

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

January/February 2001

ISSN 8756-1336

The Sovereignty of God

Perhaps it seems that I'm "biting off more than I can chew" by beginning this small newsletter with such an awesome subject. Sovereignty means, among other things, supremacy—such as the power held by kings and presidents. But God's sovereignty is infinitely greater than any other. How wonderful it is to know that "He's got the whole world in His hands"!

In my old age I think a great deal about my Heavenly Father's lovingkindness throughout my life. There have been what seemed to be at the time obstacles to achievement, frustrations of the real purpose, mysteries beyond my ken. Yet, in retrospect, I have no doubt whatsoever that all is a part of His mysterious and eternal purpose.

Look at Psalm 40:5—"Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare."

Isaiah 30:15—"In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength."

2 Corinthians 4:16-18—"Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Although I was born in Belgium where my parents were missionaries for five years, my earliest memories in the U.S. seem to be during the Great Depression when my father was editor of a weekly called *The Sunday School Times*, which was specifically designed for Sunday school teachers. He drew a salary of perhaps ten or twelve dollars per week with which to pay bills and feed

the three children he had begotten so far.

My entrance to first grade was terrifying. I was sure I would flunk arithmetic. I almost did (I still count on my fingers). There were forty-two boys in our neighborhood and one girl besides myself. I was shy, had the usual childhood illnesses, and my dearest friend was Essie, who died when we were both nine. Our favorite hymn, "Out of the Ivory Palaces," was played at her funeral. Both words and music were composed by Essie's church organist.

I was blessed to have parents who set an example of godliness, self-discipline, and love for each other and for us. Although their expectations for their children were, I suppose, high, they were taken for granted. We had very little of the type of conversation that is nowadays called *sharing*. A rigorous program? We didn't know that. Following a talk I gave describing my growing up years a man came to me to say, "Wow! I'm sure glad I didn't have to grow up under such rigorous, regimented rules and regulations!" But I can't be thankful enough that I did.

Missionaries were my heroes. We watched hundreds of missionary slides, heard missionary stories firsthand at our dinner table (Mother heeded the scriptural injunction to "use hospitality without grudging" so we had countless missionaries, as her guest book proves; 42 different countries are represented there), read missionary books (there were few books recommended for Sunday afternoon reading). I began to pray that God would let me be one of those fascinating characters.

In the mysteriously wonderful *sovereignty of God*, following Wheaton College and Prairie Bible Institute, I was given a summer's work in an out-of-the-way place called Patience (of all things), in Alberta, Canada. It was good preparation for the

foreign field. My colleague Fay and I had a terrible time trying to get along with each other. We got to the point of wanting to pack in the whole enterprise, so back we went to headquarters (the Canadian Sunday School Mission) and asked for separate assignments. Nothing doing. We were told that we had no choice but to learn what it means to love one another. We learned.

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed” (1 Peter 1:6-7).

“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (Deuteronomy 31:8).

The sovereignty of God is not fate but a dynamic unfolding of a design which includes all of our circumstances, conditions, heredity, and environment; the time in which we live, the things beyond our control—and *our* decisions, every willed choice. God knows how to make even the wrath of man to praise Him. “I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me” (Romans 10:20).

Thanks be to God for the power that determines and administers the government of His world. “Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Genesis 18:25).

What to Do About Feelings

Do not debunk feelings *as such*. Remember they are given to us as part of our humanity. Do not try to fortify yourself *against* emotions. Recognize them; name them, if that helps; and then lay them open before the Lord for His training of your responses. The discipline of emotions is the training of responses.

No argument for discipline will furnish the power to discipline. He who summons is He who empowers. He is Master. As we give ourselves to His rule, He gives us grace to rule.

St. Francis de Sales put it this way: “We are not masters of our own feeling but we are by God’s grace masters of our consent.”

Try it. When, in the face of powerful temptation to do wrong, there is the swift, hard renunciation—*I will not*—it will be followed by the sudden loosening of the bonds of self, the yes to God that lets in sunlight, sets us singing and all freedom’s bells clanging for joy.

From my book *Discipline: The Glad Surrender*

From Despair to Peace

A woman wrote to say that she had read Elizabeth Rice Handford’s little book, *Me? Obey Him? She* asked God to speak to her. She felt that her husband wanted her out, so she left, wounded in spirit. She went to her parents’ for two months but was not comfortable there. Realizing that she was in rebellion and disobedience toward her husband, and had cut herself off from the Lord, she repented.

“What do I do next, Lord?”

“Ask your husband for forgiveness, since you hurt him, rebelled, and disobeyed.”

She asked for words and the opportunity to “walk out” what she had learned. God’s response was immediate. She talked with her husband from the heart, with God’s help. She did not ask to come home, but he invited her home, having missed her, and forgave her.

“God had met me and prepared my husband to be receptive to me,” she wrote. “I am blessed beyond measure. I feel complete again with my husband. As you said, men do not always do as they should according to God’s word (nor do we), but that was none of my business. I was to love him as Christ does, laying all my desires, expecta-

Up to 100 copies of an article may be made for private distribution but not for resale. Please cite full credit as given below. For permission to make more than 100 copies of an article, please write to the newsletter.

© 2001 by Elisabeth Elliot Gren

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter is published six times a year by Servant Publications. The cost is \$7.00 per year. Tax-deductible donations make it possible for those who are unable to pay to receive the letter free. Please send donations to: The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter, P.O. Box 7711, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-7711. Foreign subscribers: Please send donations in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank.

tions, disappointments, etc. at the foot of the cross.

“I have a new love for my husband that I have not known for some time, and am trying to focus on his good qualities.”

Prayer for Our Children

Father, hear us, we are praying,
Hear the words our hearts are saying,
We are praying for our children.

Keep them from the powers of evil,
From the secret, hidden peril,
From the whirlpool that would suck them,
From the treacherous quicksand, pluck them.

From the worldling's hollow gladness,
From the sting of faithless sadness,
Holy Father, save our children.

Through life's troubled waters steer them,
Through life's bitter battle cheer them,
Father, Father, be Thou near them.
Read the language of our longing,
Read the wordless pleadings thronging,
Holy Father, for our children.

*And wherever they may bide,
Lead them Home at eventide.*

**From *Toward Jerusalem*,
by Amy Carmichael**

A Great Woman Has Gone From Us

My dear Lois (and the rest of your family):

It was no shock to hear of the homegoing of your wonderful mother, my dear Katherine Morgan, who had such a powerful influence in my life from the moment when Jim Elliot had insisted that I should make a point of meeting her as soon as possible. I often worked with her in downtown New York City where, on furlough from her mission work in Colombia, she helped with the production of a missionary newsletter. Then of course your

mother would often take me to your home in New Jersey for the weekend (I was living in Brooklyn) and we would have a hilarious time together with you four sisters. You'll remember the *hat show* we once had—"hand-me-downs" from dear Plymouth Brethren ladies. We laughed so hard we choked!

When, a few years later, five young American men were killed in Ecuador, your mother got into her old beat-up red truck and drove through the night from Pasto, Colombia, to Shell Mera, Ecuador. She was a godsend to all of us five wives there, helping with laundry, dishes, feeding three babies ("I've stuffed Valerie with green Jello till it's coming out of her EARS," she said), making us laugh, singing with us around the piano, and then, when it was clear that all five men were dead, she flew with me to my station in Shandia, slept in the bed with me, kept me on an even keel, made me laugh and let me cry until it was time for her to return to her own amazing work in Colombia.

I keep trying to visualize the tremendous welcome she has received in the Father's house! What singing, what joy, what laughter and glory! Miss her? Of course you do. Of course you *will*. But you would not ask her to come back. You will carry on as she taught you four, and you will bless many because of her. I bless her. I thank God for her. I loved her, loved her compassion, loved her total surrender to Christ, loved her boundless love for her people and all who beat a path to her door. Carry on, dear Lois and your three sisters and their spouses. You are in my prayers today, and so, unceasingly, is your mother, I believe.

With love,
Elisabeth

A Word From Lars

It is a beauty of a day. Sunny, bright blue skies, temperature a mild 65 degrees—just the kind of a day to enjoy in January or February, especially in Boston. But of course you need to know that this is being put together in the end of August. I'll try to recall this in four months or so.

In last year's issue, you will remember my Y2K recipe for keeping hunger pangs away during the

disaster via tuna fish and spaghetti: skip breakfast, 1/2 can tuna for lunch, and spaghetti for supper. Well, the tuna is now gone but as of August 22 we still had 12 pounds of spaghetti left on our shelf. Just got a bargain on 6 jars of sauce to aid in the depletion of our horde. Good thing it lasts. Made no plans to stock up for Y-01-K.

So as not to waste too much of E's space, I want to get right to the point and give our appreciation and thanksgiving to all of you who have so generously supported the newsletter with donations and who responded to the offers such as the greeting card offer last year. The response was so good that we ran out of cards. We hope this didn't present a problem for those of you who received the *Gateway to Joy* book instead. If you've had any problem with the greeting card premiums please contact me (Lars Gren, 10 Strawberry Cove, Magnolia, MA 01930).

We surely appreciate all the years the newsletter has been running in the black. Your generous gifts make it possible for us to send the newsletter to subscribers in 74 foreign countries.

We're in that age bracket now where, when we meet someone, they often ask, "Are you feeling well?" or, "You must be tired." Should some of you wonder the same—as far as I know we are well. This in spite of two reports of my demise and the letter to me from a publisher in the U.K. who was sorry that he waited too long to get a

Travel Schedule January 2001–March 2001

January 25-28 Birmingham, Ala., Briarwood Presbyterian Church, (205)978-1322.

February 1-3 Vision New England, Stephen A. Macchia, (978)929-9800.

February 10 Moody Founders' Week, Chicago, Ill., (312)329-4000.

February 16-17 Aiken, S.C., First Baptist Church, (803)648-5476.

March 3-5 Denver, Colo., Calvary Chapel, Jennifer Stipe, (303)421-3800.

March 10 Norfolk, Mass., Emmanuel Baptist Church, Kathy Bridge, (508)528-5862.

March 16-17 Raleigh, N.C., Emmanuel Baptist Church, (919)834-3417.

March 24 Marlboro, Mass., Greater Grace Christian Fellowship, Sarah Daigle, (508)845-2327.

book from E now that she is gone. Also for those who have asked and prayed about my glaucoma condition—I'm thankful to the Lord that I still see well and bump my head enough to remind me of the blind spots that I do have. So thank you for the support, prayers, and friendship of so many of you we've had the privilege of meeting on the road.

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

Servant Ministries, Inc.
Post Office Box 7711
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-7711

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 14
Ann Arbor, MI