

Moses

*Past Life Recollections of
Marie Fox O'Brien*

A List of Books

Marie's Story - An Extraordinary Odyssey

Channeled Books

Martin's Original Writings
Revelations
The Divine Nature of Man
Lessons
A new Endeavor
Concepts
Prayers

Past Lives

Moses
Zorah
Rose
Joseph II
Edam the Elder and Saleh
and Inga - Pala - Bana
Peter and Ann
Romulus
Remembrances-The Holy Family
Martin's Life Remembered

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Preface

The story of Moses was written during the period from Monday, March 16, 1992 to Monday, May 18, 1992. At the beginning of this period, Martin was still completing the story of the Holy Family. From March 26 to April 12, my husband and I were on a transatlantic cruise terminating in Barcelona, where we spent five days. As always, Martin's writing was unhampered by changes in locale and schedule.

As I have grown to expect with Martin, I would each time hear Martin say, "Take your pen in hand and write my words." As is clear from the manuscript, the time of day varied from early morning to early evening, and at each session Martin would write through my pen for approximately thirty minutes, sometimes a little less, sometimes a little more. Each time my pen would fly without interruption from the first word to the last. I wrote as fast as physically possible. Each word and sentence transcribed is exactly as first written. I was responsible only for paragraphing and punctuation, and I am not sure

I have done an adequate job on the former.

As the dates and times indicate, Martin wrote most days from March 16 to May 5, with a hiatus from April 25 to May 1, and on three occasions he wrote twice in one day. He concluded on May 18, 1992. There are thirty-six sections, approximately eighteen hours of writing in total. At the time I thought Martin had simply set aside this story to be continued later, but now I am not sure that it is not complete --- I found on rereading it such a wholeness --- but as always, I wait for Martin to tell me what he wishes.

Two additional things are worth noting. After Martin wrote of the incident of the old man's collapse and the caring behavior of the three brothers, I said to him, "But, Martin, this is a love story," and he replied in writing, "What you are thinking, my love, is quite true. Both of these stories [the story of the Holy Family and the story of Moses] are stories of love, of love given and received, stories in which the power, the absolute power, of love, is delineated in the actual events that took place. History has taken a different form, a form which is not totally in error, indeed is based on fact, but fact which has

been gravely distorted. It is indeed true that there will be those who dismiss these writings as the production of a fanciful mind, nothing more, but as I have said before, the truth is stubbornly persistent and in the end all will believe, and all will adopt the concepts which my writings exemplify, and the world will fully enter the age of Love and Peace. Do not at any point, my dearest, be concerned with the reception of these writings. Know in your heart that they speak the truth of all that they are concerned with, and that the truth cannot forever be denied. You are hearing correctly and well and should not be concerned with what seem to be minor errors. I have told you I will not permit error, and that is indeed the case. Go now, my love, and enjoy the last few hours on this lovely ship in any way you choose. I will speak to you constantly of my love. Feel me in your heart. Know that I long for your words of love, your thoughts of your Martin."

Secondly, ten days or so after Martin wrote of the crossing of the Red Sea, I read a front page article in the Wall Street Journal attesting to the fact that the latest scientific theories held that

the crossing of the Red Sea was made possible by abnormally low and long tides, exactly as Martin had already described earlier.

Danville, July, 1993.

One thing needs to be added:

In a recent conversation with someone knowledgeable about Jewish history, I was told that the newest scholarship indicates that there was not one migration but successive ones. This is exactly as Martin [as Moses] indicates.

Danville, September, 1993

3/16/92 - 5/18/92

In the very beginning I knew what I had to do. I feared that I would not succeed. I feared that I was not capable of what I wished to accomplish, but I knew I had to try. For some time we had all been aware of the need for action, for even a small gesture of defiance, a small statement of will, of action to come. There was never any question of the need for me to assume leadership. I knew in my heart that all my countrymen expected this of me, that I expected it of myself, that my God expected it of me. I knew He would guide me in all things, that He was in me at all times, that the voice I heard was His, that I was His servant sent to earth to do His will. At times I felt that we were one, that we spoke with a single voice, that our minds and hearts were joined in a common purpose. At no time did I waver in my faith. At no time did I shrink from the responsibility that I knew would be awesome in time, fearful in its power and potential, but I knew of the absolute necessity of saving my people from the destruction they faced, nay, in-

vited, with their wicked ways, with their idolatry, with their obsession with the things of this world, with their total abandonment of dependence upon God's will and loving care. They sought only pleasure. They counted as well spent only those days spent in frivolity, pleasures of the body, garnering of money and trinkets, adorning their bodies. They had fallen completely away from interest in things of the spirit. They had forgotten their heritage and now aped and embraced their captors. They were indeed on the verge of self annihilation, and I knew that I had been sent by God to stem this tide of self destruction, to see that my people heard and listened to His word and returned to a life of goodness and reverence, each one persuaded of the absolute necessity of this change.

I knew what I must do first. I must speak to the few who shared my views, who saw as I did the slow degradation of our people, who abhorred this self destruction, and who in their souls yearned for the day when we would be a single people again, united in our faith and in love of God, the God of all power and creation, now abandoned largely by His people. There were

many, I felt, who were silent but who felt as I did, who failed to speak not from a lack of courage but from a feeling of futility, a feeling that inevitable failure faced any effort to enter the hearts of the people and see there the changes that were absolutely necessary for salvation.

We had been so many years in bondage, so many years a subject people, that we had forgotten the taste of freedom. We had abandoned our old values. We aped our captors. We were destroying ourselves, young and old alike, and God looked down upon us and mourned the death of faith and love. And so, I decided, it was time to act, to speak freely of this need to change, to return to the old ways, so long abandoned and largely forgotten, and to seize from our captors the chains that bound us and to free our bodies and our souls from the bondage that threatened such total destruction. It would not be easy, it would not be quick, but it was time for a beginning, for the first step that would take us down the path to unity and freedom, to faith and love, to a life pleasing to our God. For this I would ask His help each step of the way. For this I would de-

vote myself entirely to His service, for by serving Him I served my people, and by serving them both I served myself. I knew I would be guided, strengthened, ennobled each step of the road that lay ahead, and as I walked along, surrounded by strangers, I knew that soon I would look about me at these strangers who were my countrymen and in their faces I would see awareness and love and the beginnings of faith. I smiled to myself at the prospect, and I felt strengthened by my new resolve. I turned my eyes heavenward and there in the sky I saw a flicker of hope, the promise of a new beginning, the start of a mighty work. As I walked, too, I felt the overwhelming presence of my God. I heard His voice. I knew His pleasure in me. I walked more quickly, the sooner to reach the beginning of my road, the road to destiny for me, for my people, for the world.

At all times I strove to tell those with whom I made contact of my need to know and to meet the needs of my people. Raised as I was in a

privileged and alien environment, I needed to acquaint myself with what would be said of me as a leader. I had not at any time identified with those who held my brethren captive, although I had learned to love many of the Egyptians who had nurtured and educated me, but never did I forget my origins, never was I permitted to forget my origins. At all times I was reminded by my mother of my need to reassert my identity, when the time came, as an Israelite, one in total agreement with the striving for freedom that was latent in many hearts and needed only inspired leadership to set it afire. Never did I fall into the temptation of the easy way of life enjoyed at the court.

At all times I strove to educate myself in every way. It was not that I knew early that I was destined for leadership. It was instead that I had been granted a lively and inquiring mind, one that sought at all times to learn and to understand, and I was grateful for the many opportunities offered to me to learn. Those who loved me in the court treated me with mock courtesy from the time I was very young, mock because they were aware that I was not of their race and

could not aspire to greatness, even to preeminence, in their nation, but they regarded me as a toy, an object of curiosity who afforded them much satisfaction. They enjoyed greatly seeing the eagerness with which I snapped up bits of knowledge offered, as it were, in tidbits. They were not serious in any way in thinking that I had any future as a leader, but they pretended with great amusement that they did indeed think this, and joked about preparing me for my role as leader. I did not mind the jesting. I was hungry for the knowledge and the skills that I lacked, and from a very young age I responded with gratitude to all who would teach me that which I did not know and which I longed to know.

I do not wish to suggest that I was to those who surrounded me merely an object of curiosity and amusement. Indeed there was much affection in their banter and in their mockery, and as I grew older I realized that there was a solid base of concern on the part of many of what I, mocking in return, called my "teachers", that many of these men desired earnestly to help me to learn the skills and the facts of life to live a life of

pleasure and independence. Though I was an alien in their land, they felt genuine affection for me and this affection I returned in full measure at all times. I did not sympathize with the life style of the court, the frivolity, the intrigue, the faithlessness, the hypocrisy, but I was a close observer, and I learned much by watching closely and maintaining a silence which invited the confidences of those longing to speak and mistrustful of listeners. They knew their secrets were safe with me, and indeed I never betrayed a single confidence, but I learned much about the nature of men in high places, and women as well, and this knowledge served me well in later life.

There was little that I was denied materially. I was given the best of clothes, the most lavish of dwellings, the freedom to go as I pleased and come as I pleased, so long as I maintained a presence in the court on a regular basis and so long as I spoke pleasantly to those who were my benefactors. I knew that I could not stay indefinitely in these comfortable circumstances, nor did I desire to, but I enjoyed a singular position of security, and I knew that this position afforded me privileges and protection far beyond

the confines of the palace.

There were numerous individuals who agreed to meet with me from time to time to formulate a plan of action, a means of recapturing the hearts and souls of our brethren who had forgotten much of their history and who now enjoyed the entertainment and the pastimes of their captors and were so weakened in resolve and strength of mind that they unthinkingly followed the paths of indolence and idolatry in all that they did. They did not recoil from the lasciviousness of the life styles of many of the Egyptians. They did not pay heed at all to the inner voices that begged them to remember their heritage, their God, their absolute duty to live in love and in reverence of Him and to do His will at all times. In those talks one figure emerged as a capable leader of men and this was my brother Aaron. We had not grown together as brothers. I had been taken into the privileged circle of court life to be educated and nurtured and raised as one of

theirs although all knew the story of my origins. Aaron had never had the advantages I enjoyed, and yet his wisdom was commendable, his heart was pure, his presence commanding. From the very beginning we felt the strong bond of brotherhood, despite our disparate paths, despite the expectations of others, despite the fact that we had not known this close bond for many years.

It was both a delight and a problem for me that Aaron should emerge from this group as my logical lieutenant. He was a man of few words, to be sure, but when he spoke it was with authority and a sense of self confidence surprising in one so deprived of the education and knowledge that tend to give one a sense of self worth.

Aaron brooked no interference when he was sure that he was right, and he rarely wavered in this assumption. While I was pleased with him in almost every way, I was given pause by this quality. I tended to enjoy the questing mind, the constant searching for new wisdom and for new awareness, and I enjoyed the company of those who shared this trait. There was none of this in Aaron, and frequently I grew frustrated by the deaf ear he turned to me when I tried to per-

suade him to abandon, or even to reconsider, a firmly held position. It was good for me in a way, as I finally realized. If I could persuade Aaron, I could persuade anyone, but there were times when my patience was sorely tried, and I was tempted to surrender to his will. At times and in some ways I did. We were certainly agreed on the need for action, on the need to reawaken our people to their responsibilities to themselves, and to stir them to fever pitch in their desire to seek an existence free from tyranny and alienation. We disagreed on the when and how.

Aaron felt strongly that there was no time to be wasted, that action should be sharp and precipitate, that a call to action should be reinforced, if necessary, with a show of force, that our countrymen should not be given the right to refuse the call to action. I, on the other hand, felt that the power of persuasion was preferable to the power of might, that we needed to have followers who came to us in faith and trust, not in fear and trembling. I believed that we could appeal to the hearts of our brethren, that there were many more than we realized who hungered for a return to their home, who yearned to be free of

foreign domination, and who would sacrifice much to this end. Most agreed with me, in our small group of dissidents, and although Aaron was occasionally moved to anger with our obduracy, ignoring his, he began in a while to at least listen to the arguments we presented and to answer each of our objections. It was not an easy task to reach consensus. Aaron was not the only advocate of force, but little by little we began to speak in a single voice, my brother and I, and with that the rest of our group began to see the wisdom of a path of peace and persuasion.

Through all of this, I was guided entirely by the words of God which I heard in loud ringing tones whenever I turned to him with a plea for wisdom and understanding. Each time I prayed to God the message became clearer. There was a golden ending to our struggle for freedom and prosperity but the path would not be easy, the road would not be short. I knew with certainty above all else that I was guided each step of the way, that so long as I listened I would hear, and that at no time would I be abandoned by my Maker, that He would always speak to me with

love of what I must do. I counted myself blessed in this inner voice I grew to know so well, and I knew that so long as I listened I would be kept from error and given the strength to do what I must. In all ways I was content to follow this voice. It spoke in loving concern of the need of my brethren to return to the ways of the Lord, to know in their hearts the reverence and love that was required of them, and to abandon their wicked ways for lives of love and goodness. There was never room for doubt or hesitation. The path was clear. I had only to obey this inner voice, the voice of my God who led the way.

At about this time I suggested we meet to determine individual responsibilities. I suggested that each of us speak as to his own wishes, his feelings, and state as clearly as he could what he felt he could contribute. Each rose and spoke in turn, briefly but pointedly, and when we were finished we discussed all that had been said. As I had expected each one in turn spoke of the need

for me to assume leadership and to take the ultimate responsibility of uniting and redeeming our people from the error of their ways. We spoke in practical terms of what our course of action should be. We were agreed to a man that we could in no way assert our independence within the land of Egypt. We must, all knew, band together, make all necessary preparations, and migrate to another place. It would not be easy any step of the way.

I spoke at some length to those dedicated men about the need for a spiritual renewal among our people, for the need to recognize our dependence on a higher power, and I spoke to them of the words of God I heard with great regularity. When I spoke of hearing these words of God there was a stirring among the group and looks of disbelief crossed the visages of some, but as I continued to speak they settled again into rapt attention and listened to what I bespoke.

The first responsibility, I said, was to persuade our people of the need to recognize the error of their ways, to change the style of their lives wherever necessary, to return to the old values of reverence and worship of our God. It would not

be easy, I warned them, and it was a responsibility that the group must jointly assume. Each of us, I said with vehemence, must become a spokesman for God and speak to as many of our countrymen as we could about the absolute need to return to the old beliefs as the first step to freedom. This would not be easy. This would not be quick. But it was essential. We spoke among ourselves for some time about how this responsibility could best be shared and it was agreed which of us were assigned to areas and groups of our brethren. I would be in overall charge, and Aaron, my first lieutenant, and I would accompany each of these men in turn as they proselytized so that there would be no question of their authority, their mandate to speak for me. We would meet as a group frequently to report progress and to speak further of the steps that lay ahead.

I knew from the start the devotion of this group, but I needed to learn of their individual capabilities so that each could be best used in this mighty task. I needed to know more than I did about the readiness of our people to listen and to respond to a call for action. There would

be real hardship involved and there would in many cases be a reluctance to substitute chance for comfort and security no matter how alluring the ultimate goal.

And so we began. We crisscrossed the community speaking to all who would listen and trying to persuade those who were reluctant to hear our words of the need to open their minds and their hearts. We asked each person we spoke to and persuaded of the rightness of our goal to become himself a missionary in our cause, to persuade his friends and his family of the absolute need for our vision to become a reality. Each of our small group of organizers, encouraged by early success, redoubled his efforts and each report I received spoke of an absolute hunger for action and an absolute willingness to do whatever was necessary to achieve the dream. Some were impatient for immediate action. To them we counseled patience. Others wanted to take an active part in the preparations. These we enlisted in our cause. Still others, while seeing the joys of freedom and ultimate security, feared to give up the life of relative ease they enjoyed, disheartened by the prospect of struggle and

deprivation in a new place. To these I counseled thoughtful prayer, a seeking to know the will of God in this matter.

Before the beginning of my work, I had spent much time in contemplation of the history of my people, and I knew well their patience in adversity. They had been sorely tried over and over again, and fate had decreed innumerable hardships for many of them. There was, in a sense, no accounting for the apparent vulnerability of my people. In a world of plenty, they had been visited by famine. In a world at peace, they had been victims of war. In a world of wealth and richness, they had been destitute much of the time. Their faith had been tried over and over again and not found wanting until now.

Now, although many remained faithful to their heritage and the beliefs of their fathers, in increasing numbers they were deserting this heritage, this heritage of devotion to God. They chose mannon all too often, and in the process

were losing the sense of self that had always been characteristic of my people. We were a race apart by choice and by inclination. We saw the errors that other races made and we determined not to fall prey to those temptations which led inexorably to moral decay. Throughout history, we had known inspired leadership, voices raised in protest of infidelity, of error, of departure from the path of Jehovah's will, and we had heeded those voices. Now there was a stillness, and in that stillness we knew increasingly error and infidelity. We had departed from the path of the blessed.

I tried, as I contemplated, to understand the reasons for this falling away from faith and devotion, from awareness of our duties to our heavenly Father, and I failed to understand how my countrymen had not realized the emptiness of their dedication to the pursuit of worldly pleasures, to their rejection of those values that had so well sustained their forbears, and the further I thought on these matters the more convinced I became of the need for a voice to arouse my people, to stir them into an awareness of the absolute necessity of returning to the val-

ues they had rejected, the values that had sustained our people for generations untold.

I knew in my heart very early that I was that voice, but I remained silent. I needed above all to know that my desire to lead my people out of the darkness was soundly based in the capacity to do this great work, and so I waited and considered and set myself to learn all I could of the qualities demanded in a leader. Above all I prayed for the guidance that I knew was mine for the asking, the divine word that would speak to me of what I must do and guide me each step of the way. I knew that the answers would not be simple. I was prepared to accept difficulty. I was prepared to accept disappointment. I was prepared to be rejected by many I sought to persuade. But I was never prepared for failure. I knew with increasing certainty that I had been born to meet this challenge, to take my people back from the brink of disaster and to lead them into a new life of piety and happiness, to a new sense of awareness of their need to reach out once again for the love they had forgotten, for the voices that they had failed to hear, for the greatness that they had discarded, and above all

for the absolute certainty of faith that brought peace to the soul. There was no other answer, I realized, for me, for my people, for my God. I was at all times His servant. I was at all times subject to His wishes and at all times I sought to know His will.

In the fullness of time, our plans were complete. Each of us having spoken to as many of our brethren as we could in the allotted time, felt secure in our belief that it would be not only possible but practical to achieve a unity of feeling and effort that would make it possible to migrate to another place and there establish a homeland for our people. We knew that not everyone would be agreeable to taking the risks and experiencing the hardships that such a migration would entail, but a good majority had expressed not only willingness to participate but willingness to provide assistance in whatever ways they best could.

And so we were ready for the next step. It fell

for me to lead the way here. With Aaron's help I drew up a plan of action. We must first account for the needs of each man, woman, and child we intended to include in our retinue, and plan in addition for any unforeseen delays or diversions we might encounter. There was a great need for talents in various fields of endeavor to prepare all the things we would need for our journey and there was great need for close planning on how we would be organized into interdependent groups for purposes of making adequate preparations. One group needed to be responsible for the food we would need along the way. Another for shelter and supplies other than food --- clothing, medicines, and the like. A third group was needed to take care of the needs of the children and those too elderly or infirm to withstand the hardship of walking great distances. We would need animals, both for transport of people and transport of goods. Each family must be told what it could or could not take with them. There would have to be sacrifices made, but there was a need for economy in our choices, and Aaron seemed the best fitted to arbitrate any disputes that might arise here. There were ceremonial religious objects that many would want

to take with them and it was agreed that these possessions would be given priority in approval for passage.

Eventually each member of our small group of organizers was given as much responsibility as he felt he could manage, and each one of us set about our tasks with faith and confidence. Each day as we worked toward our glorious goal, more and more of those who had hesitated to join us changed their minds and sought to be included. All were welcomed with joy, and my trust in the final success of our venture grew daily.

We made no effort to hide our intentions from the Egyptians, but they seemed to show no interest in our plans. They neither opposed nor aided us in our endeavors. When I was questioned about it in a casual way, I simply responded that our people were intent on finding a new life in a new land. There was little response. No one asked further questions. I had the feeling that the Egyptians regarded such talk as idle chatter, mere day dreaming, and they regarded us as quite incapable of such an ambitious undertaking. I smiled, occasionally, when I encoun-

tered such underestimation of our capacities, but as was my habit I said little and listened much.

I had learned during the course of my studies of a land to the north, a land of milk and honey, as the stories went, and in my mind I envisioned this lush land as a place of peace and freedom for my people. I knew little of the obstacles that lay between Egypt and that rich land, and I set about gleaning as much information as I could. It was not easy, and for a time I feared that this land I had heard so much about might be a land of mere myth, a miasma, a fantasy, but such thoughts did not deter me. I knew that I was being guided in all that I did, and I felt strongly that this fabled land was the home we would seek and find. It was only a matter of time and finding the way. It would happen.

By the time we had finished organizing our venture, I knew with absolute certainty that I had done the right thing. There was a unity among my countrymen that had been lacking for many

years. There was fresh hope in every heart that the children would know the greatness of their heritage in a place of freedom and peace, in a land destined for them, and in each household the children listened entranced as their elders told of the glories of the days before exile, of the wonders of a people, devoted to their God, who lived in holiness and reverence, in a faith so sublime that it survived all challenges. Their eyes shone with anticipation of the wonders to come, of this holy pilgrimage in which they would participate and through which they would know the joy of achieving a dream of long standing, a return to a land of our choosing, a homeland.

I still endeavored to learn more of the lands lying to the north, but each inquiry met with different answers. There was no way, apparently, of knowing completely what lay ahead when we began our journey. We would have to put our trust, as I had already decided, in Almighty God our Father, and know that at each step of the journey He walked with us, a brother leading the way, a father caring for His children. I heard His voice often in those days, and He bade me tell my people that their faith would sustain them in

all hardship, that their trust in Him would be rewarded with the certainty of success, the taste of victory over all adversity. At no time did I hesitate to assure all who were faint of heart that God was with us, that this which we attempted was His will and that we could be sure at all times of His divine help and guidance.

Many months passed before we could be readied for departure, and I spent much time during those months endeavoring to increase our numbers. Both Aaron and I visited each household which had not cast its lot in with ours, no matter what the cause. Some were fearful of the journey. Others prospered under Egyptian rule. Still others vacillated out of a lack of conviction and perhaps a fear of domination by a master different from the one they knew and even more demanding, for I made it clear to all who proposed to participate in our migration that it was an absolute requirement that each person return to the old ways, that they acknowledge the absolute power of their God and that they in every way agree to the demands of this God. I stressed that the demands of this God were simple. Central was love of all creatures and service to the

lowliest of all creatures, and absolute devotion to the needs of the spirit over the pleasures of the body and the world of material concerns.

In some cases I was more vehement than I was in others when I sensed an easy acceptance of what I said without a soul felt commitment. I knew that there were those who considered me a zealot, overcritical of worldliness, and who felt in their hearts that there was a measure of hypocrisy in my demands of them, raised as I had been in the privileged environment of the court where there was little concern with spirit and much with the body. I did not endeavor to persuade these doubters of my sincerity with words. I knew that would be futile. I tried rather to persuade them by my actions, by my total devotion to our holy cause and my rejection of the worldly pursuits and pleasures which I formerly enjoyed. It took some time to persuade all, and indeed some were not fully persuaded prior to our departure, but I exacted from each one who proposed to go with us a solemn promise that he would abide by the rules I demanded, and I sensed each time that I succeeded in this persuasion a feeling of relief and gratitude, an absolute

eagerness to abandon superficial pleasures and pursuits for the totally satisfying spiritual convictions that made us a united people.

It was particularly gratifying to see the extent to which my brother won the admiration of these new converts to our cause. At times the admiration was at first grudging, but in all cases that I knew of, this grudging admiration flowered into genuine affection and respect, and our cause was thereby strengthened. It pleased me to know of this and to know the deep satisfaction I felt in choosing wisely when I chose my brother to stand at my side in this glorious venture, this massive undertaking. I knew that my brother's soul and mine were inextricably joined in the faith of our fathers and in the hope that the future we sought would be the future the prophets had foretold for our people, entry into a land of promise, a land of richness, of milk and honey and peace beyond compare. We spoke of this, Aaron and I, and our hearts, united in common purpose, glowed in the love of brotherhood that we had come to treasure. Our faith in each other was complete, our faith in God absolute, and our faith in our people growing daily. Our happiness

knew no bounds when we contemplated the years ahead.

All during the time of preparation, months of speaking, exhorting, urging, organizing, and leading, I felt an urgency to communicate more fully with those I knew as my followers. I felt the necessity of dealing with their behavior insofar as it departed from what I felt was pleasing to God, and to clarify for them the demands I would make of them both on our journey and in our new life. There was confusion in the minds of many, and there were those who felt that the times had so changed that the old values by which we had lived for generations had validity no longer. They felt that they were correct in responding to the demands or mores of a new society in abandoning old values and embracing the new.

There were men of faith and sincerity who were truthfully confused about the paths they should follow, about the demands that their God made upon them both in belief and in behavior. The more I spoke to and listened to my countrymen

the more I realized the bankruptcy of our religious codes, the standards by which we strove to live. There was honest dissension on all levels. There were those among the elders, myself among them, who felt that too many had forgotten the absolute demand of our God that we act in love of Him at all times and that we act in love at all times to all those we knew in our daily lives. They believed that we needed to express this love constantly in deed and word and that failure to do so at all times weakened the fabric of our lives and led to self doubt and unhappiness. Some of the younger people agreed with this basic belief in God's demand of man, and with these young people I was able to work effectively to persuade their peers.

I felt above all that unity of belief must precede and afterwards always accompany unity of action, and so I sought out those who I felt led lives not in accord with love of God and love of fellow man. I enlisted others to help me in this work and we spread throughout the community spreading the word of God and urging compliance with His demand that we act in love at all times. We found those who were greedy and at-

tempted to persuade them to act in charity. We found those who were deceitful and lying and persuaded them to act in truth. We found those who were cruel and persuaded them to act in kindness. Above all we found those who had lost all faith and persuaded them to act in trust and love of their Creator and Ruler. There were few dramatic conversions, but as I visited and spoke with my people I was aware of steady progress. It was hardest to persuade those who had prospered among the Egyptians, who clung stubbornly to their material successes and justified this worldliness in their own minds by abandoning their old beliefs and embracing those more compatible with their concern with worldly success and riches, but even these we persuaded in the end, and by the time we were ready to leave our adopted land we were a people united in faith and trust, ready to live in the light of God's demand for love at all times, to respect each one of our countrymen and at all times to treat each of our fellow men with love and justice. I knew that without this commitment we would be unable to survive as a people, that we would need the sustenance of faith and trust and love to

keep us from harm on our journey to our new home.

At all times, I knew, we would need to be aware of our absolute obligation to act toward each other as we would choose to be treated, and to remember at each step of our journey our absolute need to implore our God for His love and His guidance and to show Him at all times in word and deed the completeness of our love for and trust in His goodness and wisdom. I listened constantly to my inner voice, and I knew that all I strove to do was in accord with His wishes. I knew that each decision I made was His decision, that all the words I spoke were His words, and that the love I felt for my brethren, for all I knew without exception, was His love. I knew that we would flourish in the light of this love, that we must at all times be aware of this love and of our responsibility to share it with all whose lives touched ours.

So strengthened in the love of our God, we could not fail. There would be no looking back once we started our journey. We needed to feel that each step we took He took with us. I knew when we embarked upon our holy mission that

each one of my brethren would know this in his heart as surely as he knew anything else. I knew that no matter the perils of our journey, we would survive with His help, and I knew that in time of need as a people we would draw on His strength. So sustained, we needed nothing else.

Before we proceeded further, my brother and I realized the necessity of communicating to our people the rules by which we expected them to conduct themselves at all times. There was little question in our minds of the willingness of those we had spoken to to respond to our demand that they live lives of goodness and love, but there were in some minds questions about what constituted acceptable behavior, what was permissible in their daily lives and what was not. We had lived for so long in the permissive atmosphere of the Egyptian way of life that many had forgotten the basic rules of loving behavior. Many had strayed from the paths of righteousness out of ignorance and laxity. We concluded, Aaron and I, that it was desirable to promulgate

a set of rules by which our brethren should agree to live, a set of standards by which each man could endeavor to live a life more pleasing to God and to his fellow man, a set of rules which would reflect the love of God and his fellow man that we knew was essential to earthly happiness and pleasing to our Maker.

It was not difficult to establish the areas in which regulation of man's behavior was most necessary. It was essential that each of our countrymen recognize the absolute supremacy of our God, our heavenly Father, and at no time forget the necessity of total fealty to Him. It was necessary that man recognize the obligations he had to those who were related to him in family ties, that each generation recognize its responsibilities to those others, to respect, to obey, to cherish, to provide for, to be faithful and loving. It was essential that each man know the sanctity of family life and respect the rights and privileges of the married state at all times, rejecting all temptations to be unfaithful or neglectful in any way of any to whom he owed respect and loyalty. It was necessary that each man know that he must at all times be satisfied with the material goods that

God saw fit for him to have and in no way lack gratitude or satisfaction with his lot, that he should in no way demonstrate greediness or absorption in worldly pursuit of riches and material things. It was essential that each of those accompanying us on our search for our new land live in love and respect for God and his fellow man in each of these ways, and so we promulgated a set of rules for living, a guide by which our brethren could measure their behavior, a set of standards to which they could aspire, a list of demands that would result in goodness and harmony.

There were some who objected to these rules when we spoke of them, who said we acted to control the behavior of others too closely, that we were depriving them of the very freedom we claimed to be seeking. To these men we counseled further study of our rules of behavior and asked them to consider how their lives would be adversely affected by them. We asked them to tell us which of our demands was onerous or excessive in their eyes, and then to return and tell us what they had concluded. Few returned with further objections. Most of our fellow men wel-

came our set of rules as a needed guide for all to live by. They did not find that they restricted their freedom but rather contributed to their sense of rightness in their behavior and in the behavior of those around them. They felt that all we had done really was to establish more firmly in their minds the unwritten laws by which man could achieve harmony within himself and his family and with his neighbors and please the God who was so much a part of his existence. To Aaron and me, these rules represented one more step in the establishment of a new nation, a nation devoted to the concept of living in peace and love at all times. We were not sure that our rules for living were either perfect or complete, but we knew that they were a first step at least to unity among our people, to the practice of goodness in their daily lives, and to a recognition of what each of us owed ourselves, our fellow man, and our God. We knew that He would guide us further, as He had guided us from the beginning, and at all times I listened for His voice. I counted myself totally blessed in this voice, and I knew that so long as I listened and acted in accordance with what I heard my God ask of me I could not fail.

Hardly any time had passed before I had word of a traveler who had been to the lands north of Egypt. I sought him out and spoke to him at length. He said that while the journey was not impossible, it had its hazards, that travel across the desert was full of perils and that we should assure ourselves of adequate food, water, and protection from the elements. He said that storms were frequent and destructive, that they were unpredictable and precipitous. He could not estimate how long it would take for our large retinue to reach the area of which I had heard, but that it was certainly a matter of weeks. I asked him many additional questions, some of which he could answer, others which he could not.

He told me that he would be at my disposal at all times to give assistance to us on our journey should we so desire him to act. His concern for our safety was genuine, and I felt that he was heaven sent. When I asked him how long it had been since he had crossed this area he said that

he had done so recently with a company of traders, that he had with them exchanged his services for goods they offered. When I asked him what he would require of us, he said that he could only ask whatever we felt free to give. He professed to wish us well and to be anxious to help us without consideration of remuneration, but that if it was within our means to pay for his services he would be grateful for whatever we could give him. If it proved impossible to pay him anything, he would serve us without pay.

I said that I felt certain that some of those who were traveling with us had the means to pay, that others did not, but that I would determine immediately what we could offer. He said again that he would be grateful for payment but that he desired to aid and assist us even without any monetary reward. He was impressed, he said, by the loftiness of our desire to establish a nation of peace and love. There was need, he said, for such a place and it would be his privilege to be part of our holy mission. He was not of our race, but professed admiration for us and an interest in learning more of our past.

When I spoke with Aaron of this man, Aaron's

face lit up, almost with a sense of recognition. He had been concerned, he said, about undertaking the journey with inadequate knowledge of what would be necessary for the safety and well being of those in our charge, and this man seemed indeed sent by God to fill our needs.

Aaron said that he would enlist the aid of two young men in his charge to determine how much our group could afford to pay this man. He was reluctant to accept his good offer without compensating him, and agreed with me that many in our company could and would show good faith by contributing to such a fund. And so Aaron once again removed a responsibility from my shoulders and left me free to be concerned with other things.

I was still spending much time in visiting each family that planned to journey with us, to counsel, to question, to reassure. I felt strongly that before embarking on our venture I must have the total trust of all of our company and that they must realize that my total trust was in the guidance of the God I sought to please. Each time I spoke of the God of us all I felt I was reinforcing the faith I expected each of my

brethren to have in Him, and I emphasized over and over again that He would be walking with us, that He would protect and guide us, that He would rejoice with us when we reached the land of our fathers and their fathers, the land of our children and their children. Each time I spoke my own faith was strengthened until it became such an absolute certainty that I knew there was no possibility of failure, that no matter what the perils, no matter what the hardships, we would succeed in our quest. We would reach the land of milk and honey. We would reach our home.

During these several months of planning I spent a great deal of time in contemplation of what my God asked of me in this great work. I knew that I had been rarely privileged in many ways. I had enjoyed all the advantages of position and wealth in my childhood without being either moneyed or royal, and I had eagerly absorbed whatever knowledge had been made available to me. I knew a little of science and languages. I was skilled in the art of debate and discussion. I

understood well the trappings of power and the exercise of power. I sensed without being told directly the elements of leadership. I learned the power of words and the importance of self confidence in the face of challenge. I knew instinctively how to appeal to the nature of man seeking to know the truth.

This is not to say that I had any certainty that all of truth was within my comprehension, but from an early age I had strong feelings and convictions about the nature of life, its significance, its demands, its reason. I looked about me and I saw great wealth, high position, unlimited power and authority. I looked in these men for the inner happiness and sense of self that I regarded as essential, and all too often I failed to find it. I looked about me and saw the poor, the deprived, the downtrodden, and looked for unhappiness and resentment. Occasionally I would find what I expected to, but more often I found an inner life of satisfaction and self esteem. It did not take long for me to realize the lack of connection between outward success and well being and inner peace and happiness.

During all these years of learning and searching

I questioned endlessly all who would speak to me to plumb the depths of their minds and souls. I needed, I felt strongly, to know man better to understand the workings of my God. There was never a time when I was not acutely conscious of the importance of God to me. There was never a time when I did not seek to understand His ways and to turn to Him in prayer, beseeching Him for guidance and wisdom. I knew in every fiber of my being the absolute necessity of faith and trust in my God. He was ever in my mind and heart, and all I learned of the world I related to my beliefs in the divinity of man.

There was no doubt in my mind that man had been created to serve God and by serving God serve his fellow man and achieve the peace of soul that I knew all men craved. The answer, then, to worldly happiness was to achieve inner happiness, to know that the things of this world were as nothing compared to things of the spirit, that the most deprived of men who loved his fellow man and His God and served both well was indeed a happy man. I knew equally that the richest and most powerful of men were in dan-

ger at all times of forgetting the key to inner happiness, that all too often love never entered their hearts, and that their absorption with wealth and power blinded them to the need for love as nourishment for the soul.

And so I knew the necessity of love from an early age, and from an early age I sought to share the love that had been such a gift to me with all whose lives I touched, and I discovered that love begets love, and that love is infinite, constantly replenishing itself and growing with the spending of it. The richness of this discovery filled me with exultation, and I longed to share this discovery. I spoke of it to all I knew and sought out others I did not know to share with them the wonder of my knowledge. All too often my words were rejected without consideration. I found among those I spoke to a cynicism, an unwillingness to believe and to trust, a feeling of futility. I sought to learn the reasons for this reaction from so many, and although I found no single answer, I felt that there existed among my countrymen a sense of alienation from their compatriots, a lack of identification with their brethren, a lack of awareness of their God and

His love for them.

I knew, then, from an early age that I would be required to help my fellow man to find his way back to an awareness of his self worth and the worth of his brothers. I knew that my God required this of me, that it was the reason for my existence. I listened closely for His voice at all times, and gradually I began to hear insistent messages of what He required of me. There was never a moment when I mistrusted this voice. It spoke to me in words of love and encouragement. It told me to trust my heart and do as my heart commanded.

And so the road to my position as leader of my people in this holy venture was a road I chose early in my life, knowing that all I had been given, all I had been taught, all I had been privileged to experience was but preparation for this mighty undertaking. At all times I knew of the absolute rightness of what we had chosen to do. At all times I knew that with the help of my heavenly Father I would serve Him well by serving my brothers well, and as the day of departure approached, my faith reached a perfection that gave me joy beyond words. I was exultant,

inspired, empowered. I was in God's hands. I was His servant and the instrument of His will. There was no greater satisfaction than this, no greater joy than in this sure knowledge that each step I took was a step of love, each act was an act of love, each word was a word of love. This love, I knew, would sustain and nourish all of us for all of our days.

Within weeks of our departure our guide told us that he would advise postponing our departure until such time as the stars were in the right juxtaposition to insure optimum conditions for our journey. When I questioned him about this, he assured me that he had spent many years in acquiring the skills involved in estimating what the natural elements would do at certain times when the stars moved in the skies. I was loath to postpone our departure, but I had talked with our guide many times since we had agreed that he would accompany us on our venture and give us the benefit of his knowledge and I knew how wise he was in the ways of the desert. I knew

that I would be foolish not to trust him, to pit my judgment, so lacking in experience of these things, against his, and so I called a meeting of our leadership group and asked them to listen to the words of advice from our guide.

We met, and he spoke persuasively of the effect the stars had on climatic conditions and advised us that we would be well advised to do our traveling when the position of the stars was most favorable. There was some dissension born in impatience, and I listened patiently as the discussion grew heated. Those who opposed postponement were in the end hard pressed to defend their position. They were forced to admit that we had hired our guide because we needed his expertise, and that we would be foolish indeed to ignore his advice without having a compelling reason for doing so. At worst, they finally agreed, we would inconvenience a number of people who were impatient to be under way, and we would find communication of our change of plans time consuming. Beyond that, the delay meant simply that we would have to be more patient than many wanted to be.

I had expected Aaron to be vociferous in this

discussion. He rarely brooked interference, and I knew from speaking to him that he agreed with me that we should heed the advice of one more knowledgeable than we. To my surprise, Aaron remained silent throughout the meeting, his eyes riveted on each speaker in turn, his face in no way revealing his feelings, and at the end as all rose to leave he grunted his satisfaction with the outcome. That was all. I held it a matter of wonder that Aaron had learned in such a short time the effectiveness of silence, for all who worked with Aaron looked to him constantly for direction, and in this he was forcing them to make a decision without knowing his feelings.

When I spoke afterwards of this to Aaron he smiled with his eyes only and said that he had learned from me the need to have men learn the importance of independence in arriving at conclusions in case of a disagreement, and that he knew he had trained his young men well when they reached what he regarded as the right decision without any indication from Aaron of his own feelings on the subject. I knew there had been an almost audible sigh of relief when Aaron grunted his approval, and I was pleased

by the cohesiveness of this group of young men who would be the next generation of leaders of our people. They were gaining in confidence each time we met to advance our plans. They were learning the arts of persuasion and communication. They were learning the needs of our people. Finally, and perhaps most important, they were learning the absolute need for disciplined cooperation at all times.

And so, a date certain was set for our departure, a date chosen by our guide, and each of our group was assigned a portion of the task of notifying our people of the change in plans and doing anything else that was necessary in relation to this change. I spoke to as many as I could directly, as did my brother, and I was gratified by the willingness that all showed to abide by our decision without disagreement or argument of any kind.

In the end we were grateful that we took the advice of our guide and began our migration on

the exact date he chose. We were a great multitude, men, women and children, and animals of all varieties we would need to begin a new life and to transport the goods we deemed necessary for our journey and a new beginning. There was an air of great excitement as we set out. Men and women embraced each other and spoke earnestly of their desire to serve God and each other in this new place. Children danced with pleasure and a sense of adventure and ran to and fro, from one family group to another, chattering, singing, playing games, and acting as though they were already enjoying the freedom we sought.

Aaron was everywhere at once. He had decreed that before one step of our journey was taken each family group must submit to an examination and a questioning to be sure that it was equipped as he and his aides had deemed necessary for survival on the journey. They had spent much time calculating the necessary foodstuffs, water, and other supplies that it was probable each would need. This was not an easy calculation, limited as we were in sure knowledge of how long our journey would take, but with the

help of our guide they had come as close as they could to determining how long it would take us barring unexpected difficulties. And so, one by one the family groups were checked and issued permits to travel which listed all the goods they carried with them, the names of all those in the group, and a description of the livestock they had contributed. This went beyond what we had planned originally, but Aaron had come to feel strongly that it was essential to begin our journey in an orderly fashion and that it would avoid conflict at a later date to document the contributions of each group to this common endeavor, and indeed there was a sense of cooperation in all of this organization that pleased me and boded well for our future as a cohesive group in a new land.

When all were checked and documented, we took our first steps toward our new home. Aaron was insistent that I be in the forefront, leading our people physically as I led them spiritually, and it gave me great joy to do this.

I turned my face to the horizon, and with the sound of joyous song behind me led the way into the future. The day was beautiful with

promise, and my heart sang as we departed from the only home most of us had ever known in search of our new land, the land that would see us establish a nation devoted to God and brotherhood.

Our departure went almost unmarked by the Egyptians. Those of my friends I had visited to say farewell had wished me success in our search. There had been no efforts to interfere in any way with our leaving Egypt, and for that I was grateful. I had not been sure that this would be the case.

That first day of our journey our buoyant spirits permitted us to travel faster and longer than we had estimated, and when we finally stopped to rest and sleep, we were filled with a sense of accomplishment. We were optimistic that each day would be equally fruitful and that our journey would be swift and painless. I was more guarded in my optimism, having talked at great length with our guide about the potential for difficulty, but as I prayed to my God that first night before sleeping I expressed my gratitude for a day well spent and asked for His continued guidance. When I slept it was soundly, more than I had ex-

pected, and I awoke with the dawn ready for the second day of our adventure, our trip into the future I prayed fervently would be all our people hoped for.

It was inevitable, I felt from the beginning, that we experience some difficulties on our journey. I by no means expected the disaster we suffered, but I had no hopes of a totally smooth trip. It was on the third day of our journey about mid-day when without any warning the sands began to swirl about our feet and within minutes we were engulfed in a blinding sand storm. Although we had forewarned all of our brethren of the possibility of such a storm in the light of what our guide had told us, the very suddenness and intensity of this storm threw almost everyone into panic. Children were separated from their parents, husbands from their wives, and the whirlwind muffled the cries of fear and distress. It was impossible to see more than a short distance away, and many were thrown to the ground by the intensity of the winds. They lay

there gasping, eyes closed tightly, and others seeking an escape from the fury of the storm fell over them as they ran.

Aaron and I tried to raise our voices in words of calm, but our voices were drowned out completely by the sounds of the storm. The animals panicked and broke loose, and those in charge of the animals sought fruitlessly to run after them and capture them. The sand was so blinding that they had little success, and they, in turn, we learned later, were cruelly buffeted by the raging winds.

I remained standing with difficulty and realized that it was useless to try to do anything until the fury of the storm subsided. There were moments when I thought my very clothes would be ripped from my body. I prayed as I had never prayed for surcease from this catastrophe.

Then the storm was over as suddenly as it had begun. As visibility increased, I was saddened by the desolation I saw about me. Many remained huddled on the sand, their heads covered with whatever protection their clothing afforded, not moving, fearful, I assumed, of a return of the fury. Others sat dazed, looking about them for

their belongings which had been scattered far and wide by the winds. Children ran crying, searching for their parents, running aimlessly from place to place, fear in their eyes.

The first concern was for the children, and I enlisted the aid of a half dozen men and women to take all children they saw in charge and take them to a central spot and keep them there until their parents could be found. Aaron, meanwhile, was organizing a group to set out to recapture the lost livestock we needed so desperately. Some had, indeed, had their outer garments ripped off them and wandered dazed, half clothed, not certain of what to do next.

I knew that the most important responsibility I had at that moment was to reassure our countrymen, and so I moved from group to group assigning leaders to reassemble in small groups and determine if there were any of our people missing. Aaron's records were invaluable in this, and in the remaining hours of daylight we were able to determine that all were accounted for. The panic gradually subsided, and we were able to enlist the aid of many to survey the damage done by the storm and to assess its seriousness.

Many had suffered loss of some or all of their household goods and damage to their food-stuffs. Others were relatively unscathed in this regard. So it was necessary to know with as much certainty as we could if we were well enough equipped to continue our journey or if it would be necessary to return and make a fresh start. We knew we would have to spend at least one day additional in this spot to make repairs and to repack all that we were able to find of what had been swept away by the winds.

The worst blow was to the morale of our people, and I sought to reestablish their confidence in their quest, in me as their leader, and in God as their provider. There were those who questioned God's part in this disaster and saw in it a warning to return to Egypt and abandon the dream of a new homeland. It took much persuasion before these people agreed that their fears in this regard were groundless, but the optimism and buoyancy with which the journey began seemed lost forever.

We decided after assessing our position and weighing the pros and cons to press onward. Our resources were somewhat dwindled, but we had in planning overestimated our needs, anticipating problems, and this had served us in good stead. There were few who doubted the wisdom of this decision, and after the initial shock of the destruction wrought by the storm had subsided, the feeling of confidence and optimism which had marked our departure began to return.

As we set out the next morning, I heard songs of joy behind me, a chorus of affirmation. I smiled to myself as I recalled the resilience demanded of my people in ages past, and I knew that this same resilience lived in the hearts of those who walked with me toward the land we hoped would fulfill our dreams.

Aaron walked with me and reported to me on the exact nature of our losses and the feelings he had discerned in those he spoke to after the storm. He pointed out that all were aware that our losses had appeared much greater directly after the storm than they had turned out to be. Most of the animals had been recovered with little loss of life. Much of the property which had

been scattered far and wide by the wind had also been recovered and salvaged to whatever extent was possible. Aaron's concern was with a repetition of this phenomenon and he had consulted with our guide on this matter. The guide said, Aaron reported, that while it was possible for a repetition of the storm to cause us further trouble, it was his opinion that this would not happen, that the storm was unseasonable and unpredictable, but that the chances of its repeating itself were remote.

Aaron spoke of one further thing before leaving me to walk alone. He said that each of the young men who habitually worked with him had acted with valor and wisdom in the aftermath of the storm and that he felt that they deserved special recognition for all they had done. Many knew of their brave deeds, Aaron said, but equally many did not, and he wanted me to know that it would be fitting to hold an assemblage that night, that he wanted me to speak to all of our people about how well we had survived the catastrophe and how much we owed to these young men for their unselfish bravery. I realized that Aaron was exactly right in this matter and asked him to

arrange such an assemblage for that evening. We would stop for the night an hour early then, said Aaron, and all of our brethren would gather to hear me speak before nightfall. I agreed with Aaron that all of us would profit by such a meeting.

When the time came and I saw all those faces uplifted to hear my words I felt the spirit of the Lord enter me and inspire my words. I spoke of the greatness of our mission and of the need to know in our souls the rightness of our endeavors. I spoke of the storm and how it was considered by some as a warning from God that we were in error and should abandon our quest. I begged them not to harbor such thoughts, but to regard the storm rather as a challenge sent to us to strengthen us, to bring us together in common need, and to show us without question that we had the resolution and trust in God to press onward in the face of all difficulty. When I spoke of the brave deeds of the young men who worked with Aaron I spoke of how their idealism had inspired them to valor and how they had in turn inspired respect and love in the hearts of all who knew of their brave deeds. They were, I

said, perfect examples of God's charge to us --- to love each other in the face of all difficulties, all challenges, all hardships, to think not of ourselves but of our brothers, and to act in love of them at all times. This, I said, was God's wish for them -- to love and act in love as these young men had done, with no thought for their own well being, their own needs. When I finished I asked Aaron and his young men to come forward and show themselves to their countrymen, and the thunder of applause that greeted them both pleased and comforted me. I knew the need for cohesiveness in our company, and there was nothing that could have resulted in cohesiveness better than for all of our people to be united in praise of these young men who served in unselfish love to meet the needs of others.

As I looked over the sea of faces turned toward mine, I knew in my heart that we were truly a people again, united as we had never been, in pursuing our dream. My eyes turned heavenward in silent prayer, and I exhorted my fellow pilgrims to do the same. A breathless silence fell over the multitude. Even the children stood or sat or knelt, faces upward, their gazes steady. I

could almost feel the power of their prayers.

In the beginning I had thought that there would be difficulty in getting my brothers to accept the rules of conduct I laid down for them, and indeed as we proceeded on our journey I began to see signs of a falling away from the high standards of behavior I had set for them. There were quarrels between families over foodstuffs not being shared equally. There was bickering among the children about trivial matters, and unkindness began to fester like a wound. Most often I would hear reports of this unloving behavior rather than witnessing it directly, and I determined that I would try to determine what needed to be done to prevent disharmony among our people.

I knew with certainty that I needed to take some action lest the entire group be affected by the unloving behavior of a few. I consulted with Aaron on this matter, and he confirmed what I had heard, although he too had learned of this

from the words of others. We were too small a group for secrets to remain secrets, for enmity to be privately nursed. There was no way to pretend that all was well when so many were aware of what was wrong. I feared that I had been lax in enforcing these rules of behavior, feeling as I did that if each man tried to live a life of love he would find it so joyous that he would choose nothing less, and I pondered the fallacy in my thinking that had permitted the introduction of discord and conflict into our ranks at a time when it could be so destructive.

Aaron counseled another general meeting of the entire group. I agreed, although I did not have a clear idea of what I would say to address this problem. I prayed for guidance as we walked that day and tried to prepare my words. I listened closely for the voice on which I depended in time of spiritual need, and when we stopped for the night I went apart from the group to pray and listen. In this solitude I found what I sought. I must, I realized, be more complete and more absolute in my demands of my people. It was not enough, just now at least, to say that each man must live in love of his neighbor, must act

in love of his neighbor, must at all times know that this love of his neighbor was as one with his love of his God. I needed, I was told, to be very specific about rules for living under circumstances that would be for some time trying, circumstances under which each man would find it difficult to know with exactness what behavior was not acceptable within God's demand to be loved.

As I prayed and pondered, I knew that I would speak to my people in very specific terms of what each one of them must and must not do, rules for living that would guide each one into the ways of love of his brother and his God. And so that evening when I spoke to all of those who sought peace and freedom with me, I spoke to them of the rules of living that I knew my God had led me to elucidate. There were ten in all, beginning with the need to acknowledge the absolute sovereignty of God Almighty, and ending with the prohibition of greed in worldly things, greed which drove out love and inevitably created disharmony.

All of my brothers listened attentively as I spoke of the need for absolute harmony in our midst

and of reports I had heard of the lack of love among our people in some cases. I spoke to them of each of the rules I had been led to establish as a plan for living and as I spoke each one, I required all of my people to repeat it after me and enjoined them to engrave each injunction in their hearts to be observed at all times. I told them that I would hold each man individually responsible for abiding by these rules, and that in the event that one of them was broken, I would question closely the transgressor and seek to know the reason for his actions. There was no conflict, I said, that could not be peacefully settled with fairness to each side, and henceforth, I continued, actions violating these rules would by their nature be considered unloving actions and in need of repentance and change.

As always, my brothers responded to my words with approval and agreement, and several spoke individually their gratification with these commandments, rules to live by, divinely inspired. I knew there would be further transgressions. It was in the nature of man to be less than perfect. But I was hopeful that there would be less cause for discord with the wholehearted adoption of

these commandments.

On the fifth day of our journey there was an incident that remained forever embedded in my memory. In our group there were a number of older men and women of somewhat advanced age. Aaron had sought to give them means of transportation that would lessen the rigors of travel, but they had to a person refused any special treatment and insisted on walking with everyone else and maintaining a pace that they must at times have found difficult.

Aaron had assigned them traveling companions in whose caring kindness he had special confidence. Those who had younger family members were, of course, assigned to travel with their relatives. Those remaining were entrusted to the care and companionship of friends if that was possible, to kind strangers in the rest of the cases. He frequently checked on the welfare of all of these older brethren. They had weathered the storm well, and they complained not at all of the difficulties that they must have encountered in maintaining a pace which was demanding of

even the most fit. Some of them claimed that they felt more vigorous as the days passed and that they were grateful to their God for giving them the necessary stamina. Others said little but persevered silently with courage and dignity and fell to sleep gratefully each evening to renew their energy in total rest.

Among these older pilgrims was a man of very advanced years. From the beginning Aaron and I had been concerned about his ability to meet the physical demands the journey would inevitably make of him. He had no family, and Aaron chose wisely his adopted family to aid him in the journey. He sought out a family with three half grown sons, young men of good size and good nature, and spoke to them in confidence before we embarked on our venture. He told them of his confidence in their kindness and of the need this courageous old man had for caring surveillance, of the need Aaron felt to monitor his well being at all times, and to report to Aaron immediately in the event that there was any problem. He asked that one of them speak to him each day upon ending the day of how the elderly brother had fared. They did as they were asked,

and after a few days we felt that our misgivings had no basis, that the oldest member of our group had a special kind of strength and determination.

On the fifth day that strength failed. As we walked along in the early part of the afternoon, one of Aaron's young men came to me as I walked in the forefront and said that Aaron needed urgently to see me. I excused myself from the small group that had been walking with me and followed the young man back through the ranks of my countrymen until we came upon Aaron and the old man, along with the three boys who served as his guardians. The old man lay on the ground, his breathing barely perceptible, his face placid in repose. Aaron had spoken to him in urgent tones and he had not responded in any way. The young men said that he had not complained in any way before his collapse, that at one moment he was walking at their side in apparent good health and at the next he dropped to the ground, speechless and senseless.

Around us a crowd began to gather, and Aaron told his young assistant to disperse them and tell

them that they must continue their walking. We knelt beside the still body of the old man. There was no response to our words. There was no reaction to our touch. He was as if in a deep sleep. Gradually, as we stood there, hoping for a miraculous recovery, the main body of our group moved further and further away. I had advised waiting for him to recover spontaneously, but each moment that passed made this less likely. There was nothing at hand to construct a litter, and I realized too late that we should have considered this before telling the group to move on. There was nothing else to be done but to carry this man, our fallen traveler, to the night's resting place. I had concluded that simple exhaustion was the probable cause of his collapse and had hopes that rest would insure his recovery. Aaron agreed with me and bent to pick up the frail old man. Before he could do so, one of the boys gently took him by the shoulders and moved him aside. He and his brothers, he said, had been made responsible for this old man, and he and his brothers would carry him in turns for however long it was necessary. So saying, he lifted the old man into his arms and started after the

rest of the group. The old man was not overly heavy, but as I regarded this half grown boy-man, I was amazed at the ease with which he bore his burden. He might have been carrying a sack of feathers. In time he transferred this burden to one of his brothers, and for the rest of the afternoon we traveled in this fashion.

By nightfall, the old man still had not opened his eyes. He seemed no better and no worse, but the boys' concern for him had grown with the passage of time, and they kept watch over him through the night, taking turns of a few hours each. By morning he stirred and muttered a few words, but still was not responsive to questions. There was no doubt in the boys' minds what to do. They had said that they would carry him as long as it was necessary to do so, and so they would. We were able to fashion a litter to ease their difficulties in this, and so they traveled for the rest of the journey, sharing among the three of them the burden of transporting the old man. Others offered to help, to share the responsibility, and they expressed their thanks to these people, but, no, they said, the old man was theirs to care for and it was their privilege to do

so. He was light, they said, no burden at all.

As the days went by little by little the old man regained his sensibility and tried to persuade his bearers to permit him to try once again to walk as the rest, but they would hear none of it. He could walk as much as he wanted, they said, early in the morning and in the evening after their arrival at the resting place, but during the day he was their responsibility and he had no choice. All of their actions were marked by affection and concern, all of their words with gentle humor, and in the end the old man bowed to their wishes with good grace.

Aaron said little and watched closely, fearful to some extent, he confessed to me, that their enthusiasm would diminish as time passed, but it did not. They maintained their cheerful demeanor at all times, affectionately referring to the old gentleman as their adopted grandfather, and indeed the bond that grew among them could not have been stronger with ties of blood. He was their brother and they loved him well.

Aaron was insistent that we keep a careful log of our journey and it fell to me to do this. In the evening after quiet settled over our resting place I would note any event of the day that was out of the ordinary, along with the approximate number of hours we had traveled that day. In my notes I began to see the need for more frequent exhortations to our company. There were more instances of minor difficulties involving lack of conviction. There were disagreements cropping up about the likelihood of our success as a new nation. The universal optimism which had marked our departure seemed to be dissipating in the daily effort. There was such a sameness in our days that many were seized by ennui and began to be discouraged by the seeming prospect of endless travel. And indeed our journey did seem endless with the horizon stretching endlessly before us and the terrain about us so unchanging that it was impossible to believe that it would ever end.

I spoke with Aaron about this, and although he had less patience than I with the concept of boredom growing among our people and caus-

ing them to doubt the rightness of our mission, causing them to feel that we would not, somehow, ever reach the mythical lands we sought, he agreed that it could do little harm to congregate for the purpose of my speaking to them and trying to ignite once more the spark that had flamed into commitment for our holy work and which seemed to have been extinguished in so many hearts.

It was our habit as we traveled to convey news through a network of messengers, and we sent them to tell our people that we would be stopping our journey short of a full day in order for us to assemble, one and all, to listen and to speak of our condition. I was not alone in my awareness of the low morale among our group, and this growing disillusionment or dissatisfaction, whatever name it was given, was feeding upon itself and generating further doubts. It took real fortitude to resist the temptation to sink into pessimism. And so as word of our intended meeting spread through the crowd, there was a ripple of excitement and the very pace of our progress seemed to quicken.

I was both pleased and challenged by the aware-

ness of this response, this anticipation of my words, and I prayed with intensity to my Father to give me the words to meet this need. I went aside when we reached our resting place and spent some time in solitude listening to His words. I was struck anew by the miracle of this voice I heard, a voice always of solicitude and love. It spoke to me always of love.

So this was my theme. I reminded that sea of upturned faces intent on my words of their lives in Egypt and the hardships they had known. I reminded them of the difficulty of acting in love under such circumstances, of the absolute need for us to achieve a measure of peace and freedom which would permit us to act in love at all times while feeling a sense of self worth that never failed. I reminded them of the absolute need for faith in themselves, each other, and their heavenly Father, the God who had filled their hearts with faith and hope and whom they seemed to be forgetting more with each passing day. I asked them to look into their souls and to find there the capacity for loving behavior that was so essential to our success both on our journey and in establishing our new nation. I urged

them to begin each day in thinking of this God who guided us on our way, to join together in praise of Him, and to keep Him at all times in the forefront of their minds, to know that He was their guide in all they did, that I was nothing more than His spokesman, that from the very beginning I had spoken to them His words, His wishes. I reminded them that His strength was their strength, His love their love, His wisdom their wisdom. They had only to know Him to know all of this and to know Him they had only to open their hearts and their minds and accept His will.

There were some, I knew, who had sunk so deep into discouragement that they were deaf to my words, but I sensed an almost universal acceptance of the truth of what I said. The crowd murmured its approval and looked upon one another with new eyes. When I asked them at the end to join with me in speaking silently to our God, each head bowed and the stillness was complete. Then someone broke into joyous song, a song of praise for this God we revered, and the music spread until it filled the air, and our people were united into a single voice rising

to the heavens with a message of new hope, of faith, of love. I was well pleased and joined them in their thanksgiving.

There was little that concerned me as we entered the second week of our journey. We had not, except for the dust storm, encountered delays or difficulties. The faith and morale of our people seemed to have been restored, and we made it our custom, Aaron and I, to visit and speak with as many of our countrymen as was possible each day we ended our journey.

In this way we remained informed of minor problems and were able to prevent them from blossoming into major difficulty. There was a certain logic, too, to our sharing this responsibility. Aaron was blunt and forceful, and had no hesitation in speaking his mind frankly at all times. Although there were those who were occasionally angered by his directness, many more were impressed by his convictions and strength and feared to offend him in any way. Others re-

quired the indirection that I more often employed by which they could be persuaded often without being aware of what it was they agreed to. Where force was effective, Aaron spoke. Where persuasion was effective, I did. Both of us were in total agreement on the need for a disciplined following and on the way in which this discipline could be effectively insured.

Among the younger people we sensed at one point a laxity of purpose, a feeling that this mission of ours was an adventure, pure and simple, a seeking after riches and prosperity, not in any way a serious seeking after God, not in any way dependent upon His will and strength and protection. They began to assemble each evening for games of chance, for loud and boisterous merrymaking, and for night long pleasure seeking. Often they would not fully or efficiently perform the services demanded of them.

At first I was inclined to be tolerant of such behavior, excusing it as temporary and feeling they they would respond to the disapproval of their countrymen and cease such behavior. They did not, and indeed their numbers began to grow. At no point did this group seriously impair our

progress, but there were signs that their minor failings were becoming more major and that there was need for action on the part of their elders. We began, Aaron and I, to stroll nightly nearby this group of merry makers, and our very presence in the area seemed at first to provide enough intimidation. When they spied us they became less raucous and boisterous and a few at a time their numbers dwindled and quiet returned to the camp. Then, little by little, our effectiveness decreased and they paid little attention to our presence nearby.

Aaron and I disagreed about the steps we should take to persuade these young folks of the inadvisability of their conduct. Aaron was in favor of setting an absolute curfew for them and threatening them with punishment if they violated this curfew. I asked Aaron in what way he would choose to mete out punishment, and he said that he would favor assigning them onerous tasks and prohibit them from traveling in a group. I could accept the logic of his reasoning, but I implored him to let me try first to change their behavior.

The next evening I walked by myself into their

midst. When they saw me there was a sudden silence, and they looked at each other in perplexity. I told them to go on with their activities, their talk, their games, that I wanted only to sit and observe and understand their behavior. I sat down in their midst and was silent. A few began at the game again, joking and whistling, but more watched silently, covertly glancing at me from time to time. Within a very few minutes, even those who had tried to carry on fell silent and sat looking uncomfortable in my presence. The silence grew, and when one or two rose to leave, I told them to stay, that the party was not yet over, and that I had not learned what I came to learn. I wanted to understand their behavior and I still didn't understand. I asked them, if they would, to speak of their understanding of what we were trying to do, why we were so journeying. A few of the young men made an effort at joking remarks and glanced about them at their peers for approval. They found no approval. Then I began to speak to them of their heritage, of the travails their elders had known in Egypt, and of the high hopes they had for finding a new land of promise for the young. I

asked them to tell me if they shared this dream. Most said they did not, that they were in our company because they felt obliged to be, that they had not felt the compulsion to leave Egypt in search of new lands but had been compelled to by their families. I asked why they had not stayed behind. They looked abashed and asked how they would have done such a thing lacking the ability to care for their own needs. I asked on whom they were so dependent, knowing full well the answer. I needed to force them to verbalize this admission. One by one they spoke of their desire to be independent and capable to total self responsibility and of their feeling that they could better achieve this in a new place. Well, then, I said, they had indeed joined our caravan out of free will, and if this were so, I persevered, would it not follow that as willing members of the group they would do all in their power to insure the success of this mission. Would they not prefer to expend their energies usefully? Had we erred, I asked them, in not meeting their needs, in not recognizing their longing to feel more a part of this great undertaking? What would they have us do? And again they spoke, one by one,

and I listened closely.

In the end, they had gained in understanding and so had I. We arranged for serious responsibilities to be assigned to each of these young people, Aaron and I, responsibilities that met their need to be useful and responsibilities which contributed to the general welfare. We arranged that these nightly gatherings would continue so that each of the group could speak to his peers of the day just past, of needs that had been met, of needs that became newly apparent, of what each, in short, had done and what each could do additionally.

With very little guidance this group of young people learned the joys of usefulness. Their camaraderie did not cease to be pleasurable, but it ceased to be idly destructive to the seriousness of our holy mission. I made it my concern to attend these nightly meetings for the remainder of our journey and I learned much while I was trying to teach, and I found myself with new hope for the future of our people when responsibilities of a more serious nature passed to this younger generation. Above all I was pleased by the joyousness that this group knew in service to

others. This was the lesson above all that I desired them to learn and they learned it well. From a nuisance a great asset had evolved, the energies of the young wisely expended.

By the third week of our journey both Aaron and I were prepared to believe that we had been rarely blessed by the God we sought to please. There was a great sense of achievement among our people, a unity expressed in numerous ways, a sense of camaraderie that served all of us well, an awareness of our commitment to the God of our fathers in all ways.

And then, disaster struck. Numbers of our group were stricken with an illness that rendered them unfit for travel. The sickness spread rapidly throughout our numbers and left fewer and fewer to nurse those ill and helpless. This spreading sickness threatened to destroy our entire community. Our planning had not envisioned a problem of such dimensions.

We had no choice but to put a halt to our jour-

ney while we cared for our sick brothers and sisters and prayed for their recovery. We were using up precious foodstuffs that we would need to complete our journey, and we were at first fearful that our water supply, inadequate at best, would be totally depleted before we reached a source of this precious fluid.

At no time did we think that our God had deserted us with this new difficulty. We knew that each problem we encountered was a lesson for us, that our people had always been united by hardship and that this unity we now knew would survive strongly in the face of this challenge.

The outpouring of love and the unselfishness of this love was pleasing to behold. There was no one who failed to respond to this challenge.

Those who were able met the needs of the ill in every way. As the days went by Aaron and I were gratified to note that severe as the symptoms of this illness were, there was not a single death among us, and within a week we were able to resume our journey.

Our provisions had been severely diminished by the delay, and our progress each day was slower than it had been previously. Almost immediately

on resuming our journey we came upon some springs and were able to replenish our supply of water. Aaron and I conferred with our guide to determine with his help how much we needed to be concerned about rationing our remaining foodstuffs so that we would not be without supplies of any kind. He was not able to be exact in his estimate, but he felt that we should be within range of our destination within another fortnight, barring any further delays.

After speaking with him, my brother and I conferred with those in charge of stores. Each family had contributed as they were able to a general food supply as well as carrying with them all that they were able to manage. This general food supply was designed for just such an emergency as we now faced after our week's delay. As far as we could tell, with good management we would have adequate food, but we decided that we would indeed limit rations to each family group to minimum requirements. This would be a minor hardship, but only minor.

It was our assumption that when we reached the lands we sought that the land itself would readily supply our needs and that our cattle would grow

fat and sleek and reproduce readily and in time provide us with all that we needed for a life rich in enjoyment. We had no reason to doubt this. We knew the land was rich and fertile and that water was plentiful. We knew that we were willing to work however hard we needed to create this new society of peace and plenty which we sought with such faith.

When we resumed our journey it was with hearts still full of faith and hope. Aaron and I and his young men had spent much time and effort reassuring our brothers that we would easily survive despite this latest set back, and we found no lack of receptiveness to our words. Our brothers wanted to believe us and they did. They had seen the open handed generosity of their brothers in meeting the needs of the ill. They had experienced the giving and receiving of love. They knew the beauty in this love and it continued to animate their souls. So it was with hearts full of love for each other and for our God that we began again our journey to our promised land, the fabled land of milk and honey, our homeland. I counted myself blessed to lead this company.

There was a sameness in our days that grew wearisome for many. The trip seemed endless, unbroken as our voyage was by physical differences in the land we traversed. The desert stretched into seeming infinity, broken only occasionally by watering places. Our guide proved invaluable for his knowledge of these oases if for no other reason, but he was indeed useful in a myriad of other ways. He was a keen observer and was able to set the pace of our march in view of what he judged to be the capacity of our people. He would, on occasion, suggest to me and to Aaron that we cut our journey short by a few hours and use this time freed from travel to restore the spirits of our brothers and sisters.

On such days we would organize games or assemblies or arrange for special entertainment. There were many in our group of travelers with varied talents. We had musicians among us, and magicians and acrobats and story tellers, and each of these talented men was both willing and eager to share his talents and distract his fellow

travelers from the tedium of our journey. On these occasions there was a marked upswing in morale, and in most cases our pace was so quickened the following day that we compensated for the time spent in pleasurable relaxation.

Our guide had other talents as well. He was a skilled hunter and taught our young men to capture small animals to extend our food supply. He knew all the tricks of the hunter and all the skills of the food preparer and in time taught both these skills to many of our people. There were plants, too, that proved edible in some cases and provided moisture in others. His eye was keen and his previous travels in these lands had afforded him detailed knowledge of all the land offered to man as sustenance.

This teaching had other advantages. It gave many of the young men and women in our group pleasure in learning the secrets of an environment that was totally alien to them. They were cheered by the knowledge that it was not only possible to survive in an alien land but to do well in supplying basic needs. All of us learned from this man we had been fortunate enough to find and who had in kindness agreed

to lend us his knowledge, for there was much in this man that was beyond the ordinary. He had, it is true, led the life of an explorer, an adventurer if you will. He had no family that he knew of. He belonged in no group that claimed his allegiance. He had been raised in a haphazard fashion by any who would care for him for a while, and at an early age he was forced to live by his wits, to survive in an uncaring world as best he could.

The result of this forced independence was a mind acutely attuned to his environment, a mind at the same time inquisitive and cautious, a sense of judgment that was above all sound. He spoke little, but what he said was sound and cogent. He was responsive at all times to our questions and demands. In time I came to regard him as our brother, and indeed a part of our undertaking vital to its success. In time I began to be as aware of his silences as of his speech. When I spoke to my people, as I tried to do often, of the holiness of our mission, he was always in the forefront of the assembled crowds, listening intently as was his habit. He always melted into the crowd when I concluded, and at no time indi-

cated to me that he had been present on those occasions.

One day when he chose to walk with me, as he often did, I felt strongly the need to probe his feelings. I began by saying that I had noticed him more than once or twice listening intently to the words I spoke to my people, urging them at all times to remember their allegiance to each other and to our God and repeating the lessons of love that bound us each to the other. He was silent briefly and then spoke of his admiration for our people, our purpose and our love for each other, and for our devotion to the Supreme Being we called our God.

He spoke of the growing awareness he felt for the need to know this kind of love in his life and of his desire to be more than a guide to us. He said that he knew he was not of our race and that this was a barrier in the eyes of many to his becoming a part of our group of seekers after freedom. I asked him how he thought his soul differed from ours, what barrier existed between our souls. He said nothing for a while, and we walked in silence, lost in our own thoughts.

"Nothing," he finally said, "no difference," but,

he persisted, would this seem so to the rest? He knew that they regarded him as an outsider, a friend and a benefactor, but an outsider.

I knew he was right in thinking this, and I knew in the same instant that there was no truth or justice or love in this feeling of exclusiveness among my people. We were bound by strong ties of race, it was true, but we were bound by even stronger ties of brotherhood. I knew what I had to do. As we walked, I encircled his shoulders with my right arm and called him brother.

At the next assembly I spoke to my people of our guide and his desire to be one of us. I told them I had embraced him as my brother and that they in turn should do this. I was confident of the goodness of my brethren, but I was not prepared for the outpouring of love which greeted my words. Those in front rushed forward, their faces working with emotion, to embrace our new brother, and a cheer rose from the assembled multitude, a cheer of love and welcome, the sound of love given and received.

In the aftermath of the widespread illness, it took great faith to resume our journey. There were those among us who regarded the misfortunes we had encountered as warning from above that we were pursuing a reckless course not favored by the God we strove to please. There were murmurings amongst my people, questioning my judgment, the rightness of my decisions. I met this diminishing of faith with words of comfort and persuasion. I strove to drive out fear from the minds and hearts of those who doubted and replace it with faith and hope and love. It was not easy in some cases, but in most I was gratified by the ready response to my words. I felt that my God spoke through me at all times and that it was His strength I was transmitting to those who needed it. Gradually a sense of unity and purpose returned to our company and we set our faces toward the land of promise that we all longed for and envisioned as a place of love and harmony for all our people. During the time of pestilence it was the young who seemed the hardest hit by the sickness, but their youthful resilience served them well and

they recovered more quickly than their elders. During the time of reorganization and reevaluation of our needs in view of the delay they were invaluable. The natural optimism of the young was infectious and their attitude and behavior injected new hope into the hearts of those least responsive to my words. I was grateful beyond words for these young people, and their increasing sense of responsibility in the face of seeming disaster was an answer to heartfelt prayer.

There was little left to me to do, and so I was free to exhort and encourage and inspire those who most needed hope and confidence. It became clearer and clearer to me as I spoke that the difficulties we had encountered had strengthened rather than weakened us. The love given and received which had been inspired by the needs of others had been as infectious as the optimism of the young. Strangers became friends. Friends became brothers. There was a new awareness of the universality of our needs, of our hopes. There was new sense of identity as we set forth once again on our journey, fortified by the knowledge of our unity, our common purpose, our capacity of loving behavior, and in

many hearts there was silent thanks for the lessons our hardships had taught us, for the newly born awareness of the absolute brotherhood that had come to flourish among us.

Gone were the petty quarrels that marked the early days of our journey. Gone were the doubts that plagued the minds of many. Gone was the solitary traveler among us. In new unity we knew our strength was equal to any challenge. In new awareness of God's love for His people we walked boldly toward the land of promise and brotherhood, toward our destiny. My soul surged with pride as I walked in the forefront of our company, surrounded by love and loyalty and a new awareness of our capacity to survive.

It was a longer journey altogether than any of us had anticipated, beset as we were by difficulties and delays. There was no question in my mind that the difficulties that did beset us were sent to us for a purpose. Each time we were challenged to respond we did so with fervor and faith and

emerged from each trial stronger and more resolute. There was an emerging awareness among the most skeptical that we were guided each step of the way by the Father of us all, that we did His will with each step we took, with each act of kindness and caring and sharing. I continued at all times my practice of speaking each nightfall to as many of my brethren as I could reach in the time I had before sleep claimed us all, and never did I feel more pride or faith than in these hours of communion with my people.

There was at all times among us a certainty that when we reached the land we sought we would be blessed with the same caring guidance that we had known from the beginning, that God spoke to every heart of his loving concern for all His people, for each soul born to woman and to the love of God. Our hearts were suffused with love for Him and for each other and we feared nothing. Aaron found himself surrounded by the young who yearned to be helpful and giving of whatever talents they possessed. They relieved him greatly of the tedious duties that were a necessary part of our journey, and he was well pleased with the emerging leadership among the

young. There was a newfound harmony at all times in their dealings with one another and an unstinting generosity marked their words and actions. It boded well for our new nation, this sense of responsible stewardship.

The women had long since grown accustomed to the rigors that traveling imposed upon them, and they too developed among themselves a sense of camaraderie that made their days joyous. Each child was everybody's child and knew the loving devotion of all who surrounded him. There was a gaiety, a joyousness, among the women and children that brought smiles to the faces of all who observed them. Their voices rose in song, their laughter filled the air, their cheer was contagious, and all profited by the lightness of their spirits, by the joy in their hearts and souls. If there was scarcity, they coped. If there was plenty, they gave thanks. If they were challenged they met the challenge with smiling countenances and full hearts. If there was need for comfort, there were scores to comfort.

I walked often among the women and children, and for me those were the most joyful hours of

our journey. They were at first silent and restrained in my presence, but as time passed they accepted my presence as a loving presence and treated me with both reverence and open affection. I delighted in the children and their stories and their games, and their open hearted response to my love for them made my spirits soar.

As I look back on those days I think we were never a more unified people, never a more holy people, never a happier people. We were given the strength to do the impossible by a God to whom nothing was impossible, then or now, and we knew our special place in his providence.

Toward the end of our journey we had an experience that taught us all, each and every one, the strength of faith and the wisdom of trust. It was necessary for us to cross a large body of water. Our guide had told us of this and had said that at certain times of the year the water receded so that passage was possible. The ease with which

we crossed would depend, he said, on tidal conditions. There would in any case be great need for speed, that it was possible that only some of our group would be able to cross over at a given time and that the rest would have to wait for the next tide that permitted passage. It was somewhat dangerous, he said, to cross over in such large numbers, but only if we experienced difficulty in transporting our goods and our animals. In the event that we experienced such problems, he said, we should be prepared to abandon worldly possessions to the sea and make haste to preserve our lives.

As we approached the sea, my heart filled with trepidation, despite my faith both in our guide and in our heavenly Father's caring. We camped close to the shore to plan our crossing. Our guide said that there would be a series of extremely low tides within a week and counseled patience and dependence upon his advice. He had made this trip often, he said, and prided himself on his knowledge of the waters. We spent the time waiting to cross dividing our company and their possessions into groups as our guide advised. Each group was assigned a

leader who was closely instructed by our guide in what to expect on the crossing, of the need for extreme speed and total efficiency in the transportation of goods. Each member of each group promised absolute obedience to their leader, unquestioning response to his orders whatever they might be.

Our guide advised us to spend our waiting time in rest and prayer after we had made all the preparations he required of us. Two days passed, and I was amazed by the serenity with which my people waited, by the total trust and patience that their actions reflected. Finally, our guide spoke to me with some urgency and said that the day had come, that within hours the first groups should be ready to pass.

There was an undercurrent of excitement as this became known, but on the surface there was a disciplined calm. I walked with the first group, but not before I went throughout our encampment giving my blessing to each of them and reminding them of all the guide had asked us to do. Aaron was to go with the last party, and before I left I embraced my brother closely and felt in the tremor of his body the suppressed excite-

ment that possessed him. Once over the sea we were almost there.

At the appointed time, the first group set out with me in the forefront. There was absolute silence among us, and I could almost hear the prayers rising to heaven. Emotions ran high, but discipline was absolute. Directly behind us came another group and then a third. Looking back I could see no more. The journey was swift, and when we reached the other side, breathless from exertion, tense with excitement, there were cries of joy and exultation, embraces of love and thanksgiving, and our members fell on their brethren in the next group as they stepped on dry earth.

All day long this continued. I was in an agony of confusion. I had expected a stop to the procession with the turn of the tide and a delay before the next groups could pass. I feared several times that our guide had erred in his judgment, that he had dispatched groups that should have waited and that some of our numbers would be trapped by the rising waters. But still they came, and with each arriving group, the cries of thanksgiving and joy grew louder until it was a riot of sound

and laughter. My anxiety was not allayed until I spied in the distance an end to the column of travelers, and I knew that our numbers were complete and safe.

I fell on Aaron as he neared and was moved to tears as I held him. I then embraced our guide who had walked at his side, and I saw on his face a look of wonder. Never, he said finally, in all his years had he seen a tide so low and so lasting, that he had hesitated to continue dispatching groups in view of his previous experience, but that he was mysteriously moved to do so when the waters continued to recede further than he had ever seen and then to show no sign of returning. He gazed back over the sand so recently traversed and as he did so his experienced eye saw a changing in the waters. "It starts now," he said. "The tide has turned. It is beyond nature."

I chided myself inwardly for having doubted and joined my people in their revelry and thanksgiving.

Above all, in this new land across the sea, we sought an area our guide had described and of which I had heard, a fabled land rich and lush, promising plenty, promising wealth, promising peaceful lives for all my people. After regrouping and offering our thanks to our God, we began the search for this land. We were, to a man, thankful that the most trying part of our journey was over, but now we were all impatient for it to end, impatient to start the work that we knew would be required to establish our homes in a new place.

To that end, we began to plan, and found it advisable to draw up a list of priorities. In view of our dwindling supplies, we knew without thinking about it that food was our first priority. We were a goodly number, and although the trip had taught us that we could exist on sparse meals and little water, we all hungered for plenty. To that end, Aaron drew up a plan of organization and assigned responsibility for the production of food to a group of young men in whose performance on the journey he was well pleased. He chose two older brothers with much experience in agriculture to aid them in their planning

and to supervise them in their work. We had brought seeds and fledgling plants with us, and it had been a labor of love during our journey to keep these seedlings alive. Most had survived and would represent a new start to our lives in a new place based on the life we had left.

We knew we had to think of shelter more adequate than what we had brought with us, and to this end we engaged the services of our guide who professed skill in this area and said his experience served him well. He knew our needs, he said, and he knew how to best meet them. He said he would need the energies of many in this work and that he would endeavor to use their labor well. There was no shortage of volunteers to share this labor of love and the planning began in this area. All of this forward planning took place as we walked, and in the evenings when we stopped for rest.

As we proceeded, the country began to change in nature and the change was pleasing to all of us. The greenery we saw meant that rainfall would be adequate to our needs. The plants we saw looked strange to us, but our guide assured us that among them we would find much that

was edible, that would serve us well in the months before our first crops could be harvested.

It seemed strange to us that a land so lush could be so completely unpopulated until we recalled that this might indeed be the very land of our forefathers, that what remained of growth might be the result of their labors so long ago.

I began to realize that we were nearing our final destination when I heard the sweet sound of birds. I took this as a sign and spoke with Aaron and our guide. Aaron professed himself willing to be guided completely by our decision. Our guide said that this was a part of the country with which he was familiar only by what he had heard, but he counseled continuing our quest until we found a ready source of water, a source that would serve us well in times of drought or little rainfall, and so we continued our journey, each day more pleased with what we saw, until that glorious day when we came upon the river and we knew we had found our home.

It was a time of wild rejoicing. The children frolicked and splashed in the blessed waters, and many knelt and kissed the ground at the river's

edge. I was exultant, and as my heart exploded with joy, I knew that our first duty was clear. I waited until the first excitement was diminished somewhat, and then I spoke to my people of the need to give thanks to our heavenly Father for this moment, for this new home he had given us, for all the blessings he had sent us, for all the love we knew for Him and for each other. It gratified me to see the unhesitating response to my words. My brothers joined together, hand in hand, in grateful prayer. They sang the praises of their Lord. They embraced each other in prayerful love. It was a moment of total perfection, and I knew peace beyond compare in my soul. We were home.

As soon as we were assembled we gave our thanks to Almighty God for bringing us to this wondrous place and proclaimed our unending love for Him and for each other. Our praises were heart felt and prolonged, and we were in a fever pitch of excitement. It was hard for the children to stand still and contain their excite-

ment.

I spoke to them of the holiness of this day, of the need to remember this day in perpetuity and to make it a day of thanksgiving in our new life. I spoke of the need to remember that God graced our every act, our every thought, our every word with His blessing, and that at no point in our new life should we allow ourselves to forget this. I said that we should make preparations for the night's rest and then join together in a meal of thanks and celebration and until we slept spend each moment in the joy of love. Let each man, I said, embrace his neighbor. Let each woman embrace hers. Let each child know that all children are his brothers and sisters, and let them love one another without bounds. Let us exult, I said, in our new land, in each other, in our faith and trust and love for our God. Let us never forget the joy of this day, and let us welcome as a brother our beloved guide who has served us so well and who is now one of us. At that there was a tumultuous shouting, and several young men sought out our guide and carried him on their shoulders in a triumphant procession to where I stood. I grasped his hands in

mine and drew him toward me for the kiss of brotherhood. There were tears in his eyes as he returned my kiss, and we stood thus, hand in hand, as the crowd roared its approval.

Nothing marred that perfect day. There was no thought of the days ahead, of hard labor, of deprivation, of difficulties of all kinds. We knew that any problems we would encounter would be temporary and would lend themselves to solutions. We knew to a man that we were capable of meeting any challenges that this new home might pose for us, that we were indeed a united people set on the path chosen for us by a God who cared for His children at all times and who constantly reminded them of His love. There was not the slightest doubt in any mind that day.

Throughout the festivities that followed our assembly I watched Aaron's face as he went about watching and sharing in the joy of those who had entrusted their lives to us. I had never seen Aaron betray such emotion. Never had I seen his eyes fill with tears as they did frequently that day, particularly when he was with the children. They hung on him as on a father much loved. They stroked his face with their tender fingers. They

spoke to him of their love for him. They begged him to stay with them and play their games. And play he did. I never thought I would see my stalwart brother engaged in such childish pursuits, and I smiled inwardly at the sight. I knew that if Aaron saw an outward smile he would be reminded of the nature of his dignity and feel compelled to jump to his feet. As it was, he knew without question the love that these children felt for him and knew that it was a reflection of the love that all their elders felt.

As for me, I was finally free to go to my wife and children and share with them the joy of this blessed day. Their faith in me and in their God had never wavered from the first day this journey was suggested, and at all times they had acted in a way that filled me with pride, calm in the face of trouble, willing when help was needed, cheerful when others grew discouraged, loving at all times, and generously tolerant of my absence from their midst when I was needed elsewhere, and this was most of the time.

I spoke quietly with my wife of what lay ahead, and my sons listened intently. They were young enough to know dependence and old enough to

desire independence, and they expressed their hopes that in the building of this new land they would be regarded as men and given the responsibilities of men. They no longer enjoyed the pleasures of childhood, they said. They longed for the full participation in all things accorded to men. I was proud of them in their aspirations, and I did not discourage their hopes, but I counseled patience and said that they would have many opportunities to prove their manhood. With that I gave each of them my blessing and told them that they were free to go join their friends in this great celebration.

Left to ourselves, my wife and I spoke gently of the days past and the days to come. She was a woman of rare courage, and at several times during our journey she had served us all well. She had a way of turning major crises into minor crises and was trusted by all who knew her. I knew that in the days ahead we all would know her value, and I told her that night of my love and my admiration. In her modesty, she turned aside my praise and spoke instead of my inspired leadership. She knew of my inner voice. We spoke of it often, and there was not the slightest

doubt in her mind that God spoke to me in this way of what he required of me. I counted myself blessed in my family. Their love for me and mine for them exceeded all bounds and they brought me the peace of soul that such love generates.

Before we slept we joined together in a final prayer of thanksgiving and hope, and slept dreamlessly before awakening in the dawn of our first new day in our homeland.

Our first task in our new home was to assign living space for each of our countrymen. They would not occupy this land immediately, but the equitable distribution of land was one of our first priorities. This was a complicated process and involved much surveying of the area we felt would lend itself to cultivation and produce generously. Aaron was in charge of this project, surrounded as he was by able young men, quick to learn and eager to help. They determined that the best approach was division of the land into

logical sections without regard to final ownership but with regard to the potential of the land itself and its proximity to the river. Almost immediately it became clear that the use of water would have to be closely supervised and that perhaps there needed eventually to be a common authority in the distribution of this precious commodity.

A second group of young men set about laying out the town. There was obvious need for centralization here with all our craftsmen and artisans located conveniently for the populace. Immediate shelter had been contrived, but we went about building the homes that would serve us well in the coming years. Each family assumed the basic responsibility for its own dwelling unit once its location had been determined and approved, but the cooperation among our people in this endeavor was gratifying not only to me but to all who observed it. Even the children fell to eagerly carrying water, moving rocks, and doing a myriad of other tasks that suited their young strength and willingness.

As I walked the rough streets those first days of settlement, I could not stop smiling. Everywhere

I looked there was activity. Everywhere I looked the outlines of a town were taking shape. I have not mentioned the shops, but here too thought was given to the importance of participation by all in their construction, and before we knew it those who served us as merchants and craftsmen were adequately housed.

All through these early days the euphoria we had known on our arrival in this blessed place continued to possess our spirits. It was as though our God had granted us this gift to sustain us in our holy work, and wherever I looked I saw the glow of satisfaction on each face. I heard voices raised in happy song. I heard the contagious laughter of the children. If there were complaints they did not reach my ears.

We knew from the beginning that we must have some form of government to oversee our affairs. During our journey I had been impressed by the qualities of leadership that had emerged among the young people in our company, and although I kept my counsel to myself, I hoped that others had noted this. I hoped that we as a group would look to these young people as an important part of our governing bodies, but I

knew that in this matter there must be a consensus of opinion. My will mattered little, but I hoped I could persuade. When our group of original organizers met to discuss this need, it was agreed that for the moment we would serve as an unofficial governmental body and would bend our efforts to consideration both of what form our new government should take and who of our number were those best suited to take on the responsibilities of leadership in this new government. We agreed to meet at a later time for further discussion of what our next step would be.

I knew, too, that we needed a meeting place, a place where all our people could come in communion to praise God and a place where all could share the love we felt both for Him and for each other, and to that end one of our first actions was to choose a location for this meeting place. We knew we could not afford to build the large edifice this demanded at the present time, but we counted it important to reserve a site, centrally located and of good size so that there would be adequate room for both the building and for pleasant surroundings. We designated

such a site, spacious and central, and I said to all those I spoke to that we would meet at this place regularly before the building was started and that these meetings would serve two purposes. First, I said, we needed to meet in unity of faith and thanksgiving, to give praise to the Lord who led us to this place. Then, I said, we needed to meet in unity of common endeavor, of brotherhood in action, and know that the needs of all our brothers were being met in love and giving, that there was no one among us who lacked in any way.

We needed, finally, a means of communication each to the other in this new place, and to this end we divided our town into sections, and in each section appointed one person responsible for communicating all necessary information to those in his area. There was one person, in turn, responsible for communicating all messages and information to these group leaders. At first I was not certain of the efficiency of this communication system, but it worked well and served the additional purpose of unifying each small section of the town under a single communicator, an individual whom the townspeople came to re-

gard as a leader and whom they grew to trust, and eventually the communication became two way communication so that the needs of the people or the problems they might be encountering were relayed through this system to those in control. But this was later. At first our communication system was rudimentary but effective and served us adequately in those early days.

There were many other concerns that occupied us as newcomers to this land, but these were the central issues with which we had to cope, and I was well pleased with the effectiveness of our efforts and the harmony with which these efforts were effected. Our fledgling community was taking shape before my eyes, and I awoke each morning to the wonder of it and went to sleep each evening with gratitude in my heart toward all those I loved, my brothers and sisters all, and toward the God who made it all possible.

In the fullness of time our community began to take shape, and it was a wonder to me each time

I regarded its beauty. This was indeed a land of lushness and promise, and all of my brethren lived in joyful anticipation of our first harvest, our first gathering of the crops we had planted almost immediately on our arrival. We had planted a variety of foodstuffs, and we learned more each day of the nature of the plants we found already thriving on our arrival.

There was an air of hope in this new settlement and a willingness to work long hours without complaint or fatigue. There was a sense of total cooperation wherever I looked, each man prepared to lay aside his own tasks to help a brother in need, a neighbor in need. A sense of community pervaded our fledgling settlement, and each day brought new tasks and new accomplishments. We were fortunate in our artisans. They were men not only of skill, but also of sensitivity, and they advised against haste in either our planning or our building. They were instrumental in leading us to plan our dwelling places so that we would enjoy air and light within them, to so space them for us to enjoy these luxuries which they regarded as essentials. They guided us in the clever use of materials we found at

hand and in all ways we profited by their direction and their tutelage.

Our fledgling government began to take shape almost of its own volition. There emerged a group of men, a variety of ages, occupations, and experience, who seemed always to be in the forefront of each new project, from the initial planning to the completion. Gradually all of us expected to benefit by the wisdom of one or more of these men, and all of us found ourselves assuming that they would be our permanent overseers whatever our pastimes, whatever our challenges. It pleased me to see this emerging leadership. Our journey to this land had let me hope that this would happen, that our leaders would be chosen rather than appointed, be selected for ability and dedication freely recognized by all.

And so, harmony prevailed, the harmony that I had exhorted my countrymen to seek at all times, and both Aaron and I were well pleased. We spoke often and still felt responsible for the well being of all of our brothers and spent our time as we had on the journey overseeing all that they did and visiting each home as often as we

could to acquaint ourselves with each change, each need, each problem that might seek a solution, and each of us was encouraged at each juncture of the progress all of our people were making in their new home.

Only one thing bothered both of us. We had yet to find the time or the money after several months of industrious effort on other things to begin work on our meeting place. So caught up were all in the daily business of planning for the physical needs of the community that we were forgetting the spiritual needs. To both of us, meeting the spiritual needs of the community involved many things, but certainly significant among them was construction of our place of worship and communion. We agreed that we had progressed well enough in providing for food, housing, and the other essentials of our daily lives that we should turn our energies to this new effort which had been in our plans since the very first day, but which, having been put aside in favor of immediate physical needs, had been forgotten, and if not forgotten, lost in the long list of things which commanded our attention and demanded our energies.

We met often as a people on the site we had chosen for our temple, and perhaps it was for this reason that there was no feeling of urgency about its completion. Whatever the reason, there were, several months after our arrival, no plans for this building, no date set for its beginning, no schedule set for its completion. It had been assumed from the beginning that the cost of this edifice would be borne by all of us, that all would participate physically in its construction, no matter how lowly the labor might be, and that construction of our place of worship would be a labor of love from the first stone laid until the last. There was no question in Aaron's mind or in mine about the willingness of all of our people to share joyfully in this venture, but they needed to be reminded, they needed to be led.

To this end, Aaron and I met with this group of emerging leaders and spoke to them of what we had discussed between ourselves. I asked them to consider the building of our place of worship within a reasonable time. I told them that I felt we had reached a point in the work of settlement where it would be not only possible but spiritually profitable for each of us to devote a

portion of our time to this holy work. There was not a word of dissent in this group. Indeed they looked to a man abashed that they needed to be reminded of this holy obligation and assured us that we needed to speak no further, that they would that day begin to make plans and would consult with us each step of the way for our approval of whatever they proposed.

We ended this meeting with professions of love for each other and for God, as was our custom, and Aaron and I walked away together in silence until we came to the place where we parted company to go to to our respective homes. Aaron was a man of few words always, so it did not surprise me when we embraced before separation and his single word comment was "Good."

By the end of the first year we were well underway to being a prosperous peaceful settlement. There was rare harmony among all our citizenry and at any suggestion of strife an awareness of its inappropriateness stilled the anger of the war-

ring parties. I at all times thanked my God for the awareness He had instilled in every heart of the need to live in love and reverence, and as I knew would happen, loving behavior inspired loving behavior, and I grew accustomed, though always freshly delighted, with the customs my people had adopted to insure and enforce this love that existed in each heart and found its expression in word and action. It was commonplace among us to greet each other at all times with expressions of love and caring. It was our custom to care each for his brother in any way that he needed, and there were always more willing to give of themselves and their goods than those in need. In all ways we had realized our dream of a land of richness both material and spiritual, and as a people we sought at all times to express our thanks for this euphoric existence to the God whose caring love guided us and bound us together.

Each day brought new wonders to us. Each day saw progress in every way until I wondered what we would do with our energies once we had reached the end of building our city and caring for the physical needs of all of our people.

Some of this energy went each day into the construction of our temple. Each and every one of our people contributed to the erection of this mighty edifice, a place of worship both spacious and elegant, simple and majestic, in all ways a fitting environment for the worship of the Deity and the communion of our brethren, for we had indeed made it our custom to congregate each and every one of us at the end of the day once a week to join together in holy worship and to speak together of our faith in our God and in each other. We had come to this weekly gathering almost immediately upon arriving in this holy place, and at first the gathering numbers were smaller than later when it was rare for our brothers to fail to participate.

It fell to me to preside over such gatherings, and each time I prayed to my God for inspiration and guidance in selecting my words. There were those among us who possessed ancient writings, passed down from generation to generation, and it was my privilege often to read from these writings and remind my brothers of the richness of their heritage. At other times I spoke to them of the material accomplishments the week had

seen, of the contributions each had made to the welfare of all, and at times I reminded my brethren of the rules for living by which we were guided. In all ways these meetings united our people and served to introduce the very young to the ideals by which they were expected to live their lives and of the richness of their history.

There were times when others of my brethren were moved to speak to the congregation, and at all times such addresses were welcomed by us all. It mattered not what was said. It mattered that these messages came from the heart and spoke of love.

Not a day went by that I did not raise my voice in thanksgiving to the God who had made this utopia possible. Not a day went by that I did not beseech Him to continue His loving care of all His children, all those who turned to Him in loving prayer. At no time did I doubt his listening ear, and I heard His voice often telling me of His pleasure in all we did in love and caring.

This, then, was our life after a year in our new home. Where there was trouble, there was a loving solution. Where there was need, there was a

generous response. Where there was questioning or doubt, there was faith supplied and accepted. Where there was uncertainty, there was assurance. Each man took full responsibility for himself, for his family, and for his neighbor, always in honest and loving solicitude, always in acts of charity and love. Greed did not live in any heart. Envy was unknown. In a land of peace and plenty each heart knew the fullness of God's loving care, and each heart rejoiced at all times in its fortune. Our dream was complete, our faith and trust total. We were one people under one God, united in love and reverence for Him and for each other. There was nothing more to hope for.

Within a fortnight of our meeting, plans for our meeting place were well under way and the enthusiasm of the planners knew no bounds. It was determined that the temple would be of a size to accommodate twice as many as our present population to anticipate the needs of the future. It was decided that each stone of this

edifice would be laid with loving care to insure its permanence, for each of us felt that we were building not only for ourselves but for generations unborn.

Each time Aaron and I met with those designing our temple, we found little in our response but approval. This group of talented artisans acted with a single mind, as though drawing inspiration from the God they sought to honor. There was a loftiness of purpose that animated their every thought, their every utterance. Indeed, this undertaking seemed to transform them and to magnify their talents to the point of perfection. In all, they were sustained by a buoyant faith in each other and in their purpose.

There was much interest in all of our people in the plans for our meeting place, and at each of our weekly gatherings I spoke of progress being made, of plans being effected, and I described as best I could the beauty of the proposed plans. There was among all of us an impatience to see the actual building get underway, but there was equally an awareness that haste was an indulgence, that loving care must be lavished on every detail of this building that would be a symbol to

us of the achievements of all of us in this new home and a symbol of the loving unity we enjoyed with the blessing of our God. At no time was there a whisper of dissension or dissatisfaction in any way from any of our people. We were joined together in common purpose and complete communion in this tribute.

And so as the weeks went by and progress continued in the planning of our temple, there was little in my heart but love and thanksgiving. Our people lived in peace and prosperity. There were births and there were deaths, each marked by love. There was equitable distribution of worldly goods and no hunger was felt in any heart for more than he had been given. A sense of sharing possessed our people at all times, from the oldest to the youngest, and harmony prevailed. We were rarely blessed. And when trouble did come -- sickness, death, accident -- there was no limit to the solicitude and aid that sprang forth to meet the needs of the afflicted.

I went often about the town to glory in this peace and prosperity that we had been led to. The love I sensed all about me was almost palpable, I thought, an endless source of delight to

me. This is what I had prayed for so fervently. This is what I thanked our heavenly Father for each day of my life. I had the utmost faith in Him, in my brothers, and in myself, finally. I knew in my heart that I had done what I was sent to this earth to do and I counted myself blessed beyond words. I sought now only to know what else my God required of me.

In the midst of all the joy I felt in my heart, there was a longing, a sense of incompleteness in myself that I did not begin to understand for a long time. I felt that each day of my life was complete, filled as it was with activities, filled as it was with love. For the first time in many years I had adequate time to spend with my family, and the hours I passed with them were sources of great happiness to all of them.

Their deep devotion to our cause had given me the freedom to be away from them during the years I needed to devote most of my time and energies to my brothers in their search for per-

fect freedom, and I had been grateful for their tolerance. Never had my wife spoken in criticism or complaint. She had at all times accepted my absence with faith in all I endeavored to do, and she had conveyed this faith to our children so that they too were totally tolerant and understanding of my seeming neglect of them. They knew that at all times my love for them and theirs for me was the most important aspect of my life, second only to the love all of us felt for our God. Now, however, relieved from the total preoccupation with the affairs of my brethren that was essential for so long, I was free to enjoy the loving companionship that those closest to me by blood ties and by love offered to me.

I had always spent much time in conversation with my wife, and during those times when I had been away from my own bed, I had missed her loving counsel, for her wisdom was above the ordinary and her sensitivity beyond measure. It was rare for us to disagree, but when we did my wife would cling to her opinions and beliefs with a persistence I sometimes tended to regard as stubborn. She was somewhat like Aaron in this regard, but her stubbornness had a charm that

his lacked and was therefore more palatable. She would argue with me with a stubborn logic, and I hesitate to admit how often in the end I agreed to the rightness of her convictions. At times when I was blinded by my closeness to the problem, by my emotional involvement, my wife supplied me with the detachment I lacked, with the coolness of appraisal that I needed. We were in a very real sense a team, just as Aaron and I were a team, and when I thanked my God for His blessings, I never failed to include both these blessed gifts to me.

Now, in the sweet peace of our new township, I was free to enjoy this loving companionship and to assume more of the responsibilities of fatherhood than I had been able to in the past. It was not that I had lost the love or respect of my sons in any way. It was that I felt I had been deprived of the pleasure of their company for too long, changing as they seemed to do almost from day to day. They were sons in whom I considered myself rarely blessed. Never had either of them given me a moment's unrest. Never had either of them failed to live up to all expectations their mother and I had of them. During our

journey, although they were far short of manhood, they had striven to be useful in every way their ages allowed, and I had been given reports of their usefulness and caring.

Theirs was a difficult position and one they handled well. Much was expected of them by all of our people because they were my sons, and it would have been easy for them to let resentment creep into their hearts, for the expectations expressed were often unreasonable in nature. My older son spoke well and unhesitatingly and seemed to have inherited my ease with words, but the younger was shy and hesitant in his speech, and there were many times when well meaning but insensitive people commented on his manner of speech and contrasted it with mine and his brother's. "You will learn when you grow up," they told him. "You will be a great orator like your father."

Each time this happened my wife and I sought to reassure him that this seeming unkindness was not an unkindness at all, but that in any case his manner of speech was not any basis for comparison between him and anyone else, that he was perfect in our eyes, his manner of speech

perfect too. Perhaps we went too far. He knew very well that his speech was impeded, and perhaps it was equally insensitive of us to pretend that it was not. There was no lack of love in our dealing with this problem that we considered minor at best, but rather a lack of awareness of how important it was to this child to measure up to what he thought were our true expectations of him. I learned much later that each time he heard me speak his soul shriveled with the sure knowledge that he would never be able to be like me in this way and that he would therefore be a disappointment all of his life.

And so, at the time unknown to me, I was failing my younger child without meaning to. When he was withdrawn, I thought he was dreamy. When he was silent, I thought he was distracted. Gradually I came to realize that he was speaking less and less, responding to questions in monosyllables, and that when he did speak in longer strings of words the hesitance in his speech was greater than before, and that speech was becoming a physical effort for him. The harder he tried it seemed, the more pronounced the problem. He was tending too to be more solitary, and I

came to see him often wandering by himself, eschewing the company of boys his age, even the company of his brother.

My wife, her eyes troubled, urged me to take some action. She had tried to talk with him, she said, but he gently refused her efforts to help. Her eyes filled with tears as she spoke, and I knew the depth of her distress. And so, that day, I followed my son as he wandered off. He did not even notice me some distance behind him, and when I came up from behind and sat beside him he was startled, and to my astonishment burst into tears. I held him in my arms and felt the shudders pass through that frail half grown body, and I was moved to tears myself. How had I not known the depths of my child's sorrow?

Eventually his sobs ceased and he pulled away from me and sat upright, rubbing his eyes with the backs of his hands, looking abashed. We sat for a while in silence. Then the words poured forth from him -- halting, great gulps of breath between each word -- but a torrent of self deprecation, of self inadequacy, of a longing to be what he was not, to speak as he could not. As I sat there and looked at the tear streaked face of

my beloved child and listened to his tortured words I was filled with dismay and remorse. How could I have so failed this child? How could I have been so sensitive to the needs of all my brethren, as I thought I was, and have overlooked the intensity of the need closest to my heart?

I knew what I must do. I reached over and pulled my child to me in a close embrace. He stiffened, resisted, and tried to pull away, but I strengthened my hold, and gradually I felt the tension leave his body and he softened in my embrace. Slowly his arms reached around my body and we were locked in wordless communication. That was the beginning. It was many months before the silent ravages began to show healing, many months of thoughtful, joyful, sometimes painful communication between my child and me. This child who had hidden his needs out of love learned to share his needs out of love, and I was the richer for this experience.

From the beginning there was a feeling shared by most of my brothers that we needed to organize ourselves into groups to share the responsibility of government. There were, as I have said, among our people certain individuals who had emerged as leaders because of their devotion to our cause and their innate abilities. We had met informally each time there was need for organization of a specific effort or when there was need of a decision that affected the welfare of all. While we still met each week to offer praise to our God and to mingle with our brothers in thankful and loving friendship, it was not feasible to carry out any of the affairs of government at these gatherings.

The building of the temple was going well, and this indeed was an effort that involved all of our people, but there were other practical matters in which progress and accomplishment were not proceeding as smoothly. There was a general plan for laying out the town which was pleasing to all, but there were misunderstandings and disagreements about the details of this plan, and indeed in many cases the disagreement was based on honest differences of opinion because no

standards had been set out in detail. There was some confusion about the responsibilities for other public buildings. There was disagreement about what buildings we needed, both presently and for the future, about how these buildings would be designed and who would be responsible for paying and maintaining them. There were problems with water rights that needed organization and arbitration, and this was perhaps the most pressing of our needs.

In all, it was clear to me by the end of the second year that we needed to find permanent answers to these problems, and that this required permanent governing bodies with clearly delegated powers and a body of law that would not only meet our current needs but plan for the future as well. We needed also to have a body of officials who would be responsible for administering these rules and regulations once we had set them forth and would do so in the spirit of loving cooperation that had marked our lives since we left the land of bondage.

I was not alone in my opinions here, and it was a simple matter to gather about me an adequate number of concerned brethren of many talents

and absolute devotion, and when this group met for the first time our thinking was so similar on what should be done that progress was rapid. As always, Aaron was at my side and as always he became our scribe, our keeper of records, our source of knowledge. It was quickly decided that the most effective approach was to determine the areas of concern, and this was readily accomplished. The needs were clear to all. Then each of our number volunteered to take responsibility for one area of concern and to work with any of the group similarly interested. The group quickly divided itself and it pleased me to note that at the end the groups were of roughly the same size and that the members of each group were already talking animatedly among themselves of what they would do next.

Before the group dispersed, I called for their attention and asked that they be prepared to meet again in a fortnight bringing with them full reports of all they had accomplished and all that they proposed. I then left, and I was told later that the rest of the group remained behind for some time discussing their responsibilities and how they would meet them. When I heard this I

was not surprised at their enthusiasm -- I had come to expect this kind of cooperation -- but I was pleased nonetheless with knowing of it. I was pleased that at no time that I was aware of had this sense of cooperation failed in our new land. Even where there were disagreements among our people, each of the parties sought an amicable solution. Never had any disagreement degenerated into a quarrel. Never had any one of my people acted other than in love toward his brother, and for that gift from God I was profoundly grateful.

It was my earnest wish at all times to do everything that was necessary to preserve this loving behavior by removing potential causes of friction, and it was to this end that I sought to provide a framework of law for the guidance of all. It was to this end that I sought to delegate responsibilities and obligations in such a way as to eliminate misunderstandings and apprehensions. I was confident that my brothers would return to me at our next meeting with answers to meet our needs. I looked forward to hearing of them, and as I walked homeward, reliving in my mind the words of the evening, I was filled with

thankfulness to God for His having given me the privilege of leading these people, my brothers in love.

From time to time Aaron and I met to consult with those who were endeavoring to formulate a set of laws by which the community could know the rightness or wrongness of each action and know that in case of error, for we all were aware of man's capacity for error, there was an equitable solution for all involved. There had been cases which I had adjudicated on the merits of each case as presented by the aggrieved party and the accused. In each of these cases I had, all agreed, reached a decision based on the merits of the case, and in each case those who came to me for judgment accepted the decision I came to and abided by it.

We were, however, a growing community, and the complexities of living were increased. Neighbors living in close contact were liable often to disagreement, usually about property, and in

these cases it was sometimes possible for the disagreeing parties to reach an amicable solution, a compromise that pleased both, but in others and more frequently there was an honest conviction of the rightness of his position on both sides, and in these cases an outside arbitrator was essential to restore the loving relationship which had been adversely affected by the dispute. We saw a need for quick decision in the event of a disagreement over property, and so we bent our efforts to codifying the rights of the individual should they be violated in any way, and we attempted to codify solutions to the greatest extent possible. For each deprivation, we tried to find adequate compensation. For each incident where there was dispute over whose rights were being violated, we tried to codify what each citizen could rightfully consider his rights and what he must respect as the rights of his neighbor. If an apple should fall from a tree planted in one man's yard and fall into the neighboring yard, whose apple is the fallen apple by right -- the man who owns the tree or the man whose yard it fell into?

I use this extreme example as an example only,

since no incident so petty would have provoked a dispute, but it serves to indicate the kind of property rights we were necessarily concerned with. We were beginning to know prosperity, and much property of value came into being.

Whereas my brethren were still generous of heart and mindful of the rule that prohibited greed and envy, it was human nature to feel an air of possessiveness about those things that had resulted from long and hard labor, and so it was with my countrymen. There was an absolute need for laws which would insure that when this new found prosperity and possessiveness led to dispute and a temporary interruption of the harmony we had come to know and still needed in my firm opinion, there would be fair settlement of these disagreements and the restoration of love and peace between brothers.

When we began to codify these laws, rules, and regulations designed for the orderly business of everyday life, we were surprised at how lengthy a list we produced, each man finding needs that the others had not considered, many of them having knowledge of disagreements to which I was not privy, disagreements which had erupted

and which had been settled without any intervention from me. The longer we labored the more we realized that our labors if not long overdue were timely and necessary.

I ended each of these meetings filled with admiration for my brothers whose wisdom and concern were so generously contributed to the common good. I considered myself aware of the needs of my people, as did Aaron, and both of us came away from each session with those good men newly aware of how many things we would not have considered important enough to codify into law, but whose importance was unmistakable when clearly presented. There was much too that we had been unaware of in terms of property disagreements among friends and neighbors, disagreements which had never reached our ears because they had not reached major proportions before being settled, but in these cases, we learned, settlement often was reached because one of the parties was the more magnanimous and often chose to sacrifice what others would have considered rightful demands in the interest of harmony.

So we proceeded with this task, and it was a

search for just and equitable solutions to problems that had arisen or could theoretically arise within our growing community. We were all aware of man's frailty and of the constant temptations he faced to put material considerations before spiritual, and it was our desire above all things to provide a body of laws that promised justice in the event of a dispute that had due regard for the rights of each individual, no matter age, position, wealth, at all times. It was not a simple matter, and yet we sought to keep our laws simple enough for easy understanding and our solutions so clearly just that there was no possibility of disagreement or dissatisfaction.

During the time that we were formulating and codifying our laws, the community took much interest in what this small group of men were doing and asked me and Aaron on our visits if they could be permitted to participate in any way in this work. We were both pleased and surprised by the number of these inquiries and consulted with our law makers. It was their suggestion that

a list of the areas of concern be discussed at one of our weekly meetings and that the populace at large be asked if they felt anything of importance had been neglected. They would, they said, be prepared to do this in a matter of weeks, and asked Aaron and me to so instruct our brethren. It was their suggestion that each individual prepare a list of his own, areas in which he had reason to believe that regulation of some sort was needed.

Both these suggestions met with willing acceptance, and I was pleased by the degree of interest exhibited by each of our citizens. Not that it was strange to have a degree of interest among them in the very laws by which they would be governed, but for the least educated and sophisticated of my brothers to have the feeling that he had the right and the capability to participate in such weighty decisions was a triumph of confidence, I felt, and as I walked about the next few weeks there was little else expressed. Each man spoke with his neighbor of what he felt should be included and each discussion seemed to result in agreement that there was much that needed inclusion if each chance of disagreement was to

be avoided.

There was an air of excitement in all of this, the same feeling of participation that had animated all our efforts in building homes and shops, in tilling and planting, in the construction of our temple. The difference was that this endeavor was one that required thought and skills commonly associated only with the wisest and most learned of our number. It was a departure indeed to have each and every man, woman, and child speaking about the laws by which they would be expected to act and by which they would be adjudged lacking or responsible in event of error.

And when the time came for the meeting, only those too ill or infirm to attend were missing. I opened the meeting by explaining once again the reason for the efforts of this group in creating a body of law by which we would all be judged in our actions. There was not a person in the assemblage for whom this was new information, but they listened closely and patiently, and nodded their heads in agreement throughout my short talk. Then Aaron spoke briefly about our pleasure in the degree of interest that their num-

bers represented, and our belief that their presence here tonight made the efforts to codify these laws of property and person more meaningful.

Then the business began. The spokesman for the group of law makers explained how their meetings had been conducted, what they hoped to accomplish, and their pleasure in the interest of the populace in all that they were trying to do. Again, the audience was rapt in its attention. Even the children, those old enough to attend, seemed to sense the importance of this to their lives in the years to come. Then, one by one, he discussed the areas of concern which the group had drawn up and spoke briefly of each, explaining that to go into details of each area would take too long for that meeting, but adding that if it was the pleasure of the group that further meetings be held to go into detail about each area of concern he and his group would abide by the wishes of all the citizens. If, he said, there were areas of concern they had failed to consider he would have a ready ear as would the rest of the group, to hear all suggestions.

As he spoke I watched my brothers, absorbed in

his words, nodding their agreement as he came to each new area of concern. Occasionally there would be expressions indicating skepticism or a questioning attitude, but on the whole the silent agreement was impressive to me, as was the degree of concern evident both in their presence and in their demeanor.

When the spokesman was finished speaking there was a moment of silence and then the sounds of approval, and one of our older citizens stepped forward and asked for permission to speak. He would, he said, take advantage of the privileges of age and assume the right to speak for his brothers and sisters. He said that he was both moved and grateful, that he hoped that there would be further meetings of this sort to permit the detailed explanation of each law so that all those to be governed by that law would be enabled to agree with its wisdom and fairness, so that at a later time there would be no room for disagreement on the part of any man. He said that he would be pleased if the lawmakers could find it possible to permit anyone who disagreed on any point of law to speak before his brethren and to voice his objections and sugges-

tions. If his was a lone dissent then he would be forced to reconsider his position, but if the dissent was widespread, then perhaps the law makers would reconsider theirs.

There was little more to say after this wise man had concluded. There was absolute agreement among the law makers that this was a wise method of proceeding, and they looked to me to speak further. I expressed to my brothers my pleasure in all that had been said, in all that I had observed of their demeanor and concern, and I promised to consult both with this group of codifiers and with the community at large about further meetings and try to reach both a reasonable estimate of how many meetings would be needed and a reasonable schedule of such meetings. I would, I said, send forth word of this when the decision had been made, and I told them to go to their homes with God's blessing in their hearts and to remember always the blessedness of this meeting, of the love that it evidenced, and of the harmony it represented and sought to perpetuate. I asked them to spend a moment with me in silent thanksgiving, in acknowledgment of our gratitude to our God who

kept us in His caring. Thus the meeting ended
and a beginning was made.
