the king. This official believed with all his heart that everything God does is good.

To the faithful official, this truth was indisputable as no one could contest it, he believed. This man participated in all the hearings and conferences that Hi Majesty, the king would convene. In all discussions that transpired, the king’s word was final. After hearing all complaints, reasons, plans, projects or any other important business regarding the kingdom, the king would listen to what his trustworthy official had to say, and then make his decision.

This would then be make known officially and transcribed into record books. Also, as a means to authenticate this, the royal seal would be attached. The decisions were always wise and fair. The king’s official, who feared God and knew His word, had in his humbleness the secret of pleasing god,

who, he believed, made him wise, lived by all kinds and respected throughout the kingdom.

Wherever the king would go, this official was included in his party even if this was only a simple hunting excursion, and it was during one of these excursions that the king fell victim to a tragic accident. Riding an elephant, the king saw an antelope with a beautiful and rare skin. It was moving slowly at a distance of less than 50 meters. His Majesty already imagined himself wrapped up in the coat that would make out of that skin with such a unique color.

The King feeling lucky, aimed carefully, held his breath and gently pressed the trigger of his rifle for the perfect shot. It was a good day for the prey and not such a good one for predator. The rifle backfired and with a fierce explosion the king lost his ring finger, which was of paramount significance as he use it to stamp his authority upon making his decisions final.

The king was deeply upset for having lost that particular finger which signified his power and royalty. That night, when he was grieving over his tragic misfortune, his official, with the faithfulness with which he had always counseled the sovereign, told the king to accept the situation because, as he always said, “everything that God does is good.”

The king suffered great indignation upon hearing the official speak those words. He had expected his official to be just as resentful, so as to send the rifle manufacturer to jail together with the royal man of the army whose responsibility was to keep the rifles in order. On the contrary, the official seemed indifferent to the king’s suffering, and king, full of anger and searching for someone to blame, determined that the poor man be thrown into prison, forgetting all about his good services of the past.

The years went by, and the king was always hopeful he would still-hunt that beautiful antelope. One day, searching for that animal, the king and his party wandered far out of his kingdom and fell prisoners to a tribe of cannibals. All of them were devoured except for the king who was spared and sent away because of the defect on his right hand.

On his way back, the king was rejoicing at the thought of being spared by the fact of a missing finger, which had caused him great grief for so long. As he sat on his throne, he remembered the words of his faithful official who had always said: “Everything God does is good”, and finally understood that, that accident was precisely what saved his life.

The king, then, before his entire kingdom, apologized for the unfair punishment he has handed down on the official. Very embarrassed, the king asked the official how he could ever repay him for all the heartache of evil he had caused him.

The official answered: “You do not owe me anything, your Majesty, because I have learned to know and accept that everything God does is good. If I were not in prison, where you put me, it is certain that I would have been with you at the time of the hunting. And because I have no physical defect, inevitably I would have ended up devoured by the cannibals, just like all those who were with you. In that way, God saved you and I because everything God does is good!

Nothing in His appearance
that we should desire Him!

It has been told that in a small. American town, a terrible and devastating fire broke out in a modest home, burning it to the ground in a few hours. The fire brigade was called immediately but to no avail. The house was very old and made of wood. So the firemen concentrated their efforts on the surrounding neighbors. The flames were growing everywhere and smoke could be seen at a distance. The experienced firemen did not approach the house because they knew the ceiling would collapse at any minute, killing whoever defied the power of the fire. That usually calm small street was soon full of astonished people who were watching the ghastly ruin of that house. The amount of water being hosed on the fire was to no avail, as it would evaporate before it even got to the fire because of the intense heat.

It was in middle of this scenario that a woman suddenly came out from the crowd, shouting out loud. And before anyone could get hold of her, she overcame the barriers set up by the firemen and ran into the burning house, disappearing in the thick smoke. People in the crowd began shouting out the firemen, calling to the woman who had madly run into the house. The confusion that took place was so big that no one knew what to do. What could have prompted that woman to take such an insane step, defying death itself< even the crowd, although at a distance, had to protect their faces from the tremendous amount of heat!

Not yet recovered from that woman’s astonishing dash into the burning house, they saw her coming out carrying a

bundle of once white linen, which she held closely tight to herself. The firemen ran to help her. Amazed, they saw that in that bundle, was a baby that was crying but seemed to be unharmed. Unfortunately, the same could not be said about the woman. Her hands and part of her face had been severely burned by the blazing fire. Miraculously both woman and baby survived.

The baby turned out to be a beautiful little girl, but the mother had on one side of the face and both hands badly disfigured. Her appearance shocked people many times. So, that poor woman decided to work as a seamstress confined to her home, even though she was still a young lady, just not to distress people whom she would, form time to time, come across.

Her daughter, whom she had saved from the fire, was the most precious thing she possessed. She worked hard and gave her clothes and put her in the best school she could afford.

One day, the school bus broke down and there was no one who could go and pick her daughter up from school, so she had to go herself. As she approached the school, the children started talking about her ugly appearance, like everyone else always did. When the children asked the girl if that was her mother, she immediately answered: “No, that is my house maid. My mother is very beautiful and not ugly like she is.”

Those painful words struck deeply into the woman’s heart and hurt her more than the blazing fire had. On the way home, the woman uttered not a word but tears were streaming down her face. Once at home, the mother sat down with the daughter and said: “My darling, I know you feel ashamed of me in front of your friends, however I must

tell you that one day I was beautiful until a tragedy occurred in my life: I had left you peaceful sleeping in your cot and rushed out to get the cake I had ordered for your first birthday. When I came back, our house was on fire. I dashed across the flames and smoke, thinking of nothing but you; I was desperate and scared of losing you.

I got you out of the house wrapped up in my arms, protecting you against the flames with my body. I was very hurt and burned from the flames but you suffered nothing. I may be ugly now but it was the price I paid so you could be beautiful."

At that moment the little girl understood her mother's grief, and shedding tears, she answered: "My dearest mother, now I see how beautiful you are. For me you are the most beautiful mother in the world."

When Jesus was taken to the cross because of our sins, and He was there from 9 o'clock in the morning till 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the Bible says that all who looked up at Him saw no beauty in His appearance that was pleasing to them.

He was despised and no one cared about Him. At the time, Jerusalem was full of Jews and gentiles who had come to celebrate the Passover. Everyone was busy preparing unleavened bread, bitter herbs and a lamb for the feast they had been celebrating every year for over 2000 years, while the true Lamb of god was abandoned on the cross, naked and bleeding with a crown of thorns of His head.

The people could not se that in that ugliness, truly, was the beauty, which shows in each one of us!

Bobo the great critic of God

There is an interesting story of a man who was not at all happy with life. For this reason he was always complaining with God. He felt it was unfair that he had been born so poor. He revolt was so great, that he would look up into the skies and let out his frustrations.

What Bobo really wanted in life was to be rich. Actually, he really wished he had been born rich. He was not resigned to the fact that he was just the son of Sipho, a worker at the market in Ntusuma, whose only possessions, besides the stall at the market, were an old pick-up van and a house in the village.

The sorrow in Bobo's heart was so great that he was blind to see the good side of things in life. How many good opportunities had he missed out on, simply because he had not been able to appreciate them.

And so, on a beautiful Saturday afternoon – one of those sunny days when the seashore cities offer infinity of leisure options – Bobo was to be found sitting on his bed with his head down low, very unhappy and distant to everything around him.

It was on this day that an angel visited him. The presence of that heavenly being made the room lighten up more than the sunny sky. The angel turned to Bobo and said; For many years now I have heard you complain that you were born poor. Today I have come to make you a rich man." Bobo

smiled, as he hadn’t in a very long time. Being rich was everything he had wanted in life.

Actually, to have been born rich was what he really wanted. “If it is money that makes you happy”, the angel continued, “I am prepare to pay you a million for your right leg”. A million was indeed a lot of money and boy did Bobo dream of that sum of money!

He was enticed to accept that offer, but looked at his leg, touched and felt it, and finally realized that he could not accept it. By the way, this was his good leg for playing soccer. Of course he wanted that money but to loose leg was too much!

The angel than made him another offer, “if you can’t do without your leg, I will give you ten million for both your arms.” Ten million would make Bobo one of the richest men in the country. Just imagine all the things he could buy with that amount of money! Cars, jewellery, houses, trips, a comfortable life. But how would he be able to drive without his arms, or wear his jewellery, or even open the doors to his houses? No! He simply could not give away his arms, which enable him to do so many things. Once more Bobo rejected the offer. Finally the angel asked, “If you want your arms, and you will not part with them for ten million, it is a wise decision, but before leaving I will give you one more opportunity. I offer you not one or ten but one hundred million for your eyes”. A hundred million is such a lot of money that there was nothing in life which Bobo could not posses. All that money would make Bobo not just one of the richest men in the country but also in the whole wide world. He would be a prestigious figure, envied, pampered and invited to all-important parties.

However, the thought of being blind forever troubled him! What would he do with the prestige if he could not see the face of those who gave it to him? What would be the point of being envied for his wealth but unable to get around without the aid of someone? And at parties he would only be able to see darkness.

Bobo knew that this was his last chance but all the same he decided to turn it down. He could not do without his legs, even if it were for a hundred million.

“You see Bobo”, said the angel, “you are very rich but know not of it. I could have offered you a thousand times more money but you would have refused it just the same. Accept the fact that you were born rich and how fortunate you are!

Only one of your legs plus one arms and eyes are valuable much more than one hundred million Rand!”

Our beloved Father says that if our eyes are good our entire body is illuminated. Good eyes are not those, which are blue, and or green or that can see across great distances. Good eyes are those that can appreciate the good things that life offers.

They enhance the virtues and minimize the defects of other people. They see difficulties as opportunities. They grace all. Be it known that the greatest wealth lies within ourselves – and this is something God has given to each and everyone of us.

The old cock and the young cock

There was a certain man named Mr. Airy who had a modest farm, but the chicken coops behind his house were a sight to see! The eggs his chickens laid were really lovely with a very yellow yolk and delicious flavor, far better than the ones found in the supermarkets.

Mr. airy had uncountable chickens but only one rooster. Old Bastian had reigned supreme over that entire huge barnyard, and for many years had been a dependable cock and of good service to his owner.

Of course the feathers began to fly! Bastian and Smarty couldn't even set eyes on each other. Although there were many hens, each rooster wanted to reign supreme, which meant that one of them would have to go.

Coming to an agreement was out of the question. The only solution was to have to have a cockfight. The fight was a gruesome one. They started in front of the chicken coop, pecking and clawing and lunging at each other all over the yard. The excited chickens cackled their heads off, running desperately from one side to another. It was a great confusion until old Bastian, completely exhausted, surrendered.

Smarty was quite full of himself. He scanned the entire yard with his bright eyes and his cockscomb stood taller then ever. A moment victory like this had to be celebrated in great style. He thought that nothing was more appropriate

than to crow from the top of the roof show that was in charge from now on.

The young cock climbed the fence and jumped on to the porch roof, which was too low for his satisfaction, and so he flew to the highest beam of the roof of the farmer's house. The young fowl puffed out his chest and let to a loud cock –a doodle-doo!! Cock-a-doodle-doo!!

He crowed so loud, that it caught the attention of a falcon flying by. This mighty bird flapped its wings vigorously and swooping down, snatched Smarty from the roof, carrying him away in his powerful claws.

There went the poor and unhappy rooster to be devoured, no one knows where, while old Bastian resumed his functions once again.

This fable shows us in its simplicity a lesson of incalculable value. He who exalts himself will certainly be laid low; not one can escape. This is the quickest and oldest way to misfortune. It was inaugurate many years ago by satan himself, and unfortunately this old and cursed road is still very well traveled. It is a one-way road that only goes down!

The fox and the vineyard

The eagerness to possess material things is a deadly trap for those who love money. The love for riches is, according to the Bible, the root of all evil. On the other hand, prosperity is a blessing of God to those who believe and sacrifice their offerings and tithes.

Prosperity comes with wisdom and health, in such a way that the one who receives it has peace and does not commit his heart to it, but has his heart totally committed to god and is therefore grateful. He realizes that what he has came from God, and not from the strength of his arm.

On the other hand, a greedy person credits himself with the reason for his own success. This kind of person leads a stingy and thrifty life and does not even enjoy what he has. The main fear is that tomorrow will bring a lack; therefore he puts away all he can, giving up even small pleasures, and running away from all those in need as he becomes suspicious even of his very own shadow.

Those ruled by the wave of greed, usually die when they least except and leave other to reap the fruit of their hard labor. Flattered by material riches, they accumulate treasures on earth but nothing in heaven. We leave behind us whatever riches we may have accumulated here on earth and take nothing with us when we die. From this life we can take nothing except love.

It is told that, once upon a time, there lived a fox in the forest near a small farm. This farm had many fruit trees,

well-kept lawns and gardens. The tree formed a shade over the paths of a yellow kind of soil that cut through the property. Everything was beautiful, but to the small fox compared with that vineyard, planted on the left side of farmer's house.

On most nights, the fox walked around the vineyard, searching for a way through the tight bamboo fence, which was standing there to make it impossible to jump over.

As it could not resist the look of those inviting juicy bunches of grapes, its only chance was to lose some weight, as this would enable it to pass through a small hole in the fence. However, to be able to do this, the fox had two very important tasks to perform. First, there was the problem of weight it had to lose, and then it had to wait for the owner of the farm to be away on a journey.

So, the fox fasted, got thin and when the owner traveled, it past through the \e tight hole and reached the vineyard. While inside, it leaped to catch the big bunches and gobbled them down with great pleasure without bothering about the grapes that were scattering on the ground.

Full of capacity with all the nice grapes, foxy fell into a sound sleep only to wake up a few hours and start al over again. The day passes by and the fox had never been so happy, until the day it remembered that the owner would soon be returning.

At this stage, the fox was grossly over-weighted and found it different even to walk. Then came the realization that it could never get through the small hole. The fox became desperate and with the fear of being caught, it embarked on a furious way of fasting.

After a few days, it got weak, thin and exhausted, and only then could the fox manage to get through the hole in the fence again.

Walking slowly away, the fox turned back to look once more at the vineyard and thought to itself: “Never again will you tempt me, for hungry and thin I went in and hungry and thin I am coming out”.

We can see that the same example of the fox and the vineyard applied in the life of man, in that, when he is born, his arms are open as if to say: ‘all the world is mine.’ When he dies, however, his arms are crossed upon his chest so as to say: ‘As I came, so am I going’.

There is only one real treasure in this world: Our god and Father: He is the safe treasure we should keep in our hearts.

“It's the frog, friends!”

Any time the Lord Jesus taught us the great value of modestly and how important it is to shun the treacherous glory of this world. By the way, this rotten glory, whose father is the devil, was offered to Jesus at the time of His temptation in the desert and, as it was despised, the tempter left defeated.

It is told that the animals of a certain area of the Amazon Rain forest used to gather together every year the Blank River, in order to organize a great festival of novelties. Each animal participating was supposed to bring in something special, like a different kind of food, interesting stories, discoveries, inventions, somersaults and so on, all in order to choose the most admirable and clever one who would receive the title of “Champion Of The Forest”.

All over was spread about the enthusiastic preparations of the animals coming from different places, moving towards the glade that had been especially made for the great exhibition. The show opened with the demonstration of the lion’s power, followed by the monkey’s somersaults and by an ovenbird that presented a crazy cake. In this way, one after the other, each animal tried to impress the spectators and, consequently, win the competition.

Robbie, the frog, who was so vain, arranged for that year’s competition something so spectacular that he was sure of his victory. He had made an agreement with a bird, as follows: he would tie a cord on the bird’s leg and hold it with his mouth. Every time he pulled the cord lowering his head that meant the bird should fly higher.

For the first time in the forest's history, everybody would see a fling-frog. The bird he hired was a black vulture, as Robbie thought, "It doesn't make sense to use a colorful bird that will outshine my nice green color". While other animals were taking turns on the stage, Robbie pains no attention to them. He was just waiting for the right moment of his triumphal entry.

When the festival was about to end, the frog came flying over the crown of the trees and began to surround the glade. The first animal that saw the frog was the giraffe, who couldn't hide its amazement and shouted, "Look up their buddies! Who's flying in the sky?" So, everybody immediately looked up and the frog became the main attraction. That was what Robbie wanted the most!

Then, gasps of amazement followed: "What a great idea!" "He's a genius!", "what courage!" In this way, every time he heard one of those sentences, Robbie pulled the cord and the bird flew higher.

Everybody was astonished, but as that animal was flying so high they couldn't distinguish who it was. All the animals kept on asking each other, "Who's the brave one?" "Is it the rat?", "Is it the tree-toad?"

When Robbie noticed that the animals were mistaking him for another animal, he quickly decided to clear all doubts by shouting, "It's the frog, friends!" And that was the last sentence of his life. The poor Robbie, as he opened his big mouth, lost the cord, which was pulling him. He fell, toppling from his glorious height, crushing himself on big stones.

The story about the frog teaches us a great lesson. Words of praise are like a trap made to pump up human pride; they

take to the highest places those who desire to be praised with the glory of this world. The higher they go the worse will be their downfall.

Read what is written in Proverbs 16:18, “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall”.

God will save me!

We need to have a humble heart before God in order to accept those who are sent in our aid.

As a missionary in Africa, I have seen so many people in suffering and believe that their prayers to God, crying for help, have been answered as God has sent people like missionaries to help them. But unfortunately, many do not accept us.

It is told that a small town was ravaged by heavy storms. The sewage system was rendered out of order and began to flood, causing the town to go under.

The local authorities announced on the radio and thorough T.V., warning the population to take refuge in public buildings on the high side of town, where they would receive all the necessary assistance until it was safe to return to their homes.

One of the citizens, however, refused to leave his home. His neighbors, before leaving, knocked insistently at his door, urging him to follow them, but he would just answer: ‘God will save me’!’

Everyone left that suburb, the roads were deserted, and even the cats and dogs had left. Only that one man remained at home. The water began to rise and covered the pavement, flooded the garden and was almost reaching the front door, when the Army truck, moving with difficulty, announced that if there was anyone who had not left yet, to get on board the truck immediately.

The man paid no attention. He saw the water creeping under the door and covering the lounger floor. He climbed onto a chair, then onto the table; from the table he went onto the roof. At that moment, a boat from the Fire Brigade, searching the area, spotted the on the roof and for a long time the crew insisted that the man should come aboard. They threw him a rope, a life vest, but he made no effort to catch them. Clinging to the T.V. antenna, he shouted: 'God will save me!'

By nightfall, the water was already touching his feet. A helicopter from the Air Force beamed light over the man and lowered a strong rope ladder that touched his arms and body and that seemed to humbly urge him to grab it. The stubborn man recoiled in order to escape the water and never looked up. The helicopter went away, searching for others who needed help.

The rain continued furiously, and then, the man drowned. In heaven he was very cross and upset. He complained that although he had a great faith he was not saved. "Saint" Peter answered: 'Your prayer arrived here and the answer was sent immediately. To your rescue, more than 10 neighbors were sent, and after the Army, and the Fire Brigade and finally the Air Force. But you, my son, did not accept any help.'

Once more we see that it is necessary to have a humble heart before God to accept those who are sent to help us. The Bible teaches that God constitutes spiritual and governmental authorities. The humble heart acknowledges them, respects them and receives them; this is a wise way to live.

You don't know what's good!

Many years ago, at a railway station called Patience, on the banks of the Long River in France, an evangelical pastor boarded the train at Evian and was going to Paris. The pastor was a very simple man, with a strong rural accent. However, whatever he lacked in formal education he had in abundance the anointing with the Holy Spirit. Humble and faithful, he served God with all his heart.

He had taken leave for a few days to visit his relatives, and in spite of the cold winter, he has enjoyed the visit very much. Having boarded the train, he entered a compartment where he put his luggage in a corner and took a seat that happened to face a catholic priest. They greeted each other politely and before the train left Evian district, the priest pulled out a pack of cigarettes and kindly offered the pastor one, “No sir, I am a pastor and in my church we do not smoke’, answered the pastor. The priest gave him a wry smile, lit his cigarette, inhaled deeply, and after releasing the smoke, he said: ‘You don’t know what’s good’.

The journey proceeded, crossing the beautiful landscape and progressive town of Bordeaux. The priest was praying the rosary offered one to the pastor: “Are you sure you would nor like to try one? It won’t do you an harm.” (At the time it was not known that smoking is major cause of cancer). No thank you, priest. No thank you.’ To what the priest answered: ‘You don’t know what’s good’.

And for the following hours, they traveled through the country and some small towns. As the train started to climb

the mountains, it became quite chilly. The priest then opened his handbag and produced a bottle. He filled a glass and offered it to the pastor: ‘Take a sip, my son, it’s good for the cold’. The pastor asked him; ‘Is it coffee, priest?’ ‘It’s cognac, my son – the priest’s cognac!’ the priest answered with a mischievous look. ‘No priest, I do not drink that!’ The priest took his glass and drank in one gulp and sighed: ‘You don’t know what’s good!’

Early in the evening, the train finally pulled onto the platform as it reached its destination at the Central Station. They disembarked together and walked to the station’s main hall. As soon as they got there, the pastor’s beautiful wife and daughter ran to hug him. They kissed and the pastor introduced them to his journey companion. ‘Where’s your wife, priest?’ asked the pastor, ‘Priest do not marry, my son, he answered.

The pastor didn’t miss the opportunity and said, ‘You don’t know what’s good!’ then he turned and walked away.

The Bible teaches us that marriage is a precious gift from God. The marriage of a pastor is of fundamental importance to his ministry, the wife being his first sheep. Together, they give birth to both physical and spiritual children. Alcoholic drinks and smoking are very bad for one’s health.

What is in heaven
that was made
by human hands?

Before the dear reader begins to think about the answer to this question, allow me to describe the legend of King Osodiav whose kingdom, many, many years ago, occupied the lands that today are parts of France and Belgium.

That kingdom was famous for the palace His Majesty had built with the best engineers and craftsmen of his time. For ever ten years, thousand of men worked hard to raise that fabulous monument, of which the tallest tower could be seen, on a clear day, from the farthest regions of that country.

Possessed by the vanity of building a monument to his glory, the king greatly abused the finances of his people. He increased taxes heavily, sold land, exchanged a great part of the grain harvest for marble, material, gold and silver in order to decorate the rooms of his palace. Because of this, the people of his kingdom found themselves in a difficult situation and became poorer by the day.

There was also in this kingdom a craftsman who, besides being on excellent carpenter, was a great expect in the secrets of Geometry. Thanks to his knowledge of lines, curves, angels and the figures formed by them, he knew as no one else how to fit together pieces of wood, precisely cut and polished, and form the most beautiful furniture ever seen in those days.

In all the pieces of indescribable beauty, the geometric carpenter displayed his geniality, as well as an impressive skill in using planes chisels and saws in his humble workshop.

Everything that was made by wood – the monumental doors of the palace with two engraved lions representing the royal crest, the spherical structure of the dome that covered the throne room, windows, arches, panels, tables, beds, wardrobes, shelves and, of course, the throne itself, had been carefully projected and elaborated by that man.

The craftsman, was therefore, obliged to work everyday until late at night; even during the vigorous winters that swept over that country four months a year.

For all that incalculable effort, the poor man received so little that he could barely support his beloved wife and dear little daughter.

His friends and relative, smitten by the high taxes and the lack of food, lived also in very grim circumstances. The clever craftsman did his level best in the hope that, with the work finished and his vanity satisfied, the king would return the life of his kingdom back to normal.

When finally the day of finishing that extraordinary palace approached, the king sent our invitations to all the kings of the neighboring countries to come, together with their noblemen, to the great inauguration party.

However, upon inspecting the building, the king felt that something was missing! He then ordered his ministers to provide the entrance hall with an absolutely spectacular piece of furniture that has never been conceived by any genius. Something that would, at first sight, impress whoever came I his palace, and that could, in some way

represent the personal and magnanimous character of His Majesty, King Osodiav, and his kingdom. The engineering ministers required that the exhausted carpenter once again design a piece that would satisfy the sovereign's will.

The poor man then designed and built a piece of infinite beauty. It was a corner table that rested against the front wall of the entrance hall. Over it were three frames with three mirrors. The two lateral mirrors were projected front wards in such a calculated manner that the image of a great painting of the king, dressed in royal robes, hanging on the opposite wall, was infinitely reflected in the central mirror. Over this piece was engraved the following phrase: BESEBER MAMUR.

On the great night of the inauguration, the kings and all the nobility of the neighboring regions began to arrive in their sumptuous chariots. From afar they could imagine the elegant and beautiful forms of that royal abode.

However, as they entered the hall and saw the piece of wood and gold, that could not go unnoticed, they immediately had to turn their eyes away. The glare of the light of the lit candelabra, hanging from the ceiling of that hall, endlessly reflected in the central mirror, caused intense pain to the eyes of who tried to admire it.

All the guests commented on this curious incident, and it eventually reached the king's ears.

On the following day, the sovereign got up early and ordered that he be taken in the royal chariot to the carpenter's home. Upon arriving, he found the artist, as usual, working arduously to support his family.

The angry king then asked: "Carpenter, your king has in his sumptuous palace many pieces made by your hands.

However, there is one that, for the importance of the place it occupies, I determined that it be of great beauty and of extraordinary geniality. And that, through the majesty of its forms, it would reveal to all the greatness of the king. However, it is precisely this piece that has in itself a defect from its conception. It brings pain to those, captivated by its beauty, who try to look into its mirror."

The poor man, laying down the tool he was working with on the balcony, answered: "Your Majesty says you have in your palace many pieces made by the hands of this humble carpenter. I also have in my house something made by the hands of the king. When I show Your Majesty this, I am sure the king will understand the concept of the piece I built and will agree that it is exactly according to the orders I received."

The king found this answer very curious. 'What could there be in such humble habitation that was made by the king's hands, who never in his life used a tool?

The craftsman took the king into his house, into a small but clean room where his little daughter lay sick in bed with her devoted mother at her side.

"Your Majesty, in satisfying the wishes of vanity, obliged your people to pay heavy taxes in order to pay for all the expenses of the imported goods for the palace. Still not satisfied, Your Majesty deprived us of the production of food in our lands, confiscating a great part of them in exchange for the marble that covers the floors of the palace, and for silk to make curtains and carpers. Yet, I was still imposed upon to work non-stop. I was oppressed by the deadlines your ministers gave me to fulfill the constant orders of the king. Always busy and with very low pay, I didn't notice that the window of my little daughter's room needed fixing.

Although closed, it allowed the freezing winter wind to slip through during the night, making her become terribly sick.

In this way, the piece that represents your character and governing, which rests against the front wall of the entrance hall, and that at first sight reflects endlessly the image of the king, shows to all visitors the kings infinite vanity. The mirror however, has a curious feature, given by its convex form in the superior part. When the lights of the candelabra are lit on great festive nights, the flames of the candles are captured by the mirror, which reflects them intensely into the eyes of all those who try to admire the piece. This causes great pain to their eyes, making them turn their faces immediately away. This pain represents the pain of your people, oppressed by the king's selfishness.

For this reason, I wrote those words above it which mean, in a Jewish dialect, 'THE INFINITE VANITY OF THE KING IS THE CAUSE OF THE PAIN OF HIS PEOPLE.'"

The king, very ashamed, learnt the lesson that the poor carpenter taught him. He ordered his ministers to pay him again for all the work he had done, but this time pay him with fairness. He also determined that the best doctor of the kingdom come to attend to the carpenter's sick little daughter.

Can the reader now answer the question that makes up the title of this story?

Here on Earth the most extraordinary works of the great Architect of the Universe surrounds us. However, no one ever paid for His work.

In Heaven, in His home, the only thing made by human hands are the marks of the nails that our sins made on the hands of His Son Jesus and that caused Him great pain!

The trip of humbleness

It is said that one day Humbleness decided to make a trip in order to bless very poor people who lived in a faraway land. No one was blessed in that nation. They were miserable people without a king or a queen. On the way to that place, there was a torrential river. So, Humbleness had to look for a boat to cross over.

The first boat found, was big and very beautiful. It had a very long sail. All its iron fittings were covered with gold and its hull was made of the most precious wood.

As soon as Humbleness asked the nice boat for help, it was ready to do so, but the payment required was very high: it wanted Humbleness to bless it with the glory and admiration from all, because it was “very beautiful and strong”.

As Humbleness could not afford that very high price, another passenger came, hired the boat and left.

Then, Humbleness found another boat. It was also a beautiful craft, ready to cruise the river, since its motor had great power. However, the payment was to be done with a great amount of gold and silver. So, while Humbleness was open-mouthed about the price, another hurried passenger came and threw a box full of gold onto the boat. Being satisfied, the boat sailed away with the rich passenger.

Now, Humbleness found another boat, which was neither as beautiful as the first one nor as powerful as the second one, but when it learnt that Humbleness was on a special mission to change the lives of miserable people, that small boat

began to move and happily took Humbleness to the other side of the river.

There, on the other side, the people were waiting for the arrival of Humbleness in order to be blessed. When they saw the boats arriving, most of them ran to the first one because it was the most beautiful craft. However, the passenger they found was Mr. Pride. So, they became more miserable.

Others ran to the second boat. They had been attracted by the noise of that powerful motor and by the shining gold on its deck. But the passenger found was Mr. Greed. Therefore, they became more miserable as well.

Few of them saw the bird boat and noticed it had something special much better than the beauty of the first one and the luxury of the second one. Then, they ran to it. They found Humbleness and became very happy. They were honored. They became kings, queen and wise ministers.

The greatest virtues taught in the Bible is humbleness, it precedes honor. Jesus affirmed that the one who humbles himself will be exalted and inherit the kingdom of God.

Israel waited for many kings and still waits for the Messiah. Our Lord Jesus, the great king and Messiah, came riding a donkey, and because of this He was not accepted.

In this story Jesus is Humbleness. We are the boat. If we take Him to people, the miserable ones will become blessed.

A woman's jealousy

It is said that fire burning up a hill, water coming down a hill and the fury of a woman are things one cannot control! He, who marries a jealousy woman, has a typhoon within his household. No one can predict when it will strike.

In fact, up to very recently the Americans had the customs of christening their typhoons – which devastated many of their cities with female names. Aurora, Elvira, Jane and so many others.

This custom, of very bad taste, was recently abolished thanks to the efforts of the American Feminist Movement.

Some say all women are jealous and that it all started with mother Eve back in the Garden of Eden. It is said that life was perfect in Paradise where our forefathers were happy and lived life in a sweet communion of love. They were together at all times, took long walks and discussed everything together without reservations and with no secret.

How was it possible then to get involved in a fight? Or an argument? There was absolutely no reason, however small it might have been, to disagree!

There was no such thing as she-told-me-so, neighborhood gossip, telephones, and television. No such thing as overdue accounts, dentist’s bills, kid’s schools. Traffic jams? Not a chance!

Think of a place where there was no worry, but perfect health, complete happiness and a whole universe to

discover! Everything was a novelty! There was not even rain, only a delicate drizzle that gently watered the vegetation in the mornings!

One day however, while picking some grapes, the favorite fruit of his wife Eve, our father Adam stopped to watch a different species of bird, with beautiful colors which he had never seen before. It was flying from one branch to the other, showing off its lovely feathers.

Adam calmly sat down and thought of what name could he give to this lovely bird. It had to be a very special name. He engaged in deep thought. Attracted by the sound the bird made, which resembled the sound of the vowed “a” when pronounced openly, he decided on a name for the bird. He got up, called the bird, which flew down from the branch where it was, and perched on his out- stretched arm.

“You are a lovely bird”, he said. “Hearing your song, I decided to name you Arara Amazonian parrot”. He thrust the bird upwards and it flew up into the trees.

Adam then picked some fruit and made his way back, not realizing how long he had been away. It was very late when he arrived. He gave Eve the fruit he had picked, and then laid down on the grass and fell asleep.

Our mother Eve was perplexed! For the first time Adam had come home so late and simply went straight to sleep. Immediately our mother, very nervous, started counting, “One, two, three, and four ……”

What was our mother so worriedly and nervously checking? What was it that had made her lose her calmness, making her feel so uneasy for the first time?

Mother Eve was counting Adam’s ribs to check whether God had taken one our to create another woman!

If this story is true or not we do not know. I have many times however heard someone say, “My God, is that the time? Oh boy, my wife is going to be highly upset! She will talk like a parrot!”

Love does not burn in jealousy. Jealousy is a cursed feeling, which sometimes, for the silliest of reasons, causes so much heartache.

How is it possible to be happy in love?

Christian, surrender your heart to the Holy Spirit and marry only to a Christian. You’ll be happy and will not have to worry about jealousies at all!

Himself the to of
the king who sentenced
death story

Many years ago, there was a king who reigned over a great nation. His army was at war, engaged in a struggle with northern states, which were threatening to take over his territories.

The king himself had been an outstanding warrior and had led his army to battle on numerous occasions. He was now, however, a tired man. He confined himself to the palace, and was kept undated on his army's fortunes by messengers. He was not yet an old man, but he felt that after all those hard fought battles he deserved a long rest.

As he was the king, his wish was his command, and no one near dreamed of questioning it. It was so that on a beautiful day, whilst strolling along the terrace of his royal house, the king caught a glimpse of a lovely woman taking a bath, not too far away. Impressed with her beauty, the king gave orders for that lady to be brought to his presence. Engaged in a conversation, he now learnt that she was the wife of one of his most valuable soldiers who was in battle with the rest of the army on the front.

Taking advantage of the situation, believing that no one would find out, the king took the lady as his own and obliged her to spend that night with him in the palace. Very early the following day, the king sent the lady away and tried to forget what had happened the night before. He asks her not to tell anyone and to return to her house as if nothing had occurred.

All seemed to be in order. So much so that the king no longer had any recollection of what had happened that night. But one day, the same woman returned to the palace, requesting a private meeting with the king. She alleged that it was a matter of grave seriousness to the kingdom. The king agreed to meet her in private. It was here that the king came to know that she was pregnant. It was as if the skies had fallen down on his head!

He wondered how her husband would react to the fact that his wife was pregnant, once he returned from the battlefield – where he had been for many months. He would most certainly take her to court, and in accordance with the laws of that country, she would be punished by death! How would it be possible to save her and the child without revealing their sin?

The king was desperate, and more so as he was unable to consult with any of his advisors! An idea came to mind, which would allow him to cover up the problem. He thought: 'Why not call the soldier back urgently and concede him a few days or rest? Coming back home, he would naturally desire his wife. Upon returning to the battlefield he would learn of his wife's pregnancy and naturally the child to be his'.

It was so that the soldier was brought to the palace on the king's orders. After having had the honor of dining with the king, he was ordered to make use of his leave and spend the night with his wife. The king was convinced that the problem had been solved.

The following morning, he was to be greatly surprised. His Majesty found the loyal soldier sleeping at the palace doorstep. "What is this, man?" said the sovereign. "Did I not have you brought here so that you could spend time

with your wife? What are you doing, lying down here?" "Your Majesty", answered the soldier, "I feel very honored for all that Your Highness has done for me, and I do not think I am worthy of it. I felt immensely distressed to spend the night with the woman I love, while my fellowmen sleep out in the fields, defending the nation. I felt it would be the right thing to spend the night here. I would be sharing the pain of a chilly night with my fellow soldiers".

The king felt terribly ashamed. What could he say to such a noble warrior? More than ever, the king feared him. Unable to make him break off with his loyalty to his fellow soldiers, he sent him back to the battlefront. Before leaving, the king handed him a secret letter to the Army Commander. The letter determined that the soldier be sent to the bloodiest of battlefields. This resulted in the loyal soldier's death.

The king, then, married the widow and thought that all had been very neatly solved. The kingdom was now at peace once again.

One day, the king was seated on his throne, attending to his subjects, when an old prophet approached him with an interesting story. He said, "There were two men in a city. One was rich and the other poor. The rich man had many sheep and cattle, but the poor one had none except for a small ewe-lamb, which he had bought and looked after in his house. It ate food from his plate and drank from his cup. It slept in his arms and was treated as if it were a member of the family. One day, the rich man received a guest. Not wanting to sacrifice one of his own sheep or cattle, he took the poor man's ewe-lamb and sacrificed it instead and prepared a meal for his visitor".

The king, who once was a poor shepherd, interrupted the prophet's narrative indignant and exclaimed: "As sure as the

Lord lives, the man who committed this criminal act deserves to die". All the court fell into silence upon hearing king's rage. The man who committed this justice will never escape and surely is a dead man, they thought.

Before the soldiers set out to seek this criminal, the man of God said to the king; "You are the man! And with your own words you have condemned yourself to death".

This king who condemned himself to death is no other than King David. God forgave him, however the punishment for his sin was perhaps one of the biggest applied in the Bible. And thought his sin was committed in secret, eventually it was exposed. What he desperately wanted to hide is still today, nearly 4.000 years later, and a topic of discussion.

Jesus teaches us there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed. May the Holy Spirit guide and keep us in the battlefield. Had King David been there, he would have avoided seeing what he did, while strolling on the balcony.

Mr. Moreira and the shoe salesman

There is certain nostalgia when one thinks of the local shoe shop. We would dispose of our old pair of shoes the minute they no longer were a cause of pride, but rather of embarrassment. Although one is usually not that faithful a customer when it comes to a shoe shop, compared, to say, one's hairdressing salon – the local shoe shop always seems to attract that loyalty and nostalgia.

At these shops one would usually find an attentive owner who would not mind shuttling up and down with boxes and boxes of shoes – in the noble attempt to satisfy the client's wishes. It would be a scenario of bending down to fit on the shoe and patiently awaiting for the customer's final verdict. This would normally be followed by the question: "Would you like them in a box or would you prefer them in a bag?"

Frankly, I always felt uneasy having someone bend down to fit a shoe on my foot, more so when it was an elderly gentleman. This seemed unjust to me, though, like any other noble profession, he would simply be doing his job.

Mr. Moreira, one of the loyal customers of that shoe shop, was a gentleman in his fifties, who worked as a laboratory sales representative. He was a resident in the suburb and an old client of the shoe shop. He never did without the assistance of a shoe salesman as he had great difficulty trying the shoes on himself, more due to the sheer size of his belly – and age too.

In his usual humble manner, the salesman bent down before those short stocky legs, and with the assistance of a shoe fitter, eased the one fat foot into the shoe. The lace was tied and knotted and Mr. Moreira did nothing but show great signs of pain – as if he were sucking from a sour lemon.

The amusing thing was that Mr. Moreira never uttered a word of complaint. To the contrary, he would insist on taking a pair of shoes a bit small than his own correct size. The salesman, though intrigued, thought it not in his capacity to question his customer's decision, and would end off the sale with the usual: "Box or bag?"

What in the world made Mr. Moreira purchase a smaller shoe size? His profession obliged him to walk long distances while doing his rounds to a great number of doctor's rooms – always carrying his briefcase, crammed with samples. How could he inflict and withstand so much pain on himself, as it must have been an uncomfortable experience – especially on the boiling hot days of Rio de Janeiro?

Mr. salesman found himself many times on the verge of questioning Mr. Moreira, only to change his mind at the very last minute.

On a beautiful Saturday afternoon, Mr. Moreira visited the shoe shop. He was in a cheerful mood. From his behavior one could not tell that his wife had passed away only a few days before. His face was a jovial one. For the first time, he as truly happy and at ease life. He sat down to choose a new pair of shoes. It turned out to be a more beautiful and expensive pair than he had ever bought before.

The salesman brought him the usual size but this time Mr. Moreira smiled and said, "No good friend, I do not wear that size any longer. Bring me a larger size please". The pair of

shoes that the salesman now brought fitted his feet perfectly, and unlike one who steps around on glass, Mr. Moreira walked around cheerfully in his new pair of shoes.

Before leaving the shop, he revealed his secret to the salesman: “Friend, I am sure that on many occasions I puzzled you when I bought smaller sized shoes which made me walking in them an unbearable and painful experience. I was an unhappily married man and had a wife who tormented me, always complaining and talking like a chatterbox. While I was at work I would remind myself that at the end of the day I would have to go back to all that nonsense and I would console myself with the fact that, getting home, at least I could get rid of the pain, inflicted by the shoes once I took them off. Now, after much suffering, I am finally free of torment and feel happy for that! I am a widower and no longer need smaller sized shoes”.

Discreet women who speak few but wise words are the beautiful ones. On the other hand, those who talk their heads off, involve themselves in other people’s business, make snide remarks, making their husband’s lives a living nightmare, and are not.

Dear reader, I have been reading the Bible for more than thirty years now and have found a short verse, repeated exactly the same in the different chapters that talks about the subject we are now commenting on. I invite the reader to reflect with me.

“Better to live on a corner of the rood than share a house with a quarrelsome wife”. Proverbs 21:9 / 25:24

Those are the only verses in the entire Bible that are duplicated.

NYVE and the
“Clay Saint”

Many years ago there was a small town where the folk were gullible, kind hearted and extremely religious.

The most elegant house belonged to a certain Colonel Vendler. It was the headquarters of his ranch “Saint Barbixa”, also know as “Yellow Stone’, due to the fact that there was a huge stone of his color, from which a lovely waterfall flowed. However, it had a change of name after certain events had taken place. The first lady of the ranch, Swiny Vendler, widow of the Colonel’s grandfather, whilst praying in the woods, had the vision of a saint, who in the coming years would visit the devout lady at night and always at precisely the same spot.

The widow went about relaying this happening to the local priest who, upon hearing the description she gave of the vision, had no hesitation in affirming it to be that of Saint Barbixa. The town naturally was taken aback by this phenomenon and had named it their Patron Saint.

As years went by, the widow came on in age and eventually passed away. Much loved by the town’s folk, she was canonized as “Saint Grandmother Swiny Vendler”.

The Colonel, being the grandson of the lady Saint, was a highly respected man. He had played diverse roles within the town’s community. He had been a sheriff, school principal, judge, defender of the Holy Hospital and even Mayor of the town for three terms. He was probably the greatest figure in the community. The Colonel was well

known for never letting anyone down on his promise and also never missing a Sunday mass. The man obviously had his faults, yet all agreed: “A good promise is one which is made by the Colonel!”

Peace and tranquility prevailed until one rainy night a stranger character approached the outskirts of the town. Nyve was a second-class thief, who made his living from conning honest and innocent people. As he approached the town, he stumbled into foot travelers who were seeking shelter from the rain under a big fig tree. Joining them, he set about making inquiries on the town. As they were an open folk, they gave him a full account on the town’s history, its people and recent happenings. It was as if his devious mind had seen a light.

He went on his way, leaving the travelers behind. Approaching the woods in the vicinity of the Colonel’s house that cold rainy night, he stumbled into the yellow stone and waterfall. He climbed the tallest tree there was, and whistled at the top of his head. Disturbed by the racket, the Colonel sent his guards out its cause.

Nyve climbed down from the tree, covered his body with wet sand and made as if he were praying – like saint.

This startled the guards and they ran back to the Colonel to inform him that Saint Barbixa was back.

The men now returning to the spot and, upon seeing this image, fell down on their knees. Nyve was taken to the best room in the house. All the town’s folk brought him presents and he put these away in a great chest. All wanted to get a glimpse of the Patron Saint.

On behalf of all, the Colonel met with the Saint and behind closed doors got down on his knees and said: “Saint

Barbixa, I come on behalf of the town's folk to request that you perform us a miracle so that we all can be marveled by it". "Come in, my son", responded the astute Nyve, "For I will perform two miracles. You must, however, promise me that you will not take back all the gifts that you have given me and that the secret of the Saint will not be revealed to anyone". "All that you ask will be granted, oh Saint! You have my word that your wishes will be fulfilled," responded the Colonel.

"The first miracle I performed", said Nyve "was to change an unscrupulous thief into a Saint with the help of rain and soil. I am no better than a thief and a common man. The second miracle was that by revealing my identity to you, I once again changed the Saint back into a thief".

The Colonel was furious! He felt betrayed and humiliated, though there was absolutely nothing he could do, faced with the smartness of the thief. There was no way he could or would renege on his word.

And so, Nyve vanished that very same night into the darkness with the town's offering. He came across the same travelers he had met earlier on and revealed to them that his grandfather who had told him a story of a rich widow whom he had met in the woods had given his name to him. It was here – where there lay a yellow rock and a waterfall – that he had met a secret lover on many a night who had presented him with many gifts. The name of Nyve was derived from the letters taken from the name of this beautiful lady – (the two last and two first). Hence, the true secret of the Saint had been revealed.

Nyve had a good laugh on Saint Grandmother Swiny Vendler – or better Grandmother "Swindler"!

It is said to see how multitudes of people are drawn to so many fables and stories when the Bible teaches us there is only one God, and to reach Him there is one way, Jesus. Idols are the work of mankind and the only miracles they can perform are the ones that fool unwary hearts.

The secret of a man of God

Sipho was a young man who lived in the homelands. He was always overwhelmed by the teachings of Jesus, especially the ones concerning the spreading of the gospel into the world. Each time he read “The great Commission”, found in Mark 16:15, his heart would desire eagerly to go to distant lands carrying the name of Jesus.

However, as a young man living in a world filled with temptations, he was constantly tormented by evil thoughts. Deeply disappointed, he often found himself being dragged into the desires of the flesh. He would say what he should not say; feel what it was rather too late. Filled with remorse and angered by it, his dream of becoming an evangelist was fading away fast, daily. “How can I dominate over my flesh and conquer myself” thought Sipho, “Is it possible?” he continued to wonder.

His holiday was near and he then decided to spend them with his uncle, a true man of God, who preached the gospel in the big city of Johannesburg. He could hardly contain the hours of the trip, thinking strictly about the about to the question he would ask his uncle: “How can I dominate over myself?”

When he arrived, after exchanging greetings, he called his uncle aside and said: “Uncle, I have come from a great distance to ask about your secret of living a life where your flesh does not rule over you. You have been preaching the gospel for years and no one has ever heard of you backsliding?” The uncle understood and promised to help,

but not at that very moment because the night church service was about to begin, he had to get going. He invited Sipho to go with him.

After the meeting, tirelessly the pastor heard and counseled the people. It was late when all the people had finally left, that the pastor and Sipho went to the radio station where the pastor had a program to present every night. Later that night, exhausted, they went to sleep.

In the morning of the next day, when Sipho woke up, he found the pastor dressed and ready to go to the church. They had breakfast in a hurry and soon both of them were off to the church. They were busy all day, either in services or counseling the people personally or by phone, planning the neighborhood evangelism, organizing assistant's to the district hospital, writing testimonies for the local newspaper and soon it was, once more, time for the radio program. Completely drained, Sipho would have a deep sleep.

The days few by, and Sipho got really involved in the work. His uncle's rhythm was contagious and his conversation was very cheerful. By room, they would sit down to a simple but plentiful meal, after that, the pastor would rest for an hour. It was like this for 7 days a week, 4 weeks a moth. He never complained because he was too happy to do it. His wife followed him at the same pace, together they were complete and it seemed that they could have a conversation of a thousand words with just a look or a smile.

The environment was always pleasant although very busy. The days flew by and soon it was time for Sipho to leave. As he said goodbye, his uncle asked him if he still wanted the answer to his question.

Surprised, Sipho noticed that in all that period of time, he had forgotten all about his bad thoughts, feelings and weaknesses and thus found his answer.

Having a good wife and a life dedicated to the work of God on the altar, is by far, the simplest and best secret for a man of God, in his quest for a sin-free way of life. This is how Sipho got to know the best way to serve God. Completely on the altar of God, was the most simple and infallible secret of the man of God.

The story of
Phuza Kakhulu

There is a popular tale of a powerful king who reigned north of the Congo River. His name was Phuza Kakhulu, the great Fire King! There was a large entourage moving through the jungle of which the king was a member. It so came to be that in his wild jungle, the king lost his way. After having walked for many hours, he found himself in a small open space beside a river where he found a rudimentary hut. He looked a very tired man, his gown all torn, giving the appearance of a pauper.

As he approached the hut, he was warmly greeted by an old miner, who, for many years, had been searching for gold in the waters of the small stream. The two men sat on soft skins, which covered the inner side of the hut; he was offered a tasty drink, which was fermented with wild fruits and of a naturally high sugar flavor and alcohol content.

After his first drink, the king, testing his host's reaction, said: "Well my good man, you know that while I was part of this entourage, making its way through the jungle – being a First Officer of the Personal Guard of King Phuza, Supreme of all tribes – I was also the group leader so as to foresee any potential dangers, but lost my way. And so, I found this hut". The elderly man feeling honored responded, "I am a happy man, for I thought I was a forsaken son of God and mankind. But now I see that my humble abode has brought such a distinct official, honoring me with this unexpected visit".

The Royal member laughed to himself. He had another glass of this potent drink and continued, “Well I am actually not an official of the sovereign King Phuza, as I had said to you. I now feel more at ease, knowing you better at heart and can reveal to you that I not only am an official of the guard but the General-Commander of the Army of the Empire of the king of all tribes”. The elderly man was even more impressed. “If it is so”, he said, “I see that this honor conceded to me is the largest I have ever had in my life, for I never thought I could be of service to such a noble servant of the great king”.

The king, who was a compulsive drinker, had another full glass. He was now starry-eyed and, unable to hold back the giggles, said, “Well it’s credible, if you feel so happy to be receiving a General, I would not like to disappoint you, but what I truly am is the Prime-Minister of the kingdom and all the conquered lands, in charge of all the riches and numerous properties in this our immense land. I have under my personal control the finances of the king who does nothing without my advice. My word is only surpasses by that of the king himself!”

The poor man was wide-mouthed and his eyed gazed at the king as if he were the greatest discover of all. He exclaimed, “I no longer feel dignified to be serving your Excellency with such a simple drink in this humble hut. If there is someone whom I can tell this story to I will tell that person that you were here in my own hut. The right hand to the great king of all tribes. I will receive favors and the story I now have to tell will certainly interest all those who come to hear it!”

His Majesty could not contain himself and roared our laughing. He amused himself with the look on the poor man’s face, and after having had another full glass of the

potent drink, his eyes now very red and light-headed, he took a deep breath and said, “Good and hospitable man, the man who is sitting with you this very moment in your hut is not a simple Official, a General of the Prime-Minister”, he said. His voice now had been affected by all the alcohol he had consumed. “I am the very King Phuza Kakhulu, Majesty of all tribes, the Great and Terrible King of Fire!”

The poor man took the bottle, which lay between the two, pulled away the glass from the drunken king’s hand and responded, “Stop right there, poor man! You had better stop drinking for you will next say you are God Himself. Now I know who you truly are. You are a weakling who cannot contain himself without having a drink. I no longer enjoy the pleasure of your company”.

So the old man, feely very offended by the drunken man’s joke on the king, dragged him to small canoe by the riverside, and setting him inside, let the river waters carry him down stream.

This is the state alcohol get one into. No matter if one is a worker, lawyer, student, doctor, minister or even a king. If he can’t control himself, he is a poor unfortunate slave to the drink, taken by the waters of life, God knows where too!

The Sacred Bible teaches us: “who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. Your eyes will see stranger sights and your mind imagine confusing things. You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. ‘They hit me,’ you will say, ‘but I’m not hurt! They beat me,

but I don’t feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?’’’ Proverbs 23: 29-35.