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A PARABLE IN PAIN

There was a man from the land of Virginia whose name was Roy. And there were born unto him six sons and five daughters, and he adopted two daughters besides. And he was a man of energy and vision, and his substance increased. And he is my father.

Now it came to pass in the course of time that God did speak unto my father through the church, saying, "Roy."

And he said, "Here am I."

And God said, "Get thee up out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land which lieth hard unto the south." And that land is called Mexico.

So my father departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him, and his household with him. Only his firstborn remained for a season. And I was but a child of three years of age when my father departed out of Virginia. And my father journeyed, going on still toward the south, and dwelt in the land of Mexico.

Now it came to pass that as my father dwelt in Mexico, that his firstborn journeyed into a far country for a term of mission service, and was slain. And my father was grieved in his heart because of his firstborn, and he lifted up his voice and wept sore. His wife rose up to comfort him, but he would not be comforted. Thus my father mourned his son many days.

And there was also a famine in the land; for it rained not as it was wont. And my father went deeper into debt, and his debt was unto him as a thorn in his flesh. And from time to time did evil men steal in by night to ravish his substance. Thus did his financial situation wax discouraging, while the energy and vision of youth did wane.

And it came to pass that other misfortunes befell my father's household. For behold, his son Rodney

was nigh unto death by reason of electrocution and the fall that did result. And a fiery serpent did bite his daughter Evelyn, but God spared her.

And besides all this did Satan tempt him and smite his body with divers infirmities, for he did endure back pain of the utmost intensity, and surgeries, and kidney stone pain, and the pain of the burning of the skin of his hands. Yet did he not lose heart, but retained his integrity. Also his faith in his God did remain strong.

And I, his son, pondered all these things in mine heart; how my father hearkened unto the word of the Lord, and that, behold, many hardships befell him because of it. And it came to pass that when I came of age, I returned unto the land of my nativity, and I joined myself unto some men of God in that country. And I married a wife, and begat a son, and I called his name *Roy*, for mine heart did admire the courage of my father. And also did I beget daughters.

Now it came to pass in the course of time that God spoke unto me through the church, saying, "Get thee up out of thy country, unto a land yet farther unto the south, which is called Peru."

And I said, “The word of the Lord is good; be it even as thou sayest.” But, behold, mine heart did stir within me as I considered the hardships that befell my father in times past, when he hearkened unto the voice of the Lord. And though I do not wish to admit it, mine heart did fear, lest haply similar hardships befall me.

Nevertheless did I go. Yet did mine apprehensions linger with me, for my flesh would draw back at the thought of pain. And I am not fool enough to esteem myself as strong as my father.

Yet I sold my substance, yea, all my substance, save only that which we could carry in our hands, and I took my wife and my son and my three daughters, and we did journey to the south on one-way tickets, taking nothing with us save that which we carried with our own hands. And we came unto the city of Huaral in the land of Peru, and dwelt there.

Behold, the men of that city are very wicked, even like unto the men of Sodom. And I, with my pure family, do live in their midst, encompassed hard on every side by evil men. And the doors on the houses

of the city have not one lock, but two or three. And a guard watcheth in the street.

And I said in mine heart as I pondered the locks on our door, “Behold, no evil shall come past these locks and through this door, for this house shall be unto my children as an oasis in a desert land.”

But lo, I straightway perceived that neither solid doors nor multiple locks can secure a home from evil. And that perception was painful unto mine heart. For even as I do scribe these words doth the windowpane rattle by reason of the ungodly music produced at an ungodly volume, as it were. And the beat is diabolic and the lyrics wail of broken relationships and other things which are not meet. And the overall effect is depressing unto the soul.

And whither shall we escape? And lo, now have the six of us shut ourselves up in our bedchamber, for the volume is not as oppressive here as in the main chamber of our abode. Yea, and yester night did rest flee from mine eyes, and slumber from mine eyelids by reason of the wanton banqueting of the wicked men of the city.