

Mount Zion Revisited

by Charles Reed



Chapter 13. Bears evoked humility, for it is written:
“Mind not high things, but condescend to the lowly.”

Mount Zion Revisited

The Tragic History of the Vineyard Destroyed

And from the daughter of Zion all her splendor has departed.
Her princes have become like deer that find no pasture,
That flee without strength before the pursuer. – Lamentations 1:6

The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah are the garden of his delight.
And he looked for justice but saw bloodshed;
For righteousness, but heard cries of distress. – Isaiah 5:7

by Charles Reed

Mind not who said it,
But attend to what was said.
Imitation, I, 5

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Introduction

In Which Are Set Forth the Mysterious Purposes of This Tragic Allegory

THE theme of this book is the operation of divine grace upon a group of diverse characters. It is a parable, an allegory, based upon a lamentable fact: there are teachers who cannot instruct, guides who cannot direct, coaches who cannot train. They leave behind them ignorant pupils, inept ministers, athletes who cannot compete.

Disenchantment and disappointment is a major theme of the tragedy: the vineyard of the Lord should have yielded good grapes, but only bad grapes came out. The garden of his delight should have flourished. It should have brought forth an orchard of pomegranates, and all the finest spices (Song 4:13). Instead, it was ruined by foxes (Song 2:15, Ezek. 13:4), and then destroyed, its wall broken down, and it became a wasteland (Isaiah 5:6, Psalms 80:12). God called them his *vineyard*, his *pleasant plant*, Isaiah 5:7. But their fruits were offensive, and displeasing to God, bitter as gall, malignant, and pernicious one to another, *like the cruel venom of asps*. (Deut. 32:33; Rom. 3:13)

This book is for all groups of Christians. We are all under the same condemnation (Rom. 3:9; Gal. 3:22). All alike are under sin. As it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one (Romans 3:10). The verses of Romans 3 are about everyone; the allegory in this book is universal.

Universal is the proclamation of guilt: all groups lie under the same sentence.

It is addressed especially to any one who has been disillusioned or disappointed with any group, organization, parish, congregation, assembly or fellowship, or to those who have been disappointed or abandoned by leaders and teachers.

One character is not fictional. Satan, the Adversary, is mentioned in the Scriptures often, from Genesis to Revelation. In the beginning the cunning serpent rose up from the earth. At the end the great red dragon was cast down into the abyss (Gen. 3,

Rev. 20:10). The first parents were deceived. (Gen. 3:13). In the end the children of Adam will be undeceived. (Rev. 20).

The enemy is mentioned in theology books under the category: angels. Lucifer was the most beautiful angel, a pure spirit with intelligence and free will, who fell from grace into the abyss of eternal darkness. (Isaiah 14:12, Rev. 12:9).

The cunning serpent is the one who works behind the scenes. The father of lies is the one who plans destruction and perdition. If the reader thinks this concept is an exaggeration, let him please take note of the spiritual ruin that occurs at the end of the tragedy. One cannot understand events in the world and in the church, unless he knows what is happening behind the scenes, the battle waged against “principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Eph. 6:12).

Another theme of this book, is to narrate the story of souls who are tried as gold in the fire, (1 Peter 1:7; Job 23:10), who are tempted with discouragement and who complain, as Christ complained on the cross. (Psalms 22:1). In the end they come out of the great tribulation, marching into Zion with singing, and with everlasting joy on their heads. (Isaiah 35:10).

We count them happy which endure. You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. (James 5:11)

Chapter 1

Pursuer Makes a Treaty

Wherein the Father of Lies, the Ancient Serpent, Who
Deceives the Whole World, Made an Agreement with the Lord,
To Test Men, as Gold in the Fire

One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Pursuer also came with them. The Lord said to Pursuer, “Where have you come from?”

Pursuer answered the Lord, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.”

Then the Lord said to Pursuer, “Have you considered that I am about to establish a new vineyard in the garden of my church? I have decreed to found a congregation, in which my servants, like the men and women of Bible times, will fight my battles with the sword of the spirit, and will obtain great victories for the name of the Most High. They will fight against sin, they will crush the head of my Adversary, and they will possess my special protection and an abundance of my graces and heavenly benedictions. For as the earth brings forth its bud, as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so I will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations, says the Lord God Almighty!” (Isaiah 61:11).

“Do they fear you for nothing?” Pursuer replied. “Have you not put a hedge around them, and surrounded them with so much grace and protection, that they cannot fall or transgress? But if you would put the members of your new congregation to the test, they would surely curse you to your face.”

The Lord said to Pursuer, “Very well, then. You may put them to the test, and try them, as gold is tried in the fire. I give you thirty years. But harm not the oil nor the wine.”

Then Pursuer went out from the presence of the Lord, and betook himself to the land of Peru.

Chapter 2

The Garden of Delight

Wherein is Related How the Lord Decreed to Establish a New Vineyard in the Garden of His Church, and How People Came into the Land, to Hearken unto the Word of the Most High

Once in olden times, in the city of Lima, there was a congregation of sisters. They were like the virgins of the Gospel parable: their lamps were filled with oil. They served the Lord day and night, bringing forth fruit in patience, and in continuous expectation of the visitation of the heavenly Bridegroom.

One of the sisters was named Teresa. She was like the four virgin daughters of Philip the evangelist who prophesied. (Acts 21:9; Joel 2:28). She was as a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys, in the garden of his church. (Song 2:1, Is. 5:1). He looked upon her with especial delight, for she was as a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed, and she became in his eyes, as one who found peace. (Song 4:12; 8:10).

One day the Lord spoke unto her and said, "My sister, my spouse, my dove, my perfect one, (Song 4:9; 6:9), let me sing for my beloved a song about my vineyard. I am about to establish a vineyard on a fertile hillside. I will dig it up and clear it of stones, and plant it with the choicest vines. I will build a watchtower in it, and a wine press as well. And it will bring forth a harvest of good grapes, an orchard of pomegranates, with choice fruits, with calamus and cinnamon, with every kind of incense tree, with myrrh and aloes and all the finest spices. It will be a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon." (Is. 5:1; Song 4:14; Zech. 14:8).

The Lord then revealed to her that he desired to establish a new congregation in his church, of men and women, who, like those of Bible times, would fight the battles of the Lord and who would crush the power of Satan. They would be founded upon the firm foundation of evangelical doctrine and gospel truth, and they would give great glory unto the name of the Most High, for they would follow in the footsteps of the apostles and prophets of olden times. The Lord revealed to the sister many particulars of the new congregation.

The Lord sent his command to the earth, and his word ran swiftly. (Psalms 147:15). And behold, people came into the land, to hearken unto the word, which he had revealed to his servant, so that they could join the new congregation.

One of the first who arrived was the Reverend Gauthier, a parish priest from Canada. Another was a layman, Sam Grass, who liked to study about history and empires, likewise from North America. Another was Kurt: his parents were Maronite Christians who had emigrated from Lebanon to Canada. Tall Sebastian came from North America, age 28, and in previous years had been destitute, neglected and forsaken; he knew what it meant to be forsaken of all human help and to fend for oneself; in order to survive. Brother Gabriel came from Arequipa; he was 35 and was a professional architect. Nancy Hawkins came from England; she did not join the sisters, but stayed there as a laywoman, she had experience as a journalist and translated from Spanish to English and helped in the graphic arts department.

Since many persons outside Peru were interested in the new congregation, the brothers had publications in two languages and corresponded often with people outside Peru and Latin America.

Several young ladies came from cities in Peru to join the sisters. This group of souls, gathered from among the nations, truly believed with childlike faith that the Lord had spoken to Sister Teresa.

They were like children, because, even with the experience of adults, they possessed innocence, trust, frankness and ingenuousness. They were confident that their leaders would teach them well and guide them with wisdom, so that all the words of the Lord would be fulfilled, and that they would live to see the triumph of evangelical doctrine and gospel truth, and to behold the power of Satan crushed, which the Lord had promised through his servants.

Chapter 3

Pursuer Prepares to Strike

Wherein is Related That the Consumption of a Gnat is
Preparation for the Ingestion of a Camel

Reverend Gauthier possessed abilities that were appreciated by both communities, of sisters and brothers. Every morning he celebrated the Lord's Supper with extreme devotion and reverence: for the brothers and sisters, this service was the happiest moment of the day.

The sisters needed new buildings; he helped to collect funds. He wrote letters and supervised building projects. He hired laborers to work on the construction of new buildings. Some were Peruvian peasants. Once one of the brothers noticed a laborer using a hammer with his hand in the incorrect position, and he showed him the correct way to use it. Later he remarked, "Imagine, he didn't even know how to handle a hammer."

Reverend Gauthier organized a small print shop, and they began to issue books and newsletters in Spanish and English.

Every day they had an optional hour of recreation, from one to two in the afternoon, that consisted mainly in talking and conversing, but the Reverend and Sebastian did not attend, preferring to do other things.

Two times a week some of the brothers went into the streets of Lima in order to ask for alms, that is, they went to the food stands in the open air markets and asked for food. In this they were imitating the first Dominican Friars, who also begged for alms in like manner.

One day Sam Grass and Sebastian returned from begging alms. They were in the dining room, and Reverend Gauthier asked them where was the fruit they were supposed to have brought. Sam pointed a finger at Sebastian and said: "He was supposed to do it, but he didn't." That was a lie.

Sebastian felt hurt and offended on account of Sam telling a lie about him in public. Because of that incident, Sebastian

spoke only rarely to him, only when necessity required.

By now two others had joined their community: Reverend Montaigne, a priest who had studied philosophy and theology, from North America, and Rex Mottram a young man from North America; two of his sisters also joining the community of sisters.

Once Reverend Gauthier was talking to the sisters and remarked, "*No puedo enseñar a monjes*: I am not able to teach friars." At least he was humble enough to admit it. Sometimes the brothers felt confused, because they had no one to teach them.

Once Sam Grass had an intestinal problem, and stayed in the hospital for a week. Sebastian did not inquire what kind of problem it was: he did not speak much during those first years.

After Sam returned from the hospital, he was occasionally sick. Once Sebastian prepared a small meal and carried it silently into Sam's room. Sam smiled back at him. Then Sebastian left, shrouded in silence. During all those years, that was nearly the only act of kindness he showed. He did not mean to be cruel or unkind. He even prayed for Sam sometimes. At that time he was ignorant: he did not yet know, that an excess of unkind silence might cause a tragedy. He had to learn by experience.

In the book of Job Pursuer is called "king over all the children of pride." (Job 41:34). He had servants and ministers who helped him in his malicious work. Therefore either Pursuer himself or one of his servants was always spying and observing the events occurring in the community. Machiavelli said: "Knowledge is power." The more knowledge Pursuer had, the more power he might wield over the congregation. He was pleased when Sam told the lie. He was glad when Sebastian decided not to speak kind words. He was like a serpent, coiling up and preparing to strike. He could wait. He was used to waiting, biding his time. He possessed six thousand years of observation and knowledge. He was a veteran fighter with millennial experience.

Chapter 4

The Vine Begins to Grow

Wherein is Declared that the Kingdom of Heaven is Like a Vine that Brought Forth Good Grapes and Wild Grapes

Reverend Gauthier was not a public speaker, but he did desire to give instruction to the brothers. Sometimes he read to them aloud from good books.

Once during Holy Week he was reading aloud from a book. The author of the book related that during the colonial times in the United States, there was a family named Barber. The father decided to consecrate his life unto the Lord Jesus. Then his wife did the same. Then all his sons and daughters also consecrated their entire lives unto the service of the Lord Jesus. The author of the book referred to them as “this magnanimous family.”

Then Reverend Gauthier lowered the book, made a pause and remarked, “Not like us.” He then raised the book and continued reading.

Sebastian listened in shock. Was Gauthier declaring that the entire community was not magnanimous? Was he saying they were the opposite: pusillanimous, stingy, mean, selfish? He could have said, “not like me.”

They were expected to fight the battles of the Lord with courage, and to save souls from perdition by their generosity and consecration, like the Barber family. It was hoped and desired that they might be filled with fortitude and heroism, like Christ, like the apostles and the first Christians, who were willing to shed their blood rather than deny Christ.

Now their leader was declaring to them that he was not magnanimous, and even more: they were not magnanimous?

Christians possess the long-established custom of respecting their church leaders and treating them with politeness (Heb. 13:17), even when they err. Only a higher authority can correct or admonish them, for example, a bishop or perhaps God himself, as happened to King David when he sinned.

Therefore the brothers were incapable of ameliorating the attitude of their leader. If he said in public that he was the opposite of magnanimous, that was a matter between himself and the Most High. In the end the Lord would judge them all. (Eccl. 12:14). Their secrets would be revealed, and each one would have his praise (or otherwise) from God. (1 Corinthians 4:5)

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Now the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and they said to him: Sir, did you not plant good grapes in your garden? How then does it have wild grapes?

Then the Lord said to them: An Adversary has done this.

The sons of God said to him: Do you want us then to go and gather them up?

The Lord said: No, lest while you gather up the wild grapes, you also uproot the good ones with them. Let both grow together, until the year of my redeemed has come. Then I will gather the vine of the earth and throw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. The son, the heir, will tread the winepress alone, outside the vineyard, and will stain all his robes.

If anyone has the mark of the Adversary, he himself shall also drink the wine of the wrath of God, poured out full strength, and shall be tormented with fire in the presence of the heir forever.

But for my servants I will anoint their head with oil and their cup will run over, with wine that makes glad the heart of man. I will cause them to drink from the river of my pleasures: for my friends will come into my garden and eat its pleasant fruits. (Is. 63:3, Rev. 14:19, Is. 63:4, Rev. 14:9; Psalms 23:5b; 104:15, 36:8, Song 4:16)

So the sons of God went out from the presence of the Lord.

Meanwhile, Pursuer slept peacefully coiled up on the ground, dreaming of foxes playing in the garden. (Song 2:15).

Chapter 5

Cries of Distress for Righteousness

**Wherein Is Related How They Sank in the Miry Depths,
and Came Into Deep Waters (Psalms 69:2)**

One day Sebastian was working, printing the newsletter on a mimeograph machine. He had to use the bathroom. So he walked from where he was to the corridor and into the restroom. Then he saw something bizarre.

Reverend Gauthier and Brother Gabriel were next to the shower, attempting to untie something, a large object, and bring it down. Then Sebastian realized what had happened and went into a state of shock. Sam Grass had tried to hang himself from the horizontal shower rail.

Sebastian walked out into the corridor, recoiling from the shock, and felt angry toward Reverend Gauthier, who had reprimanded the brother with too much severity on some occasions. Then he remembered he also had been silent for two years, and felt anger toward himself and a horrible sensation of guilt. He also was responsible. He wished he could have gone back into the past to say kind words. But it was too late now. The damage had been done.

He walked back into the bathroom. In the meantime, Rex Mottram had gone in and was helping them to place the body on the floor, remarking, "Now you've really done it, Sam."

Sam's body was lying on the floor, unconscious, breathing heavily, and a small amount of foam was coming out of his mouth: he had taken pills to kill the pain of hanging. He was still alive.

Then Rex remarked to Sebastian, "Last year he took poison."

In a flash Sebastian realized what had been happening during the past year, and why Sam had been in the hospital. Sam thought like a child: he really believed that he could go to heaven by dying, even self-inflicted dying: life had become unbearable.

Sebastian's shock deepened. If only he could have done

something, but it was too late now.

During the next few days the nightmare continued. Sam Grass had to be shut up in a room under lock and key, like a prisoner in a mental hospital. Then he was taken to a psychiatric hospital and received electric shock treatments.

Then his mother was contacted and a month later he went back to his country.

All were sad at the calamity. Irreparable damage had been done, and not just to one person; the entire organization was involved.

A few days afterward, Reverend Gauthier approached Sebastian and nervously remarked, "It's not our fault." It was useless to dissimulate or hide the truth: they were all guilty.

It is true, Sam had made mistakes, he had defects, but when one lives in such a group, with guides who do not lead, does one expect everyone to act without error?

So they had come to this. Was this the garden of delights that the Lord was designing? Was he pleased?

The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress. – Isaiah 5:7

No one's blood had been shed physically, but their hands were all red.

The dread oracles of the prophets were now being fulfilled: "The way of peace they have not known, and there is no justice in their ways. They have made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way shall not know peace. Therefore justice is far from us, nor does righteousness overtake us. We look for light, but there is darkness! For brightness, but we walk in blackness! We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes. We stumble at noonday as at twilight; we are as dead men in desolate places." (Is. 59:8-10).

"Jerusalem has sinned gravely, therefore she has become vile. All who honored her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness; yes, she sighs and turns away. Her uncleanness is in her skirts; she did not consider her destiny; therefore her collapse was awesome. She had no comforter. O Lord, behold

my affliction, for the enemy is exalted!” (Lamentations 1:8-9). “Fear and a snare have come upon us, desolation and destruction.” (Lamentations 3:47).

Pursuer went out that day happy and in high spirits. Calling together his ministers of wickedness, he boasted to them about this satanic triumph, and how he had ruined the life of a servant of God. And he added, “But all this gives me little satisfaction, as long as I see the other brothers persevering in their vocation.”

Then all his friends said to him, “Prepare new snares, and clever pitfalls, wrought with your infernal cunning. They will be incapable of escaping from your wiles.” This suggestion rejoiced Pursuer, who like Leviathan and Haman, was hardened in his iniquity. (Esth. 5:14; Psalms 141:9).

In his vanity Pursuer thought that any hope of subduing him was false; the mere sight of this horrible monster of iniquity was overpowering. (Job 41:9). Who was able to stand before him?

Meanwhile the One enthroned in heaven laughed (Psalms 2:4), for he saw that Leviathan's downfall was coming, reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. (Jude 1:6)

Chapter 6

Made Without Fear

**Wherein Is Related How Sister Teresa Died,
and How Kurt was Afflicted and Humiliated**

Reverend Gauthier dreaded writing the letter to Sam's mother. Writing about such news was almost like going into a torture chamber. But he had to: it was his duty. No one else could do it.

He was standing in the corridor, outside his room; a few brothers were present. Then he exclaimed, in a high-pitched tone, “Now I have to write the letter to his mother.” He was nearly whining like a dog. Isaiah did not exaggerate when he predicted the dread events of the future, that were now coming

to pass. People made animal sounds. "We moan mournfully like doves. We look for justice, but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away." "All who survive and escape will be in the mountains, moaning like doves of the valleys, each because of his sins." (Is. 59:11; Ezek. 7:16).

About two weeks after he contacted her, she came and took her son back to North America. Sebastian was in charge of answering the door of the monastery. It was a sorrowful task, when he saw her crestfallen face. A few months after the debacle, they were able to forget the nightmare and get on with their lives.

A year after these events, Reverend Gauthier contracted cancer of the liver and had to have an operation. It was hoped that there might be complete remission. After the operation he had to spend many hours resting every day. During this period, sometimes in the evening there were long distance phone calls from North America, made by Sebastian's mother.

She had not seen her son for 15 years. She felt, as by a kind of intuition, that she had little time upon earth, and wanted to see her children before she left. So she made petitions by means of phone calls, asking permission for her son to visit her; because of her health she was unable to travel to Peru.

She made several requests, but Reverend Gauthier denied them all. Finally, she threatened the intervention of an attorney. When Reverend Montaigne became aware of her impending reprisals, he advised reverend Gauthier to relent and give his consent. So authorization was finally obtained, and the brother was allowed to visit his mother for two weeks.

During the visit to his home in North America, he was at the residence of an acquaintance, Eddie. He was wearing his white robe, and looked almost like a prophet, an apostle or an angel in a Biblical drama. One of Eddie's children looked at him and exclaimed: "I thought people like that were only in the movies!"

Sebastian wished he could have been similar to people in a drama, that is, like men and women of Biblical times, filled with heroism, magnanimity and wisdom, who conceived and undertook admirable works for the glory of the name of the Most High.

People were expecting him to be like heroic characters. Even his clothing suggested such a resemblance, such a role. He wished his teachers could have taught him to be like the great men and women of the New Testament. Could Reverend Gauthier instruct him, who by his own admission, in public, declared he was not magnanimous? Was he a suitable mentor or guide?

Sebastian felt neglected, and his sentiments were shared by the other brothers.

Seven years had passed since the foundation was begun, and the Lord was about to call Sister Teresa to the wedding feast of the Lamb. She had endured afflictions; she had fulfilled her ministry, and she was being poured out as a drink offering, for the time of her departure was at hand. She had fought the good fight; she had finished the race, she had kept the faith, and there was laid up for her a crown of righteousness, that the Lord was to give to her, and to all who loved his appearing.

For more than a year she had been afflicted with two painful illnesses. At length the Lord appeared to her when she was lying on her sick bed and spoke to her: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come. The fig tree puts forth her green figs and the vines their tender grapes. The winter of tribulation is passed, and the springtime of eternal joy has arrived. Rise up, my love, my fair fair one, and come away!" (Song 2:10-13).

Then the Lord took her soul, and she went into the hall of the eternal wedding feast, with the virgins who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. (Mt. 25:10; Rev. 14:4).

In heaven there was great joy, but on earth sadness. The communities of brothers and sisters were afflicted with her loss, for her presence was no longer among them.

They all continued hoping that some day Christ's promise would be fulfilled, and a new congregation would exist and would help to build up Christ's body, his church, and would give great glory to his name, following in the footsteps of the holy apostles and the men of Bible times. Notwithstanding their slow growth, they were still hoping against hope. (Rom. 4:18)

Kurt was not present at the funeral. Because of a misunderstanding between his Lebanese parents and Reverend Gauthier, they had forced him to leave the congregation the year before.

Two years later, Kurt began to have symptoms of a mental illness, and had to take pills to control it. Shortly thereafter, he returned to Peru: he liked to live near the brothers, even if his illness prevented him from joining them. He felt protected, living in the shadow of the congregation.

Then a tragic event happened. Due to his illness, he thought that God spoke to him. Because of the presumed divine voice, he tried to kill himself on a public transportation. Fortunately he was not injured. Government authorities placed him in a psychiatric hospital, where he stayed for three months.

The day after the accident, the hospital staff phoned the monastery and told them what had happened. Thereafter Sebastian visited him two times each month.

Kurt had to take medication to control his disease and to receive a partial cure; he even had to take shock treatments. All this made Sebastian sad. He knew it was not Kurt's fault for being in such a deplorable condition.

Who can form an idea of how much Kurt suffered? He had no dignity, no power of will. No one is ever holy without suffering. They saw so much suffering in those years. It was the spring of love.

The Lord knew about all future events. If Christ had known everything regarding Kurt's tragic life, perhaps something good could result from these multiple humiliations. They kept hoping.

Three months later Kurt was partially cured. He returned to his country, and stayed there for several years.

Pursuer, king over all the children of pride, was pleased when he saw Kurt's illness and humiliation. He wanted to humiliate, persecute and if possible destroy Kurt and all the others. That was his manner of getting even with God, for having expelled him from heaven. (Is. 14:12). He was like the king of Babylon: he wanted to strike the people in wrath with a continual stroke, and to rule the nations in anger. (Isaiah 14:6).

The father of lies had now humiliated and ruined two brothers, and he wanted to finish off all the rest. He could wait.

He was not afraid of anything. He regarded iron as straw, and bronze as rotten wood. The arrow could not make him flee; slingstones became like stubble to him. Darts he regarded as straw; he laughed at the threat of javelins. There was nothing like him upon earth, for he was made without fear. (Job 41:27-34).

The Lord in heaven smiled, for one day Pursuer would be cut down to the ground, he who weakened the nations. (Is. 14:12).

Chapter 7

The Key of Knowledge

**Wherein is Related that the People Were Weakened,
Divided and Scattered, Because Knowledge
and Light Were Taken Away**

Fourteen years after the foundation had been made, Reverend Gauthier passed away, into the presence of the Solemn Judge, and was succeeded by Reverend Montaigne.

At that time Brother Sebastian remembered some past events of Gauthier's life and was grateful that they had occurred. Once Brother Sebastian had to travel outside Peru for administrative purposes. Rev. Gauthier knew that there might be problems at the airport, related to the passport and identification documents. On the morning the brother was to leave, Rev. Gauthier told him that he would celebrate Mass with those special intentions.

On one occasion Sebastian had to go to confession about a sensitive issue. He knocked on Father Gauthier's door, walked into the room, knelt down at the side of his desk, and made his confession. Father Gauthier replied with more leniency and kindness than he expected. He was grateful.

The brother was grateful that Reverend Gauthier had come into his life, notwithstanding his defects and limitations. So often he thought of the passage of Romans 11, that God's judg-

ments were unsearchable and his ways past finding out. God must have had a purpose for all these events that were happening, even the difficult and perplexing events. The brothers were like little ones. They needed help and protection; Rev. Gauthier provided it as well as he could. The issue was not the attainment of sanctity and perfection (an ideal not possible to be realized at that time and in those circumstances). The issue was one of survival. "Outside the group there was no salvation." They had only two choices: to remain inside the flock (or at least to desire to remain inside), or to be killed by wolves. They chose the former. They were not in a position to criticize the shepherd, even if he did have some defects. He did what he could, notwithstanding his limitations.

Once a visitor asked Brother Gabriel what it had been like during the first years of the congregation and how their leader, Reverend Gauthier, had acted. The brother replied, "Monopolizaba todo, y nos trató a todos como bobos. – He monopolized everything, and treated us all like dummies." He thus summarized fourteen years of church history in one concise, accurate and sorrowful statement.

One deficiency of Reverend Gauthier's administration was that he did exercise a monopoly, that is, an overbearing, exclusive control and possession of affairs that should have been distributed, or more publicly controlled. A possible cause of his monopoly was the concept he had in his mind, namely, that others possessed less intelligence than he did (a polite way of stating he thought other people were dumb).

Reverend Montaigne did not want this deficiency to continue. Therefore he allowed the brothers more freedom. He permitted Sebastian to edit the newsletter. He gave permission to Brother Gabriel to make some improvements. The print shop was too small. Brother Gabriel used his architectural skills to design and supervise the construction of a new print shop, with more space and modern equipment, adding also a new section to the chapel.

Every morning during their devotions, one brother read aloud from a meditation book, named *Divine Intimacy*, by Rev. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen. One day the theme of the meditation was: "Do not speak evil of your neighbor." The

author of the book quoted James 4:11, "Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law." The author of the book also quoted Titus 3:2, "Speak evil of no one, be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men." He wrote that just as a mother becomes angry if you criticize her children, so God is displeased when we speak about the faults of others, even if their defects are already known.

In the midst of the reading, Reverend Montaigne arose and walked out of the chapel with an embarrassed look on his face. The cause of his perplexity was that he contradicted what was written in the book, by his actions and words. He liked to criticize others; he did it often. It made him feel as if he were better than they were. Faultfinding was like a kind of cheap fortitude: no energy or courage is required to criticize, and criticizing others makes oneself feel strong, brave and important. But Montaigne was just a paper tiger.

Pursuer was gratified when he heard him blaming and censuring others. By means of his criticism and negative talk, the community was becoming weak, divided and ineffective. A group divided against itself would not be able to stand. (Matthew 12:25).

Miss Hawkins helped both communities of brothers and sisters with her collaboration, with typesetting, doing page layouts, mounting photos, writing articles in English, etc. Once Miss Hawkins spoke to Brother Sebastian and remarked: "Reverend Montaigne is the most bitter person I know." Sometimes he treated her with impoliteness and angry remarks.

However, with the Sisters and all those outside the congregation, he was amiable and polite. Most people liked him because of his grandfatherly, amiable appearance and his kindness in hearing confessions and celebrating Mass. But to the brothers inside, he spoke to them sometimes in a bad mood, impolite and rude. His example influenced everyone, especially the younger ones.

In their community they had the custom of often reading *The Imitation of Christ*, by Kempis. One day Book 1, Chapter 2, was read aloud:

"If you wish to learn and appreciate something worthwhile, then love to be unknown and considered as nothing. Truly to know and despise self is the best and most perfect counsel. To think of oneself as nothing, and always to think well and highly of others, is the best and most perfect wisdom." [Bk. 1, Ch. 2.]

After the reading, Brother Gabriel remarked: "...to think of oneself as nothing, and always to think well of others... I don't understand that, it just doesn't make sense to me." The reason for his incomprehension was that the two leaders had taught him, by their example, to do the opposite, namely, instead of thinking well and highly of others, to scorn and despise them, even for the most trivial defects. They were not aware of the truth of the passage from the *Imitation*, nor of the corresponding verse in the Scriptures: "In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves... Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:3) If Christian perfection consists in possessing the mind of Christ, they were still at kindergarten level, with little possibility of growing or advancing.

By now, other brothers had joined the community. Jasper came from New Zealand, being called thus because of his appearance, blue eyes and fair complexion.

Brother Benedict, age 70, came from a monastic community in North America to join the congregation, remaining in it until his death 15 years later.

Brother Benedict was over 70 and had much experience about religious life. Sometimes Sebastian and Brother Benedict had conversations. Once Sebastian asked him, in regard to the manner in which Reverend Montaigne censured his neighbors, "You had many Superiors and leaders during your religious life. Did you know any who spoke evil or criticized others like that?"

Brother Benedict replied, "No, I never knew any church leader who did so. At most, they might say: Beware of so-and-so, for he is a bad influence. But with that exception, they never spoke evil of anyone."

When they compared Montaigne to others, the embarrassing truth was revealed: their guide was ignorant. The ignorant was

leading the ignorant. They felt almost as if they were in a trap, inside a snare prepared by an enemy.

During one year Reverend Montaigne taught a philosophy course to the brothers. Philosopher means: lover of wisdom. He must not have loved wisdom much. With his example he taught the opposite of wisdom. "The wise men are ashamed; they have rejected the word of the Lord; so what wisdom do they have?" (Jeremiah 8:9) "How can you, being evil, speak good things?" (Mt. 12:34).

The prophets had complained regarding the conduct of the shepherds. "The shepherds have become dull-hearted, and have not sought the Lord; therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered." (Jer. 10:21) "They are shepherds who cannot understand." (Is. 56:11). "Therefore my people have gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge." (Is. 5:13). "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (Hosea 4:6) "You have taken away the key of knowledge."

Thus Brother Benedict and the rest were in a deplorable situation: they had a teacher who could not instruct, a guide who did not know the way. The key of knowledge had been taken away.

Christ had complained and he rebuked the leaders of his day, but the simple brothers were unable to rebuke anyone, not having the authority to do so. Christ said: "You have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in, you hindered." (Lk. 11:52).

The key had been taken away, they were in darkness, the door was shut.

And destruction was approaching.

Pursuer was again pleased. He wanted to ruin everything. It appeared he might succeed.

The enemy was pursuing their souls; he wanted to crush their life to the ground and make them dwell in darkness. They felt overwhelmed and distressed. (Psalms 143:3-4).

But God was going to wound the head of his enemy, and bring back his children from the depths of the sea. (Psalms 68:21).

Chapter 8

Monkey Business

Wherein Is Related That a Fool's Mouth Is His Destruction,
and His Lips the Snare of His Soul (Prov. 18:7)

The community of brothers had the custom of having an hour of recreation from one to two o'clock in the afternoon. They spent it listening to classical music and talking together. They offered a short prayer and started to play the music at exactly one o'clock. If anyone arrived late, it was his own fault. One day by chance they all arrived early, at 12:50. Sebastian also arrived early, at 12:55, but was dismayed to discover that Reverend Montaigne had already said the prayer and begun the music. He did so on purpose, to humiliate Sebastian, whom he despised more than anyone else.

The incident was a small humiliation. (By now he was used to being humiliated.) It was embarrassing to live in a group that indulged in such pettiness. Had ordinary politeness vanished?

It was merely one more instance of monkey business, of a prank, of a clever, or rather dumb action, another manifestation of fake fortitude. (They really thought their impoliteness was a manifestation of strength, a display of fortitude.)

People sometimes imagine they are strong and wise when they obtain what they desire. Jezebel and Ahab imagined they were strong when they obtained Naboth's vineyard. Ahab thought: "What a high-minded queen my Jezebel is. She really gets what she wants." How strong she was is revealed at the end of the story, when she was thrown out of a window and her flesh was eaten by dogs. (2 Kings 9:36). The unfortunate king and his wretched consort were merely weak, blind and deceived fools, playing into the hands of their enemy. It is no surprise they were humiliated. People reap what they sow.

The old dragon was more than happy when people did such foolish actions, great or small. With each dumb action they were helping him to obtain his carefully planned destruction. His strategy was: "Divide and conquer." He had already caused

much division among them. They were so blind they could not see it. What a pathetic group.

In the Scriptures it is written: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." How beautiful to live in a group where they practice First Corinthians 13:5: "Charity thinks no evil.. It rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth." To think no evil... that would be like living in heaven. How beautiful if they had only thought no evil, spoke no evil. And if someone had a defect that was obvious and was made known in public, they would dissimulate it or make excuses for any kind of mistake, just as they made excuses for their own errors. By this act of thinking and speaking evil of their neighbors, it was clear that they did not love their neighbor as they loved themselves. Because of this lack of brotherly love, they did not have the fruits of the spirit: love, peace and joy. (Ps. 133:1; Gal. 5:22)

The brothers thought of the verse of Psalms 133 sometimes, and of how, many centuries before, there were communities that lived in harmony. But all that had gone with the wind. Such heavenly groups existed only in the pages of the Bible and in church history books. This celestial unity no longer existed, at least not then, not there.

That verse in Psalm 133 represented something inaccessible, something that existed only in fantasy, in books and pictures, like a dream of past happiness.

They were not brethren living together in unity. (Pursuer had done his work well.) They were just a group of mediocre men, who indulged in petty criticism, impoliteness, backbiting, and gossip. They had no joy, little peace and less love. Instead of the fruits of the spirit they possessed the works of the flesh: envy, anger, dissension, and sadness. But Pursuer was delighted. They were slowly, step by step, walking into the pit, into the trap, into the snare.

In Peru the devil is popularly known as *changuito*, "little monkey." In the Scriptures he is called Beelzebub, Lord of the flies (Mt. 12:24). He loved to foment corruption, stupidity, pranks, monkey business, fakery. He well deserved to be named after a beast that perishes, devoid of understanding (Ps. 49:12).

Christ called him the father of lies, and he was. (Jn. 8:44). He wanted them to be fakes, without any character at all.

According to our human manner of understanding, the Lord formed thoughts in his mind. (Jer. 29:11; Is. 55:8). He would arise and his enemies would be scattered. Those who hated him would flee before him, as smoke is driven away, so the enemy and his servants would perish at the presence of God. (Psalms 68:1-2).

Chapter 9

The Splendor of Zion

Wherein Is Related How the Splendor of the Local Church Had Departed, and How the Tares were Growing With the Wheat

The Lord, in his divine omniscience, knows all things that are going to happen. He declares new things before they spring forth (Is. 42:9), and declares the end from the beginning. (Is. 46:10). Christ told all things beforehand (Mk. 13:23). The Lord in his divine nature can never be surprised or astonished at anything. But according to our human manner of understanding, God was disappointed with the conduct of his children. "And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and he was grieved in his heart." (Gen. 6:6). So he destroyed man from the face of the earth, with the exception of eight souls who were saved from the flood.

Parents are sometimes disillusioned with the conduct of their children. Jacob was disappointed with the behavior of nine of

his sons. "You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me." (Gen. 42:36).

Eli was disappointed with his sons. "For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear." (1 Sam. 2:23). His sons did not listen and for that reason they perished. The Lord and Samuel were disillusioned with Saul. "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following me, and has not performed my commandments." (1 Sam. 15:11) David and the Lord were saddened and disillusioned with the conduct of Absalom, heir to the kingdom. "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom. If only I had died instead of you." (2 Sam. 18:33).

The Lord was disappointed with Solomon. "So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel." (1 Kings 11:9). So the kingdom was torn out of the hand of his son. (1 Kg. 11:12).

Job was disillusioned. "But when I looked for good, evil came to me; and when I waited for light, then came darkness." (Job 30:26).

The Lord revealed his disillusionment to the prophet Isaiah. "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." "He looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress." "When I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not hear, but did evil before my eyes, and chose that in which I do not delight." (Is. 1:2; 5:7; 65:12; 66:4).

The people of the epoch of Isaiah were disillusioned with their leaders. "We look for light, but there is darkness! For brightness, but we walk in blackness! We look for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us." (Is. 59, 9, 11).

The prophet Jeremiah was disappointed and grief-stricken over the conduct of the kings and people of Judah. "I had planted you like a choice vine of sound and reliable stock. How then did you turn against me into a corrupt, wild vine? How gladly would I treat you like sons and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation. I thought you would call me Father, and not turn away from following me.

But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to me, O house of Israel, declares the Lord. We hoped for peace, but no good has come, for a time of healing, but there was only terror. The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing, for the wound of my people? The Lord called you a thriving olive tree with fruit beautiful in form. But with the roar of a mighty storm, he will set it on fire, and its branches will be broken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he brings the darkness. You hope for light, but he will turn it to thick darkness, and change it to deep gloom.” (Jer. 2:21; 3:19-20; 8:15; 20; 11:16; 13:16; 14:19).

Christ our Lord was disillusioned with his own people. “He came unto his own and his own did not receive him. (Jn. 1:11). He was disappointed with ingratitude and lack of thanksgiving. “Were not the ten cleansed? But where are the nine?” (Lk. 17:17). He was disillusioned with the unfaithful city. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!” (Mt. 23:37). Even his friends disappointed him. “Could you not watch with me one hour?” (Mt. 26:40). “I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none.” (Psalms 69:20). “I looked, but there was no one to help.” (Is. 63:5). “Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.” (Mt. 26:56).

The Lord was sometimes disappointed by local churches. “I know... that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.” (Rev. 3:1).

One reason God permits disenchantment, is so that we may understand how Christ our Lord felt, and what were his sentiments, when he found so much ingratitude, blindness, laziness and negligence among his own children and disciples.

We return now to our tragic narrative. Once Reverend Montaigne was giving a talk to the brothers and he commented: “Envy is the price of genius.” They all knew he was talking about himself. He was jealous of the abilities of some of the brothers.

One of the blessings promised to the chosen people was the absence of envy in the kingdom of the Messiah. (Isaiah 11:13). Therefore it was a subject of dismay to some that envy existed inside their church, like tares growing among wheat.

The Reverend's jealousy, plus his critical and negative comments, were thwarting the good he might have accomplished. Little by little he was destroying the community with his talk. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue," says the proverb. (Prov. 18:21). Whether death or life was in his tongue can be determined at the end of the story.

Christ said we should not despise the little ones, because their angels see the face of the heavenly Father. (Mt. 18:10). A wise man wrote: "It is dangerous to despise one, whose prayers are carried to God by the gracious ministry of angels."

If despising those who offer petitions to God is perilous, then the Reverend entered the danger zone every day. He often despised others and encouraged others to follow his example. Brother Gabriel, Sebastian and Benedict were all over 45, and with their experience, were less apt, or rather, unwilling, to follow the lead of their unfortunate leader. But the younger ones, like children, believed everything he said. "A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps." (Prov. 14:15).

One reason it is hazardous to despise peers is that they might not remain on a level of equality. The sons of Jacob despised, mistreated and injured their younger brother, considering his ideas of no importance. Afterward they bitterly regretted their actions. "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, and we would not listen: that is why this distress has come upon us." (Gen. 42:21).

Haman despised Mordecai and was filled with indignation against him. (Esth. 5:9). At the end Mordecai was exalted and Haman humiliated. (Mt. 23:12).

In addition to murdering John the Baptist, Herod despised and ridiculed Christ. (Lk. 23:11). The end of a man reveals his true identity. "An angel of the Lord struck him [Herod] down, and he was eaten by worms and died." (Acts 12:23).

God considers as directed to himself the scorn shown to the poor or little ones. "He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker." (Prov. 17:5).

"There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him." (Prov. 6:16-19). The first and last on the list are: a proud look, a man who stirs up dissension among brothers. Reverend Montaigne realized both kinds of actions, and he encouraged others to do the same.

Ephesus was once a glorious local church, associated with apostles, saints and miracles. Christ saw into the future. "Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place." (Rev. 2:5). The prophecy was fulfilled: the lampstand removed. Ephesus is now an abandoned ruin in western Turkey.

After all this, one can understand how much Christ must have been disillusioned with some local churches, in particular with this pitiful group of souls.

The field of this local church was supposed to produce wheat and grapes. Instead, it was yielding tares and wild grapes. (Is. 5:4; Jer. 2:21; Mt. 13:26). And foxes were ruining the vineyard (Song 2:15; Lam. 5:18). The harvest had not yet come. Therefore the owner decreed that the wheat and tares would grow together.

The parable ends by saying that the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Mt. 13:43). Some of the brothers thought of this verse often. Like the verse in Psalm 133, that other verse represented something inaccessible. There was no possibility of those verses being fulfilled at that time. Instead of shining like the sun, they were stumbling in darkness. (Is. 59:10).

The prophet Jeremiah wrote: "And from the daughter of Zion all her splendor has departed. Her princes have become like deer that find no pasture, that flee without strength before the pursuer." (Lam. 1:6). The splendor of the church was a thing of the past, existing only in books; its leaders were like timid animals, who ran like cowards from the adversary. Their guides and directors were not men but children, immature, without strength, without wisdom. The houses were left without men

(Isaiah 6:11), and mere children governed them. (Isaiah 3:4). “Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child.” (Eccl. 10:16). All those verses were fulfilled many times over. The leaders and their followers were adults physically, but they did not put away childish things. (1 Cor. 13:11). They did not grow, unlike the apostles and saints of olden times. (Eph. 4:13-15; Gal. 4:1-2; 1 Cor. 14:20).

Meanwhile, Pursuer sat enthroned, among the rulers, among the authorities, and among the powers of the dark world. (Eph. 6:12). His servants and ministers were pure spirits (although fallen from grace); they needed neither rest nor sleep. They were active and diligent 24 hours a day. With such an army of diabolical servants, Pursuer imagined he might triumph in even less than thirty years. He had another reason for hoping in a prompt victory; the directors of this unfortunate community were so careless that they did not stand firm and did not put on the full armor of God (Eph. 6:13), but, though armed with weapons, turned back on the day of battle. (Psalms 78:9).

Chapter 10

Children Who Will Not Deny

Wherein Is Related That Wisdom Is Justified by Her Children

Christ Our Lord promised that those who left homes and children for his sake, would receive a hundredfold, houses and brothers and children, and everlasting life. (Mk. 10:29-30). This promise was fulfilled when the apostles had adoptive children. “For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.” (1 Cor. 4:15). “My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you.” (Gal. 4:19). “My son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains.” (Phil. 10). “My son Timothy.” (2 Tim. 1:2). “Dear children,” (1 Jn. 2:18, 28; 3:7, 5:21).

The apostles experienced joy in their adoptive children. “A wise son makes a glad father.” (Prov. 10:1). “Your children will

be like olive plants, all around your table.” (Ps. 128:3). “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” (3 Jn. 4). “The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who begets a wise child will delight in him.” (Prov. 23:24). “Instead of your fathers shall be your sons.” (Ps. 45:16). “Surely they are my people, children who will not deny.” (Isaiah 63:8).

Jesus Christ, whom Isaiah called “Everlasting Father,” (Is. 9:6), was like an adoptive father who had twelve sons and heirs (Jn. 13:33; Mt. 11:19; Heb. 2:13). But only eleven sons gave him joy. “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (Jn. 6:70). Foolish children bring sorrow to their parents and to God. (Prov. 17:21, 25). “Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool?” (Eccl. 2:18). “Demas, having loved this world, has forsaken me... Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm.” (2 Tim. 4:10, 14).

Foolish children are deprived of their inheritance, and it is given to others. Judas could have had magnificent privileges, but he lost them all, and his inheritance was given to another. “The lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” (Acts 1:26). “He breaks in pieces mighty men without inquiry, and sets others in their place.” (Job 34:24). “He removes kings and raises up kings.” (Dan. 2:21).

There is another kind of spiritual children and parents. “You travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.” (Mt. 23:15).

On one occasion Reverend Montaigne referred to Rex Mottram as ‘my first-born spiritual son.’ Such an appellation might have been a privilege. It would be a cause for reverence, honor and joy to resemble the apostles and to have spiritual children like Timothy, Titus and Onesimus.

There are all kinds of parents producing all manner of children. Who brought forth the children of darkness?

In previous chapters it was noted how Montaigne often criticized and despised his neighbors, a trait that was passed on to his imitators. It was no surprise when Rex decided to leave

Lima and to join another congregation in another country.

One year before Reverend Montaigne passed away, Jasper's younger brother came and joined. Reverend Montaigne and Brother Benedict went in the car to the airport, Brother Jasper driving. When they got out of the car, Reverend Montaigne had a guilty look on his face. Perhaps he realized, with prophetic insight, that he was going to be a bad influence on Jasper's brother, as he had already been to several others.

Through the course of this narrative, it has been observed how often the tragic verses of Isaiah 59 were fulfilled. "No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies. They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity. The way of peace they have not known, and there is no justice in their ways. They have made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way shall not know peace. We look for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us." At times it almost seemed as if God had abandoned the community. Sometimes Sebastian thought of those verses, and how God seemed to hide himself. In such circumstances his only hope of happiness was the promise God had given of final triumph, that was going to be consummated in "Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, with an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, with God the Judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect." (Hebrews 12:22-23).

In the meantime he had to live in the church on earth, the church militant, the fighting church, where the weeds were growing next to the wheat, and the sinister verses of Isaiah 59 were being fulfilled to the last comma. But even that chapter ended with a magnificent promise: "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto to them that turn from transgression in Jacob, says the Lord."

When he read this verse, it was as if someone were giving a cup of water to a man dying of thirst.

After six years of church government, Reverend Montaigne passed away, into the presence of the Solemn Judge, and was succeeded in office by Brother Gabriel.

Chapter 11

Love Righteousness and Hate Wickedness

Wherein Is Related How the Gates of Zion Lamented and Mourned,
How the Flock was Scattered and How Satan Ruined Everything

The government of Brother Gabriel lasted three years. An astute and clever person persuaded him to leave the congregation, and he married.

Sebastian was appointed the new leader. At first such a responsibility frightened him. He was used to obeying, not to giving orders.

Sebastian loved righteousness and hated wickedness (Psalms 45:7; Amos 5:15). Therefore the readers might imagine that the government improved under his administration. But this was not to be. He did make minor improvements, some changes in the schedule and prayers. However, the problem of this community consisted in their harsh, unkind thoughts. You cannot change a person's mind by altering a schedule.

His task was more difficult than taking a twisted piece of metal and restoring it to its original shape. He did not even attempt it, bearing in mind what is written: "What is crooked cannot be made straight." (Eccl. 1:15). "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good, who are accustomed to do evil." (Jer. 13:23).

Therefore they continued thinking in the same manner, as they had done in previous years. At the end of three years a new leader was appointed: Jasper.

A year after he was appointed, he and his brother decided to attend a seminary located more than a thousand miles distant. An acquaintance and benefactor of the community remarked, "The Prime Minister of Germany would not be permitted to live outside Germany. Jasper should continue to stay in Lima."

During that time there were two young Peruvian brothers in the community. One of them was aggressive and more domineering than Hitler. The other followed his lead and

supported him in his initiatives. During Jasper's absence, that lasted for more than five months at a time, they commandeered everything. Disorder and confusion reigned.

However, some of their initiatives were beneficial. There were several large eucalyptus trees on the property. They were pleasant to the sight, but problematical. The leaves fell everywhere and soiled the ground; the roots cracked the cement foundations. The Peruvian brothers decided to remove them.

To remove large trees is complicated. It requires large chain saws, long ropes and a team of laborers. There are safety hazards when the trees fall. In the event, some of the buildings were damaged when the large trees fell.

Sebastian was assigned to be among the laborers. He had to hold and pull hard on the ropes for more than an hour. During those days he sometimes felt so miserable that he thought he would receive his reward only on the other side of the veil. He accepted. He submitted. His heart bled. During those days he sang songs to himself, applying balm to his wounded soul:

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen, nobody knows but Jesus.
Nobody knows the trouble I've seen, glory, hallelujah.

Swing low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me home,
Swing low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me home.

He understood how slaves felt in previous centuries: there was no possibility of happiness for them in this life; there was no relief or permanent joy possible, until the chariot came to carry them home to mount Zion, "the Jerusalem that is above, our mother." (Galatians 4:26)

On several occasions the aggressive brother, hereafter known as Little Hitler, spoke words of such malice, sarcasm and spite, that it seemed as if Satan were speaking through his mouth. The other brother followed his example, and criticized often. Fault-finding was their hobby.

When Kurt was in the psychiatric hospital, during three months, Sebastian visited him once each two weeks. At the end of the first month they gave Kurt electric shock treatments last-

ing for two weeks. One Friday, during Sebastian's visit, Kurt explained to him that he felt afraid. There was a machine in the adjoining room used for administering the electric shock treatment. The weekend staff was not the same as the Monday to Friday staff. On Saturday and Sunday they did not give him the pain relieving drug that should be used before he was attached to the machine. The pain hurt so much. Kurt asked Sebastian if he could be there on Saturday, but he could not. Even if he had been present, he was not a male nurse. There was nothing he could have done to relieve the pain. Kurt would have to be attached to the machine, and it hurt so much.

What poor, wretched souls! They were as if outcasts for whom no one cares, (Jer. 30:17), forsaken and abhorred. (Is. 60:15).

In the scriptures Pursuer is called the Accuser. (Rev. 12:10). Now he could accuse Kurt of having yielded to despair, and Sebastian of having kept silence when he might have spoken. They had been accused and sentenced. They had to pay for what they did. They were being disciplined. "Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty." (Job 5:17). After all, it was partly Kurt's fault that he was in the hospital. If Sebastian had spoken kind words to Sam, he might have changed the course of history. Perhaps the community would have grown and increased. Later on Sebastian had to live in an empty house. The dreadful solitude was caused partly by his own decision.

Pursuer was accusing them now, but he knew that his time was short. (Rev. 12:12). Time was running out, and one day soon, the Most High would turn the tables on him. Then the mighty would be cast down from their thrones (Lk. 1:52), and the little ones lifted up. Satan followed a policy of slash and burn. Since he had less and less time left, he wanted to destroy as many souls as possible and cause as much damage as he could. O the blindness of men, who lived in darkness and who followed such stupid suggestions given to them by the prince of darkness.

Pursuer had been humiliated many times in the past. He had been defeated when the angel of the Lord struck down the Assyrian army. (Is. 37:36). He had been put to flight when

Mordecai and Esther turned the tables on Haman. (Esth. 7:6). But his greatest defeat, his ultimate humiliation, was when Christ became obedient unto death (Phil. 2:8) and died on the cross. Satan abhorred the obedience of the brothers. Obedience was faith-in-action, an armory of weapons to undo his wiles. (Eph. 6:10-18). He wished he could have killed them. On two occasions the infernal dragon incited Little Hitler to harm Sebastian physically. He was not able, for the angel of the Lord encamped around them (Ps. 34:7). But Satan humiliated them as much as the Lord permitted; Pursuer encouraged their neighbors to despise them; even the brothers of their own community despised them on many occasions.

The ancient serpent liked to encourage people to despise each other in their thoughts, and from there, to gossip, to speak evil, to criticize. With this cunning trick he weakened and destroyed families and groups, and greatly enlarged his kingdom of darkness, confusion and despair. "Divide and conquer" was his motto.

Sadly Sebastian contemplated the destiny of the local church that had failed. It was not the first time a congregation had perished. "You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead." "I will come to you and remove your lamp-stand from its place." (Revelation 3:1, 2:5)

Just as other congregations had been ruined and destroyed, so now his own was a desolate wilderness. It was like Jerusalem after it had been invaded by the Babylonian army, destroyed and left empty. They had all been blown away like leaves. (Isaiah 64:6) Finally the last brother left the congregation, because of circumstances beyond his control. The sisters felt profound grief, that lasted for months. "The roads to Zion mourn, because no one comes to the set feasts. All her gates are desolate. Her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness." (Lam 1:4)

The seeds sown by the leaders bore bitter fruit. They taught the brothers to despise their neighbors. At the end of Jasper's period of government, he and his younger brother disdained and contemned everyone in the entire community (including the sisters) except themselves. Therefore it was no surprise when they made the decision to leave, in order to join another congregation. A year after their departure, Little Hitler and the other

Peruvian brother left, Sebastian remaining alone.

The prophecy of Isaiah was now being fulfilled, that “the houses are without a man, the land is utterly desolate; the Lord has removed men far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.” (Is. 6:11-12). For three years he lived there alone. Then, because of circumstances totally beyond his control, he had to leave Lima, and move to Arequipa. The house was now literally without a man.

There were no longer any prayers in the chapel at the appointed times. The dining room was empty, the corridors, deserted. There were no signs of life. The words of Scripture were fulfilled: *Quomodo sedet sola civitas*: How doth the city sit solitary. (Lam. 1:1) “The gates of Zion will lament and mourn, destitute, she will sit on the ground.” (Is. 3:26). “How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion with the cloud of his anger! He has hurled down the splendor of Israel from heaven to earth; he has not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger. Without pity the Lord was swallowed up all the dwellings of Jacob; in his wrath he has torn down the strongholds of the daughter of Judah. He has brought her kingdom and its princes down to the ground in dishonor. In fierce anger he has cut off every horn of Israel.” (Lamentations 2:1-3). “Her gates have sunk into the ground; their bars he has broken and destroyed. Her king and her princes are exiled among the nations. The law is no more, and her prophets no longer find visions from the Lord.” (Lamentations 2:9)

Pursuer and his followers rejoiced at the destruction of the Lord's work. “All your enemies open their mouths wide against you; they scoff and gnash their teeth and say, We have swallowed her up. This is the day we have waited for, we have lived to see it.” (Lamentations 2:16). Pursuer had waited thirty years to see this day. Now it was here.

When Jerusalem was invaded by the Babylonian army, the children were dying of hunger. “Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children, who faint from hunger at the head of every street. The children beg for bread, and but no one gives it to them.” (Lamentations 2:19; 4:4). The brothers had also died of hunger, not physical, but spiritual, from the famine mentioned by the prophet: “I will send a famine through the land,

not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.” (Amos 8:11). They had not heard the word, their souls were starved, they did not grow, they did not advance. Now death and silence reigned. The father of lies had triumphed.

After all this, Sebastian understood how the people of Jerusalem felt: they had been misled by false teachers; their enemies had come into the city, destroyed the temple, and killed many of the people. The brothers had been misled by false ideas: they despised each other. They were divided. The community had disintegrated. The house divided against itself had not stood. (Mt. 12:25). The house built on sand had collapsed. (Mt. 7:27). No buildings had been destroyed materially, but Pursuer had ruined everything, with the help of those who supported him.

Hubris ante nemesis. The king of the children of pride had inspired his unfortunate dupes with his own thoughts of pride, hubris, scorn, contempt and arrogance. Now the result appeared: destruction.

Sebastian had already become accustomed to the shocking truth: he could not trust his leaders, because they misled. “Beware of your friends; do not trust your brothers. For every brother is a deceiver, and every friend a slanderer. Friend deceives friend, and no one speaks the truth. You live in the midst of deception, in their deceit they refuse to acknowledge me, declares the Lord. What man is wise enough to understand this? Who has been instructed by the Lord and can explain it? Why has the land been ruined and laid waste like a desert that no one can cross? The Lord said, It is because they have forsaken my law, which I set before them: they have not obeyed me or followed my law. Instead, they have followed the stubbornness of their hearts.” (Jer. 9:4-6; 12-14). “The shepherds are senseless and do not inquire of the Lord; so they do not prosper, and all their flock is scattered.” (Jer. 10:21). “They know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk around in darkness. All the foundations of the earth are shaken.” (Psalms 82:5). The earth had indeed been shaken. Pursuer had turned things upside down: he persuaded them to do the exact opposite of what God had requested. In their blindness they followed him.

Just as the enemies of Jerusalem came into the city and

destroyed it in 586 B.C., (2 Kg. 25, 2 Chr. 36), so Pursuer had come into their community and ruined everything. The leaders had even opened the doors and let him come in. "The kings of the earth did not believe, nor did any of the world's people, that the enemies and foes could enter the gates of Jerusalem. But it happened because of the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, who shed within her the blood of the righteous. Now they grope through the streets like men who are blind." (Lamentations 4:12-14).

Pursuer had come in because of the iniquity of their blind leaders. They did not know the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5) and did the opposite of what he wanted. He declared: "Do not despise," (Mt. 18:10), but they despised. "He who is devoid of wisdom despises his neighbor." (Prov. 11:12).

When Sebastian lived there alone, and afterwards when in exile, he was saddened at the horrible emptiness of the house, the desolation, the dispiriting solitude. They had not understood, they had not heard, they had not paid attention. Now the grievous fruits were appearing.

"I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is. So I say, My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the Lord. I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I will remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope. Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:17-23).

"My splendor is gone, and all that I had hoped from the Lord." Thirty years before, he traveled to Peru with a childlike hope, that something wonderful was going to happen. Now the hope had faded away. The splendor was gone. His soul was downcast, but he still had hope. "Even if he kill me, yet will I trust in him." (Job 13:15). He had lost everything. "How I long for the months gone by, for the days when God watched over me, when his lamp shone upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness. But now they mock me, men younger than I, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs. Terrors overwhelm me; my dignity is driven away as by the wind, my safety vanishes like a cloud. And now my

life ebbs away; days of suffering grip me. Night pierces my bones, my gnawing pains never rest. I cry out to you, O my God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me. You turn on me ruthlessly; with the might of your hand you attack me. When I hoped for good, evil came, when I looked for light, then came darkness. My harp is turned to mourning, and my flute to the sound of wailing.” (Job 29: 2 30:1, 15).

Sebastian knew that his redeemer lived (Job 19:25), and that he would make things turn out well in the end. (Romans 8:28). Therefore he kept hoping, he kept expecting. In the midst of grievous humiliation and vehement affliction, he took heart and waited for the Lord. (Psalms 27:14).

Chapter 12

Mount Zion Deserted

Wherein Is Related How Satan Destroyed the Community of Men Totally, and How Only a Stump Remained

Pursuer was the most cunning of all God's creatures (Genesis 3:1). He had begun his career by deceiving Eve, and had deluded and betrayed many others during the course of the centuries. It was he who persuaded the sons of Jacob to despise their younger brother, as a foolish person of no value, and to sell him as a slave. It was he who incited Michal, daughter of Saul, to despise King David, (2 Sam. 6:16), and who aroused the Pharisees to look down on others. (Lk. 7:39, 18:9). And it was Pursuer who persuaded King Zedekiah and all the people to condemn the prophet Jeremiah. By this means he was able to blind their minds and cause them to lose innumerable blessings, that they might have received, if they had listened, paid attention and obeyed.

“The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians.” (2 Chr. 36:15-17).

Thus the father of lies convinced the rulers and the people that all was well, that Jerusalem would be protected, as it had been in the time of King Hezekiah (Isaiah 37:33-35), and that no misfortune would befall them. They were unaware that those ideas were merely tricks of their enemy to deceive them. They allowed themselves to be deceived. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.” (Prov. 14:12).

Afterwards, they all had to face the shocking truth. “King Zedekiah was taken to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced sentence on him. There at Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes; he also killed all the officials of Judah. Then he

put out Zedekiah's eyes, bound him with bronze shackles, and took him to Babylon, where he put him in prison till the day of his death.” (Jer. 52:9-11).

How bitterly the king regretting not having listened to Jeremiah. If only he had paid attention, he might have avoided the catastrophe. Now his children were dead, his eyes were put out, and he was in chains in Babylon, with no hope whatsoever of returning to Jerusalem. He realized Jeremiah had spoken the truth from the Lord. But it was too late to go back. He had made his final decision. He despised Jeremiah. It is dangerous to despise one, whose prayers are carried to God by the gracious ministry of angels.

For thirty years Pursuer and his demons had worked, planning the destruction of the community in Peru, by infusing thoughts of pride, scorn, envy, anger, covetousness, and many other deceits. Now at last they had obtained what they wanted, and they were gloating: “Aha, just what we wanted! We have swallowed him up.” (Psalms 35:25). They were filled with the exaltation of the envious, who take pleasure in seeing the object of their envy brought down.

They were irritated at Sebastian. He was the only one remaining. They were envious of even one soul gaining what they had lost, so they tried to humiliate him as much as possible. They pursued him, crushed him to the ground, and made him dwell in darkness like those long dead. (Psalm 143:3).

With sorrow he contemplated all the destruction the enemy had brought on the sanctuary. (Psalm 74:3). The chapel was now empty and deserted. It was as if it had been smashed. “They burned your sanctuary to the ground; they defiled the dwelling place of your name. They said in their hearts, We will crush them completely!” (Ps. 74:7). Now it seemed they had triumphed. Not a man remained. The anger of the Lord smoldered against the sheep of his pasture. (Psalms 74:1).

The Lord had rejected, he had spurned, he had been very angry with his anointed one. He had renounced the covenant with his servant, and had defiled his crown in the dust. He had broken through all his walls and reduced his strongholds to ruins. He had exalted the right hand of his foes; he had made all

his enemies rejoice. He put an end to his splendor, and cast his throne to the ground. He cut short the days of his youth; he covered him with a mantle of shame. (Psalms 89:38-45).

It was shameful to be in a community that had failed. It was shameful to have shepherds who could not shepherd, teachers who could not instruct, fathers who were sterile, or who had children of which it was written: "Ephraim's glory will fly away like a bird. Even if they rear children, I will bereave them of every one. Woe to them, when I turn away from them! Even if they bear children, I will slay their cherished offspring." (Hosea 9:11-12, 16).

They failed to pass the test: their instructors had not taught them. "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children." (Hosea 4:6).

Christ our Lord said that the kingdom of God would be taken away from the Jews, and given to a people who would produce its fruit. (Mt. 21:43).

For thirty years the Lord had given a part of his kingdom, a local church in Peru, to two leaders. Now was seen the tragic results of their misgovernment. The Lord's kingdom was like a vineyard with a wall around it, and inside were a winepress and a watchtower (Mt. 21:33, Is. 5:2). The Lord was expecting a harvest of good grapes, but it yielded bad fruit. The scripture was now fulfilled:

"What more could have been done for my vineyard that I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad? Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it. The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress. Therefore my people will go into exile for lack of understanding; their men of rank will die of hunger, and their masses will be parched with thirst. Woe to those who call evil

good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.”

“We all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. Oh, look upon us, we pray, for we are all your people. Your sacred cities have become a desert; even Zion is a desert, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and glorious temple, where our fathers praised you, has been burned with fire, and all that we treasured lies in ruins. After all this, O Lord, will you hold yourself back? Will you keep silent and punish us beyond measure?” (Isaiah 5:4-7, 13-20; 64:9-12).

The prophecies of Jeremiah were fulfilled to the letter: “A lion has come out of his lair; a destroyer of nations has set out. He has left his place to lay waste your land. Your towns will lie in ruins without inhabitant. Your own conduct and actions have brought this upon you. This is your punishment. How bitter it is! How it pierces to the heart! My people are fools; they do not know me. They are senseless children; they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil; they know not how to do good. Many shepherds will ruin my vineyard and trample down my field; they will turn my pleasant field into a desolate wasteland. It will be made a wasteland, parched and desolate before me; the whole land will be laid waste, because there is no one who cares.” (Jeremiah 4:7, 18, 22. 12:10).

The verses of Psalms were being fulfilled: “You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land. Why have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass by pick its grapes? Boars from the forest ravage it, and the creatures of the field feed upon it.” (Psalms 80:8-13).

The prophecy of Joel was fulfilled: “The fields are ruined, the ground is dried up! The grain is destroyed. The new wine is dried up, the oil fails, and the fig tree is withered. All the trees of the field are dried up. Surely the joy of mankind is withered away.” (Joel 1:10-12).

The prophecy of Deuteronomy was fulfilled: “Even all nations shall say, wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What means the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God

of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.” Deuteronomy 29:24.

In the last year of the reign of King Uzziah, the prophet Isaiah received his vocation from the Lord, and his guilt was taken away. Then he was commissioned to tell the people: “Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.” etc. (Is. 6:9). The prophet asked how long, and the Lord answered: “Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, and the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the Lord has sent everyone far away, and the land is utterly forsaken.” (This part had been fulfilled; the last was yet to come). “And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.” (Isaiah 6:11-13).

Sebastian had been crushed to the ground and made to dwell in darkness, as if dead. But there was still a holy seed inside.

“At least there is hope for a tree. If it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its new shoots will not fail. Its roots may grow old in the ground and its stump die in the soil, yet at the scent of water it will bud, and put forth shoots like a plant. (Job 14:7).

Pursuer had destroyed the community of men completely. Now only a dead stump remained. The father of lies rejoiced with his hellish attendants. He scorned Sebastian as a weak, contemptible person of no value. He paid no attention to the words of Christ, that the little ones are not to be despised. (Mt. 18:10).



Chapter 13

Bernardino Enters the Fold

Wherein is Related How a Little Creature Was Rescued from Where It Was Scattered on a Day of Clouds and Darkness (Ezek. 34:12)

After Sebastian left the community in Lima, he traveled to Arequipa in the south and obtained a job in a factory with a meager salary. If it had not been for the special grace and help from on high, he would have fallen into despair. Only the reading of the book of Job and other holy writings helped him now. It was no exaggeration to compare him to a shipwrecked person. After a few weeks he was able to recover from the shock and to begin a new chapter of his life. A casual acquaintance to whom he explained his misfortune told him: “If God closes one door, he will open another.” This sentence helped to fortify him, and give him strength, so that he would be able to persevere until the end. If God was trying him so much, perhaps that was an indication that he had designs for his future. A cross could be a sign of predestination.

One night he was praying. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there were any who understood. (Ps. 14:2). Sebastian was listening to what God the Lord would say, if he promised peace to his people. (Psalms 85:8).

He offered petitions to the Lord and addressed him as follows: "Dear God, you know how the leaders transgressed, and I also made tactical blunders and grave omissions. You have seen the misfortunes that followed. Please forgive me; I did not do it on purpose.

Did you allow me to perceive and feel intensely the passion of your Son, because it was my lot to suffer the like myself?"

The Lord whispered, "Yes."

"Did you allow me to see your vineyard destroyed, so that I would understand how grief-stricken your prophets and your Son were?"

The Lord murmured, "Yes."

"Did you allow me to lose everything, to be criticized and humiliated by my acquaintances, so that I would be like Job?"

The Lord replied softly, "I allowed that times without number."

"Dear Lord, please remember that you gave Job twice as much as he had before. Please keep in mind that you blessed the latter part of his life more than the first, and that he had sons and daughters. Will I ever have adoptive children?"

There was no answer. The mouth of the Lord was mute.

Sebastian dreaded such silence. He knew the cause of it. "With what measure you mete, it will be measured to you again." (Mt. 7:2). He had not spoken kind words to his neighbor. He had refused to speak kind words to Sam. Now God did not speak kindly to him. He was being disciplined.

He continued his sorrowful petitions. "Dear Lord, the leaders and myself committed so many sins, omissions and transgressions, that we were deprived of our privileges. I deserve to suffer these things, because I have sinned. If you want me to die childless, I accept. But please cover me with the blood of your Son, and let me live in mount Zion, the assembly and church of the first born, that I may dwell with the spirits of just men made

perfect. I did not make my errors, transgressions and sins on purpose. I did not do it on purpose!” He could not continue his petitions any longer, overwhelmed with anguish.

He offered his laments and prayers to God often. They were like a medicine for his poor, sick, undernourished soul, a balm of Gilead.

The Lord looked down upon the petition of his poor servant, and sent invisible angels to console him. For he proposed to arise and to have compassion on Zion, for it was time to show favor to her; the appointed time had come. (Psalms 102:13)

Though he kill, yet he makes alive again: (Deut. 32:39); *though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion.* (Lam. 3:32). Though he have *torn*, he will *heal us*. (Hos. 6:1, 2.)

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Once there was a lost soul. He lived like an animal. (Psalms 49:20; Eccl. 3:19). He dwelled in spiritual darkness for 38 years. (Mt. 4:16).

Then a miracle happened. He was listening to a radio program. The preacher said that if you were alone and forsaken you should accept Jesus and he would save you. And thus he accepted Jesus into his heart and wept. He wept intermittently for an entire week, experiencing a conversion of love and repentance. Thus the lost sheep entered into the fold of the good Shepherd, and went in and out, and found pasture. (Jn. 10:9).

Bernardino (for such was his name) worked in the same factory in Arequipa where Sebastian worked. He was small of stature, slightly chubby but not fat, slow and bear-like in movement, dark brown eyes, tenor voice, and a pale olive complexion.

They became acquainted, and Bernardino told Sebastian about his past, how he had been converted. Sometimes they did short Bible studies together. Bernardino showed him a photo of his wife and four children. They lived in Iquitos, in the north of Peru, and since his salary was small, he was unable to travel and visit them, but they kept in contact with phone calls and greeting cards. He was sad, because he had not seen his family for two years. Bernardino told Sebastian much about his past life, nearly every detail. But Sebastian could not reciprocate. He

also related details about his past, but only a few. He was embarrassed. It was shameful to be a former member of a congregation that had failed.

However Sebastian did confide to Bernardino that he was unable to have children physically; he wanted to have adoptive children. Bernardino likewise confided that he did not possess a father. So they made an agreement: Bernardino would be his adoptive son.

They also determined to choose an animal name for Sebastian. The reason for their decision was as follows: If the heavens declare the glory of God, and the skies proclaim the work of his hands (Ps. 19:1), the wonders of the animal kingdom reveal even more his divine attributes and perfections. Therefore the Lord said to Job: "Ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; let the fish of the sea inform you; they all know that the hand of the Lord has done this. In his hand is the life of every creature, and the breath of all mankind." (Job 12:7).

They reviewed four kinds of animals: sheep, oxen, lions and bears. Sheep, mentioned so often in the Scriptures, evoked Christ's merciful care of his flock. But sheep were disqualified, because Sebastian's countenance bore no resemblance to the face of a sheep. Oxen worked hard and suggested fruitfulness, but they were rejected for the same reason: there was no resemblance to Sebastian. Lions evoked courage, heroism and majesty. However, such imposing beasts were too aggressive, and did not harmonize with Sebastian's character, for he carried meekness to the extreme. Bears were not heroic, like lions, but they evoked humility, for it is written: "Mind not high things, but condescend to the lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits." (Rom. 12:16) Bears also suggested how people pray when under stress. (Isaiah 59:11).

Therefore they unanimously decided that Sebastian would receive the nickname polar bear, and Bernardino would be called little bear. The names harmonized with their appearance. Sebastian was tall, large but not fat, with a bear-like, weather-beaten, rugged face, having a white beard with two black stripes, pale brown eyes, dark hair and a bass voice. They were pleased with the new name, and praised the Lord for having

brought them together. Once Bernardino commented, “Now I am the only family you have.” And it was true. Sebastian had lost everything.

The other workers in the factory noticed the nicknames and were pleased with the idea of choosing animal names for humans; therefore Sebastian decided to start a game, named “zoo” (*jardín zoológico*) in which any factory worker could participate. The rules were as follows. Anyone who wanted to become a member of the zoo had to wait 24 hours, during which he was called “unknown animal.” (*animal desconocido*). During the waiting period he would choose his own name or it would be chosen by the director (*oso polar*), or the sub-director, *osito* (little bear). If possible, the name should harmonize either with the physical appearance of the member or with a character trait similar to what various animals symbolize. If the name was chosen by the director or anyone else, the one receiving the name had to verify that it was not offensive to him. If one person were permitted to call another an offensive name, then it would no longer be a game.

The “zoo” game was a relief for the sometimes exhausting and depressing atmosphere in the factory. Those who participated derived entertainment and pleasure from their nicknames. A short worker who weighed about 200 pounds was called armadillo. A tall, fat worker who walked slowly and swayed from side to side, while using a cane, was called elephant. (He chose the name himself and was very pleased with it.) A short, bird-like man who worked next to Little Bear was named sparrow. One worker whose hobby was jogging and running was named race horse. One worker with very dark skin chose as his name silver-back gorilla, another, the name chimpanzee. A worker of extremely short stature was named mosquito.

For years Sebastian had wanted to have adoptive children, and now the Lord fulfilled one of his wishes. By means of the “zoo” game and through their Bible studies and conversations, he and Bernardino had some relief in their afflictions. They could even spread a little joy to the factory workers.

It is written that the Lord fulfills the desires of those who fear him. (Ps. 145:19). Sebastian blessed the Lord for his kindness in

granting one of his desires. It was as if the Lord had told him: "I have not forgotten you." (Isaiah 49:15).

He and Bernardino could not have much of a family life, for Bernardino lived in another part of the city far away, and they met only in the factory, where it was noisy and crowded. But they did what was possible. Sebastian even memorized the names of Bernardino's children. For Bernardino's 41st birthday, they had a small party at the factory.

On one occasion Isidro, one of Bernardino's four brothers, brought news of the death of their mother, Isidra, who lived near Cuzco. The notice afflicted him greatly, but he was consoled with the knowledge that now her trials were at an end, her exile was finished. Isidra had suffered much from the adversary, and she was now among those who are led to the living fountains of water, whose tears are no more. She had fought the good fight, she had finished her course, she had kept the faith. Now the Lord, the righteous judge, had given her a crown of righteousness. She had entered Zion with songs, and with everlasting joy upon her head. She had obtained joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing had fled away. (Isaiah 35:10) Sebastian did not know her eternal and final destiny from a revelation, but he knew some details of her life and holy death, and was capable of making accurate guesses. The end of a man or a woman reveals what they are really like. At the end the truth comes out.

Cuzco was close to Arequipa, and Bernardino was able to attend the funeral. By now Sebastian had become acquainted with some of Bernardino's siblings, in particular with Maria Luisa. One day when Sebastian was alone with Maria Luisa by chance, she told him of a strange event that had happened to her mother, that no one knew about. Maria Luisa was illiterate. Therefore Sebastian decided it was his duty to write down the mysterious event that she related, in case someone needed to know about it in the future, but at that time he told no one, not even little bear. What had happened to Isidra was so strange, fearsome and wonderful, that it could only be enveloped with silence in the beginning.

Six months after Isidra's passing and holy death, Bernardino received sad news: because of an administrative change at the factory, he had to move to Chiclayo, in the north of Peru. Both

he and Sebastian were on a low income and were not able to travel much. So that meant that they would not be able to visit each other for long periods of time. Sebastian had brought forth an adoptive child, only to be separated from him.

When Bernardino was converted and was associated with Sebastian, it was almost as if God had said: "Comfort, comfort, my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (Isaiah 40:1)

Throughout this short history, it is evident how much the souls of the just were encouraged and sustained by the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Scripture (2 Peter 1:4) and of revelations. If Sebastian had not clung to these promises, he might have fallen into despair and even into eternal condemnation. "Unless thy law had been my meditation, I would have perhaps perished in my affliction." (Psalms 119:92) He had seen other souls shipwrecked, and now he himself was shipwrecked.

Many centuries ago in England, an afflicted soul was encouraged with the following promise:

"Another understanding is this, that there be deeds evil done in our sight, and so great harms taken, that it seems to us that it were impossible that ever it should come to good end. And upon this we look, sorrowing and mourning therefor, so that we cannot resign us unto the blissful beholding of God as we should do. And the cause of this is that the use of our reason is now so blind, so low, and so simple, that we cannot know that high marvellous Wisdom, the Might and the Goodness of the blissful Trinity. And thus signifies He when He says: Thou shalt see thyself that all manner of thing shall be well." As if He said: Take now heed faithfully and trustingly, and at the last end you shall verily see it in fulness of joy."

When Sebastian lived and worked in the factory in Arequipa, when he despaired even of life and had the sentence of death in himself, (2 Corinthians 1:8), this sacred promise helped to revive him. Therefore he determined to write a short work, *Norwich and the Scriptures*, to remind himself in written form of those life-giving words.

Sebastian had endured years of misery and humiliation. Perhaps now there would be a transformation.

During the night of Bernardino's departure to Chiclayo, Sebastian offered prayers of thanksgiving and petition. "Dear Lord, thank you so much for having sent this precious soul into my life. Please protect his life. Please, please do not let it be harmed or ruined, like the other souls who were wrecked and destroyed. Do not hand over the life of your dove to wild beasts. (Psalms 74:19). Do not let Satan ruin him. Please do not let the horrible events of the past happen again. Please forgive me my transgressions. I did not do them on purpose. I did not do it on purpose." Here he stopped, continuing only with unspeakable groanings. (Romans 8:26).

His sin was always before him (Psalms 51:3), impressed indelibly upon his memory, there to remain forever.

Chapter 14

Mount Zion Revisited

Wherein Is Related How They Were Wise in Their Own Conceit, and How Each of Them Turned to his Own Way
(Prov. 26:12, Rom. 12:16, Is. 53:6)

The apostle wrote that God concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Admirable was his decree of establishing a new congregation. Who has known the mind of the Lord? Who can ever possibly determine why he set up a congregation, only to have it destroyed afterwards?

Only on the day of judgment will his secrets be made known. But in order that this history, this tragedy, may not remain incomplete, it is necessary (insofar as our limited human insight permits), to endeavor to comprehend the full extent of the catastrophe and the entire measure of the horrible destruction of souls, all the graces wasted and despised, the terrible offense given to God and to men. White set upon black stands out and is more conspicuous.

Many years ago, Sebastian, Kurt, Sam and others had traveled thousands of miles to Peru, with a childlike faith, ingenuously hoping to behold the wonderful promises of Christ fulfilled. Thirty years had passed, and there was no triumph. They were disillusioned.

There had been a few small triumphs. Once a woman saw the cover of their magazine, with a picture of David being rebuked by the prophet Nathan; she had cried and been converted. A man traveled all the way from Canada, several times, to visit them, because he greatly admired their publications. A man from the north of Peru visited them, spent two hours conversing with a brother, and when leaving exclaimed, "The peace that man gives me!" Their labors had borne some fruit. They had helped to save others, but themselves they could not save.

"Think how you have instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands. Your words have supported those who stumbled; you have strengthened faltering knees. But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged; it strikes you, and you are dismayed." (Job 4:3-5).

Once during the first year, when Sister Teresa was still living, Kurt had exclaimed to Sebastian, "The peace I feel in the chapel!" At that time there was an atmosphere of hope, of encouragement, as if a wonderful fulfillment of promise and prophecy might happen in the near future. "Their days fled away, they saw no good. They passed by like swift ships, like an eagle swooping on its prey." (Job 9:26). At the end there was only sorrow, misery, discouragement and disillusionment.

In order to comprehend the extent of the harm, it is necessary to take into consideration the brothers' resemblance to children. Kurt and Sebastian were like children in the sense that they possessed trust, frankness and ingenuousness. When someone addressed them with a statement of fact, they believed it like little ones. They had faith, and showed it by traveling thousands of miles to join the new congregation, then continuing in their faith, performing hundreds of acts of obedience, day after day, year after year. Souls need obedience as a fish needs water. They were conscious of the Scriptures: "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority." (Hebrews 13:17).

There is no logic in obeying. Naaman the Syrian thought the order given by the prophet Elisha was foolish, and did not want to obey. When Christ our Lord was about to wash the feet of Peter, the excitable apostle refused to obey and complained.

Christ ordered the ten lepers in Samaria to go and show themselves to the priests. (Lk. 17:14). There is no logic in such a command. Christ was infinitely superior to the Jewish priests. He did not need the obedience of the lepers in order to cure them. They obeyed and were cured.

The church leaders in our story were not quite on the same level as Christ and the prophets. There were a little bit lower. Notwithstanding all that, the childlike brothers obeyed them, week after week, year after year, for decades.

They obeyed, they submitted, they endured. They wanted to obey like children. They desired to enter the kingdom like little ones. They wanted to submit and be led like docile sheep, guided to the fountains of living water. (Is. 49:10, Rev. 7:17).

But the door to the kingdom was shut. The guides themselves had closed it. They did not enter, nor did they let those enter who were trying. (Matthew 23:13).

Is it not a tragedy to mock the childlike trust and simplicity of little people? Is it not a crime to abandon them to their caprices and whims, to the broad way that leads to destruction and spiritual ruin? (Matthew 7:13).

Sebastian was as if annihilated, crushed and heartbroken at the sight of so much misery. He lifted his guilty face to heaven. He was ashamed and humiliated, because he had borne the disgrace of his youth. (Jeremiah 31:19). Sometimes he could not pray with words; he only sighed. (Rom. 8:23). He made noises in his throat as if he were a wounded dog or animal. (Is. 38:14, 59:11). His sighs were like a mute supplication, an S.O.S. that ascended from earth to heaven.

The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men (Ps. 14:2). What were his sentiments when he beheld this negligence, this blindness, these guides who claimed to be shepherds but who were "blind watchmen, all ignorant, dumb dogs, unable to bark?" (Isaiah 56:10).

Being aware of the prophecies, the afflicted brother well

knew that the leaders were like mute dogs. He even felt a little resentment, but had no authority to correct them. How could he accuse the watchmen of being unable to bark, when he himself was guilty of not having spoken when he should?

They were all stained; they were all guilty; they were all sentenced. "There is none that does good, no, not even one." (Ps. 14:3). They were wise in their own conceits, and their iniquities, like the wind, took them away. (Isaiah 64:6).

Sebastian was a witness of biblical prophecy being fulfilled. He saw it happen with his own eyes. "These double calamities have come upon you. Who can comfort you? Ruin and destruction, famine and sword. Who can console you? Your sons have fainted; they lie at the head of every street, like antelope caught in a net. They are filled with the wrath of the Lord, and the rebuke of your God." (Is. 51:19).

"No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and made us waste away because of our sins." (Is. 64:7)

"You have made us a reproach to our neighbors, the scorn and derision of those around us. My disgrace is before me all the day long, and my face is covered with shame, at the taunts of those who reproach and revile me, because of the enemy, who is bent on revenge." (Psalms 44:13)

"Why do you hide your face, and forget our misery and oppression? We are brought down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground." (Psalms 44:24)

Sometimes he felt abandoned by everyone. "Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. I cry to you, O Lord; I say, You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living. Listen to my cry; for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me." (Psalms 142:4)

He felt abandoned; he felt forsaken; he felt cheated. They had not taught him; they had not taught anyone. They did not pass the test. They were failures.

The leaders should have safeguarded the cause of the little ones, but they did not. "Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. They

know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. I said, You are gods; you are all sons of the Most High. But you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler.” (Psalms 82:3-6). The prophecy had been fulfilled to the letter. They did not defend the cause of the weak; they walked about in darkness; they all fell.

Sebastian bowed with his face to the ground. He sat alone in silence, for the Lord had laid it on him. He buried his face in the dust. There might yet be hope.

For men were not cast off by the Lord forever. Though he brought grief, yet he would show compassion, so great was his unfailing love.

(Lamentations 3)

Chapter 15

Marching into Zion

Wherein Is Related How They Knew the Lord Was Their Savior, and Their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob

Sebastian liked to think of his stay in Arequipa as living in exile. His concept was based on sacred history, when the Jews had been cast out of Jerusalem, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and had to endure exile in a strange land. “The nations shall say, why has the Lord done thus to this land?... because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, and the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and cast them into another land.” (Deut. 29). The chosen people had been cast out because of their disobedience, and Sebastian and the other brothers had likewise been removed, because of their vain thoughts and transgressions. They had no right to complain. They had drawn the exile upon themselves. The community in Lima (even with its defects) was like Jerusalem, and anywhere else was an exile, a Babylon of misery and humiliation. “Sing to us the songs of Zion. How

shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Ps. 137:3) Thus the Babylonians made fun of the Jews. The brothers had not paid attention to the words of Christ (as once the Jews had despised Jeremiah – Christ being greater than the prophet), and now God permitted them to be criticized and humiliated by their neighbors, as once the Jews had been humiliated by the Babylonians. Sebastian had to endure all kinds of petty humiliations in Arequipa. He had no right to complain; he knew the cause, his own awkward decisions and his iniquity.

"Know therefore that God exacts of you less than your iniquity deserves." (Job 11:6)

The sufferings of Job were mysterious; no one, except God himself, could really know their cause. There was no mystery to the sufferings of the Jews in Babylon. It was a relation of cause to effect, of disobedience to punishment.

The wise man said: There is nothing new under the sun. (Eccl. 1:9). History was repeating itself: the disobedient were exiled.

From North America had come news of the decease of some of Sebastian's acquaintances, that he had known more than thirty years before. He received no visions or revelations; he could not know exactly what happened after they died, except by making guesses, perhaps accurate ones. Since they had suffered afflictions before dying, it was probable that they died in grace, were saved, and that they were now in the heavenly Zion, enjoying rest from their labors. (Heb. 4:9; Rev. 14:13). He liked to make daydreams about their eternal happiness and hoped that he would one day be among the fortunate number of the saved. It was a privilege to be in the communion of saints and to have had fellowship with them, with any of them, with the least of them. How much had happened since they passed away, so many strange and bizarre events. Why did the Lord allow such sinister happenings? Who has known the mind of the Lord? His judgments were unsearchable, and his ways past finding out.

Sebastian even took pleasure in learning about souls second-hand, without having been with them in this life. (He had all eternity to make new acquaintances.) He especially liked to think about Isidra, whom he knew only from the testimony of Maria Luisa, Bernardino's sister. Isidra had suffered so much

during her life, without hope of escape, and finally her exile had ended.

Isidra had come out of her great tribulation, marching into Zion with singing, and with everlasting joy upon her head.

Sebastian took pleasure in thinking about Isidra. He was not the only one who had been afflicted. In addition to all her other sufferings, Isidra had to endure the humiliation of being illiterate. In his troubles Sebastian had holy books to comfort him, but Isidra could not benefit from books. She learned about Christ from sermons and from pictures, and finally, from Christ himself. She experienced a visitation. Christ came in person to teach her. "God himself will come, and will save you." (Is. 35:4).

Sebastian liked to think of series of chapters in Isaiah, and how they were being fulfilled right now.

Isaiah 53: sufferings of Christ.

Isaiah 54: glorification of Christ in head and members

Isaiah 59: the nightmare

Isaiah 60: the dream come true

It was a book of extravagant contrasts, a vivid description of sin and of grace, of darkness and of light, of bitterness and of sweetness, of humiliation and of glory. Sebastian contemplated the contrasts in his own life and in the lives of others, especially of Isidra's. Isidra was predestined to receive the inheritance of God's children: she had to suffer with Christ, so that she could be glorified with him. (Romans 8:17). The disciple had to drink of the chalice of the Son of man, so that she could sit in his kingdom in glory. (Mt. 20:23) She beheld the sorrowful verses (not by reading about them, but by feeling them, by living them). And now she saw the glorious verses come true:

"All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great will be the peace of thy children." (Isaiah 54). "They shall all be taught of God." (John 6:54).

Even while she dwelled in exile, Christ had come in person to teach her. She perceived more in five minutes with Christ, than scholars learn in ten years from books.

Sebastian and Isidra had both undergone the dreadful

sentence pronounced in Isaiah 59. "Judgment was turned away backward, and justice stood afar off; truth fell in the street, and equity could not enter." They had seen the sacred decree put into effect. Isidra did not read the decree: she experienced it, seven days a week, thirty days a month, year after year.

Now the light of Isidra had come, and the glory of the Lord was risen upon her. In his wrath he had smote her, and in his favor he had mercy upon her. Whereas she had been forsaken and hated, the Lord made her an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Now she knew that the Lord was her Savior and her Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

Violence was no more to be heard in her land, wasting nor destruction within her borders, but she now called her walls salvation, and her gates praise. The Lord was unto her an everlasting light, and her God was her glory, and the days of her mourning were ended. The little one had become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. The Lord had suddenly done it in his time.

It was a balm, a healing ointment, for Sebastian's afflicted and undernourished soul to contemplate the verses of Scripture, and to see how they were already fulfilled among his deceased friends.

It was a bittersweet life. In chapter 12 it was related how he sometimes sang songs slaves had once used, to ease his sorrow; now he sang similar songs, knowing that he was one day closer to coming home.

Soon I will be done with the troubles of the world, troubles of the world, troubles of the world.

Soon I will be done with the troubles of the world, going home to live with God.

I want to see my Jesus, I want to see my Jesus, I want to see my Jesus, going home to live with God.

O when the saints go marching in, o when the saints go marching in,
How I want to be in their number, when the saints go marching in.

Sebastian beheld all the persons who had come into in his

life, from his birth until now. He even remembered Little Hitler. Where would he, and so many others like him, be on the day of judgment? Would he be on the left side? Would he hear the sentence of the judge, "Depart from me, ye accursed, into the everlasting fire"? (Mt. 25:45). If souls were condemned, no one could accuse God of injustice. The Lord had offered all those souls a thousand opportunities of salvation, and they had given him a thousand refusals. The Lord gave them guardian angels, but they wasted all the helps their angels gave them, and listened to demons instead. They listened to Satan, allowed themselves to be deceived, followed his suggestions, and increased his kingdom, and the gates of hell were opened wide, to receive those unfortunate souls, who loved darkness more than light. (Jn. 3:19) "We will not have this man reign over us. Depart from us, we do not desire the knowledge of your ways." By choosing the things displeasing to the Lord, they said to him, "Depart from us." They were indeed foolish. Were they even worth saving? For it is written: A fool is born to his own disgrace: and even his father shall not rejoice in a fool. (Prov. 17:21)

Let favor be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, and he will not behold the majesty of the Lord. (Is. 26:10).

If Little Hitler or anyone else was at the left side on the day of judgment, if they were thrown into the lake of fire and into flames that never end, Sebastian could not have wept over them, any more than he would cry over the death of a grasshopper. (Isaiah 40:22)

He remembered with humor a conversation that had occurred many years before. Reverend Montaigne had once commented, "Every time a soul goes to hell, God fails!"... a typical reaction of many: if something goes wrong, put the blame on God. Reverend Gauthier answered, "No, God does not fail..... **they** fail." Well said. It is made clear in the Scriptures, especially in Deuteronomy, that humans have free will and can make their own decisions. God not only requested, he demanded the Israelites to make a choice: "Choose ye this day." (Josh. 24:15) They were required to choose between good and evil, between life and death, between blessings and curses. They had thousands of opportunities of making good decisions. Some of

them, Joshua, Caleb and Rahab, made wise judgments. If after all that, the majority acted without wisdom, no one could blame God for it. They even knew what was going to happen in the future. In the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, God revealed clearly the blessings or curses that would overtake them. If they chose the curses, they could not put the blame on God. They were adults, responsible for their own actions, and had to face the effects of their actions. They could not allege ignorance as an excuse.

At this phase of his life, Sebastian could not be strict with someone who transgressed, even with someone who made repeated transgressions and falls. He looked back at the past. He saw his tactical blunders, the blindness, the misery. He was not able to judge others. He had enough sins, offenses and omissions of his own.

To relieve his feelings of guilt, he sometimes repeated a prayer that had been offered long ago by a faithful servant:

“I offer You these prayers and the Sacrifice of Propitiation for those especially who have in any way injured, saddened, or slandered me, inflicted loss or pain upon me, and also for all those whom I have at any time saddened, disturbed, offended, and abused by word or deed, willfully or in ignorance.” Here he thought of Sam Grass, who suffered so much from his icy silence, and of others, who had been offended by his blunders and omissions. He had not done them on purpose. He continued: “May it please You to forgive us all alike our sins and offenses against one another.”

The prayer continued: “Take away from our hearts, O Lord, all suspicion, anger, wrath, contention, and whatever may injure charity and lessen brotherly love.” The prayer not by chance referred to the mortal sin of the unfortunate and doomed community: They had not taken away “whatever might injure charity and lessen brotherly love.”

They had not taken away harsh, unkind thoughts and words toward their neighbors; they had clung to them, fomented them, and promoted them. They even persuaded themselves and pretended, that their thoughts were good thoughts. They called evil good, and good evil; they put darkness for light, and light

for darkness; they put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. They had been wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight. Therefore as the fire devours the stubble, so their root had been as rottenness, and their blossom went up as dust: because they cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 5:20-24).

They were so blind that they did not even see their fault, or confess it, much less correct it. The community became divided and weakened. The house built on sand collapsed.

Now his only hope for the future was that God would fulfill his promises, even if he saw their fulfillment only on the other side of the veil. If God had covered him with leprosy and if he had been carried like Lazarus into Abraham's bosom (such a humiliating way to die), at least he would have been saved. By this time he had no claim to special privileges, that the entire community might have deserved if they had been faithful. They had forfeited their privileges; they had wasted their inheritance; they were unprofitable servants.

What else could he expect now, except to die childless of a loathsome disease, and in exile. If the blind lead the blind, what else is possible? Sometimes he playfully said to God, "Thank you for not making me like the rich man who was buried in hell, and who requested Abraham's help in vain. Any humiliation, even leprosy, and being licked by dogs, is better than that!" "In hell there is no redemption."

Sometimes he imagined what might have happened if the community in Lima had prospered spiritually, as the Lord had requested of Sister Teresa many years before. By now there would be a group of fervent souls, serving the Lord with zeal and joy, and helping to save many lost souls from perdition. They would have changed the course of history. But such ideas were mere daydreams. Sebastian did not know what might have happened. He only knew what really happened.

Temporal prosperity is for many the cause of their ruin. Better to be poor and enter the kingdom of heaven, than to be rich and cast outside. But even spiritual prosperity has its dangers. If the community had succeeded, perhaps he might have fallen into spiritual pride and vainglory, the worst of all vices.

Right now, there was no possibility of vainglory. What did he possess to be vainglorious of? Nothing. If you described his life in one word only, it would be: Failure. They had not passed the test. He had failed. Sam had failed; Kurt had failed. They were all failures, they were washed up. Now there was only one thing they could do: bury their faces in the dust. (Lam. 3:29)

If God had judged him according to rigor and strict justice, there would be no possibility whatsoever of success or salvation. His only hope now was in the promise of Scripture: If thou, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee....with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. (Ps. 130). For him the scriptural promise was as if someone had given medicine to a weak, sick man. He was grateful.

Sebastian decided that he should offer an official act of thanksgiving, to the Lord, for having preserved him and helped him in so many ways, during so many years, he whose mercies were without number. How could things go badly when God was present? He would rather be poor for the Lord's sake, than rich without him. He was poor, not only in material goods, but in human consolations. Like the eunuch in Acts (8:27), he could not marry. He could not have children. Now he could not even be with Little Bear. But he was grateful that he was not among the number of those who receive their good things in this life only. (Luke 16:25) He was thankful that he was not among the rich, who have their consolation here. (Lk. 6:24). For when the kingdom of heaven came, they would not be able to enter. He preferred to wander on earth without consolations, rather than to possess heaven without God. Where God was, there was heaven, and where he was not, there was death and hell. In none could he fully trust to help him in his necessities, but in the Lord alone, his God. He was his hope. He was his confidence. He was his consoler, most faithful in every need.

Even when the Lord exposed him to various temptations and hardships, (he was accustomed to prove his loved ones in a thousand ways), the Lord ordered all this for his good. He was not to be loved or praised less in these trials, than if he had filled him with heavenly consolation. Therefore in the Lord God he placed all his hope and his refuge. On him he cast all his

troubles and anguish, because whatever he had outside of him, he found to be weak and unstable.

For him the Lord was, indeed, the fountain of all good, the height of life, and depth of all that can be spoken. To trust in him above all things was the strongest comfort of Sebastian.

He remembered more mercies and benefactions that the Lord had given him in past years, and offered short thanksgivings for each one. Then he was tired, and concluded his prayer as follows.

“My God, the Father of mercies, to You I look, in You I trust. Bless and sanctify my soul with heavenly benediction, so that it may become Your holy dwelling and the seat of Your eternal glory. And in this temple of Your dignity let nothing be found that might offend Your majesty. In Your great goodness, and in the multitude of Your mercies, look upon me and listen to the prayer of Your poor servant, exiled from You in the region of the shadow of death. Protect and preserve the soul of Your poor servant among the many dangers of this corruptible life, and direct him by Your accompanying grace, through the ways of peace, to the land of everlasting light. Amen.”

Sebastian finished his prayer. Tomorrow would be another day, a day in which he would have to face new trials, new humiliations, and whatever the Lord had in store for his servant. By now he was accustomed to surprises, even the shocking ones of an unexpected affliction, or the other kind, of a consolation that came unexpectedly, by surprise.

It was a miracle that he had been able to survive up to now, and he well knew it. For time will pass away, and our lives will pass away, and others will come to occupy our places, and the mystery of death and of judgment will come to each one of us.

At the end of our lives and of time, there will remain only love, the Word and the Spirit, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Epilogue

Wherein Is Related That All Flesh Shall Know That the Lord
Is the Savior, and the Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob

If teachers are incompetent, and the pupils fail the test, to whom should we ascribe the failure? This book was written in order to answer that question, notwithstanding the feebleness and limitations of the author, who was unable to give all the details. From what was set forth in fifteen brief chapters, a partial judgment can be made at this time, in regard to what was the cause of the debacle. In spite of the cunning of the father of lies, in spite of the errors, transgressions, omissions and crimes of humans, the souls of his little ones were preserved. Everything that the Lord permitted to happen is just, even the sorrowful events. "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." (Psalms 19:9).

The readers might desire to know more details about the persons in this story. Let them please be patient: at the set time God will reveal everything. He will gather all the nations together (Mt. 25:32) and manifest his hidden designs and secrets.

In ancient times a woman of Tekoa sent to a king and made a request, with words put into her mouth by a servant (2 Sam. 14:1-3). Then the king asked questions, found out what was behind her words, and granted the request, so that a banished person could have life. The leader made a short investigation and found out what was behind her actions. God does not need to investigate, in order to determine what is behind wars, slavery, injustice, or what is behind the destruction of local churches, already knowing it with his divine omniscience. But according to our human manner of understanding, at the end of time the Lord will have an investigation made, and publish the findings of the committee or assembly, so that all may see it. Then everyone will see what was behind slavery, what was behind World War II, what was behind the Vietnam war, what was behind the doings of the seven churches of Asia and all other churches, of all centuries and nations, all the successes and all the failures, of all the local churches that have existed or

ever will exist, until the end of the world. At that time the people will be astonished at the wisdom of the Lord, as once the inhabitants of Palestine marveled at the wisdom of David's son. (1 Kg. 3:16-38; Lk. 13:17).

According to our human manner of thinking, at the very end the Lord will appoint a committee or assembly, and *will establish all words*, with their testimonies (Mt. 18:16-17). The jury will give its findings, the Judge will pronounce the sentence, and all the people will be stupefied and struck dumb with amazement. Then the words of the apostle will be verified, that God's judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out.

Another analogy can be set forth. Imagine that the events of everyone's life were to be made into a motion picture. The world premiere would be shown at the end of time in a vast amphitheater, with a capacity of six billion. Is such a marvel possible? He who laid the earth's foundations, who marked off its dimensions, who stretched a measuring line across it and laid its cornerstone, while the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, he who created all this out of nothing, can gather a vast multitude with ease.

He who comes out of the north in golden splendor, who comes in awesome majesty, exalted in power, in his justice and great righteousness, can easily prepare a screen visible by all, in order that the books may be opened (Rev. 20:21), that Jerusalem may be searched with lamps (Zeph. 1:12), and that what is concealed may be disclosed, what is hidden may be made known, and what is told in the dark may be spoken in the daylight, and that what was whispered in the ears, may be proclaimed from the roofs. (Mt. 20:26).

The Son of David proposed to make known what was hidden (Psalms 78:2). He explained verses, he quoted passages. With his divine wisdom he opened up a few truths from Scripture. However, on the day of judgment, his Almighty Father will open up all passages, reveal all verses, and uncover all hidden identities. Everyone will be exposed: none will escape. Nothing will remain unpunished. (Proverbs 16:5). Everything hidden will be manifested. Those who humble themselves with the little ones, those who are patient and endure in silence, will be

saved (Is. 30:15). Those who exalt themselves will possess swift pursuers. (Is. 30:16).

The location of the great and awesome judgment will be as follows. The Lord will judge all flesh (Is. 66:16), will gather all nations (Mt. 25:32), and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2) and will enter into judgment with them there. The day and hour have not yet been determined. It will come to pass when the Son of man arrives.

Inasmuch as the Son has not yet informed us of the day of his coming, we advise you to keep yourselves in readiness. For behold, he comes soon.

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Mount Zion Revisited

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Notes

Chapter 1.

This chapter is based on the first chapter of Job, upon the truth that the souls of the just must pass a test before they can enter heaven. (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10). It is also based upon the conversation that Pope Leo XIII heard between Christ and Satan, in which Christ gave him permission to test men for a certain period of time.

Chapter 4.

This chapter is based on the parable of the tares among the wheat, the parable of Isaiah 5 of the good grapes growing with wild grapes, the parable of the vineyard leased to servants who killed the heir, who was cast out and killed outside the vineyard, and also upon other comparisons and metaphors of Scripture, in particular that Christ's blood is the wine mentioned in Isaiah 63:4 and Revelation 14:9.

Chapter 6.

Behemoth and Leviathan, the large animals mentioned at the end of the book of Job, have been identified as possibly: a large sea monster, a dragon, a giant serpent, a crocodile, hippopotamus, or elephant. The fathers of the Church have seen them as a type or symbol of Satan, who is called in scripture a cunning serpent and a great red dragon.

Chapter 9

“It is dangerous to despise one, whose prayers are carried to God by the gracious ministry of angels.” – St. Hilary of Arles, commentary on Matthew 18. Quoted by Rev. Alban Butler, *Lives of the Saints*. Oct. 2. Guardian Angels. Also quoted in Chapter 12.

The story of Joseph and his brethren: It is dangerous to despise one's equals or inferiors, because later on they may not be equal. “Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and you are tormented.” (Luke 16:25).

Chapter 13

“No one understands the passion of Christ so thoroughly or heartily, as the man whose lot it is to suffer the like himself.” – *Imitation of Christ*, Book 2, Ch. 12.

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In Scripture the metaphors of Mount Zion and the new Jerusalem may represent both the church militant and the church triumphant.

Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. – Hebrews 12:22.

I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. – Apocalypse 21:2

Chapter 15

It was a privilege to be in the communion of saints and to have had fellowship with them, with any of them.

Saint. Definition 1. someone who practiced virtue to a heroic degree, who is in heaven and who is declared worthy of receiving public honors, by an act of canonization. Example: His role models consisted of two canonized saints.

Saint. Definition 2. a member of the church militant, of the church suffering, or of the church triumphant. Someone who is predestined to be saved (in the church militant) and who really is saved (in the church triumphant). Examples. “I believe in the communion of saints.” (Apostles' Creed). “All the saints who were not canonized are celebrated by the Church on November 1.” “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in all Achaia. (2 Cor. 1:1). “All the saints salute you.” (2 Cor. 13:13). “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus.” (Eph. 1:1) – “Paul, and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi.” (Philippians 1:1)

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus

our brother. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossae: Grace be unto you.” (Col. 1:1). – “Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.” (Hebrews 13:24). “The four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints.” (Rev. 5:8).

“For when the kingdom of heaven came, they would not be able to enter.” A reference to Imit. Bk. 3, Ch. 58.

Woe to those, therefore, who disdain to humble themselves willingly with the little children, for the low gate of the heavenly kingdom will not permit them to enter. Woe also to the rich who have their consolations here, (Luke 6:24; 16:25) for when the poor enter into God's kingdom, they will stand outside lamenting. (Isaiah 65:13) Rejoice, you humble, and exult, you poor, (Psalm 32:11) for the kingdom of God is yours, if only you walk in the truth.

Epilogue

Here are some verses given in full.

Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished. (Prov. 16:5)

For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall you be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and you would not. But you said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall you flee: and, We will ride upon the swift: therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. (Is. 30:15).

For by fire and by his sword will the Lord judge all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many. (Is. 66:16)

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. (Matthew 25:32).

I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations. (Joel 3:2)

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 18:16-17).

Appendix 1

The Secret Revealed

The Trail of Tears

Introduction

DURING the 1950s Sixto T., an Indian who lived In Latin America, married Isidra Q. they had eight children, the first being born in 1953. It was not a happy family; Sixto was in a bad mood nearly all the time, frequently became drunk and sometimes even beat his wife and children. However, with all his defects, he was hard-working.

Sixto spoke his native language, but the children grew up speaking Spanish. His first son, Bernardino, was aware of the unhappy family situation; he also was mistreated by Sixto. On one occasion, when Bernardino was 18, he asked his mother, Isidra, why she simply did not leave Sixto?

But she decided to keep living in the family, even though it cost her so much suffering. After that Bernardino went through a phase where he did not communicate with any of his relatives for three years.

During this period, Isidra was often worried and upset, fearing that she had lost her eldest son forever. She prayed often, and made novenas, for his return. Three years later, when he returned and she saw him, she was so happy she burst into tears.

A Secret Kept

During those unhappy years a strange event happened to Isidra. She never told anyone about it. However, during the last two years of her life, he guessed that she had only a few years left upon earth. Therefore she decided to reveal the secret to one of her daughters. One day she arranged o be alone with Maria Luisa and told her the following.

The Secret Revealed

ONE day Sixto had beaten her severely in one of his drunken moods. She was recovering, alone, from the shock, hurt and humiliation. Then she saw a vision: a man clothed in white

appeared to her, and took her in vision to a dark valley, where she heard the cries and screams of tormented souls. Then the man dressed in white transported her to a heavenly realm of profound peace and ineffable happiness. She wished she could have remained there forever. But her desire could not be granted. The man told her that it was the will of the Lord for her to return to the earth, so that she could teach the people about God. Then he left her, and she found herself again in her poor ranch. The man dressed in white was Jesus Christ himself.

It was as if God had told Isidra, “Do not be afraid of your husband or saddened about your suffering. In the end everything will turn out well, all manner of thing shall be well.” In those moments Isidra learned more about the horror of being eternally separated from God, the torments of condemned souls, and the incomprehensible joy of being with Him eternally in the heavenly Jerusalem, than if she had read many books or heard sermons.

The last part of the message was a puzzle, an enigma, a riddle. Isidra was illiterate, a peasant woman with no education at all. Her religious knowledge was minimal. Being without training, she was not capable of training others. She could not possibly be considered a teacher, except in the sense that one may teach by giving a good example, and witness by the testimony of good works in silence. After this event, Isidra was seen often in the parish church, praying.

Isidra never told anyone, except Maria Luisa, about her vision. She carried her secret to the grave. Bernardino was not present when she died of cancer, but he did attend the funeral, together with his siblings Isidro, Venancio, Maria Luisa, Cristina, and Alejandra. His mother's death affected him deeply and caused a mild depression that lasted six months.

Isidra did not have much, in her pilgrimage through life, except suffering, humiliations, trials and tears. However she did receive one privilege: she was taught by Jesus Christ Himself. Her life was a confirmation of the verse of Scripture: “It is written in the prophets. And they shall all be taught of God.” (John 6:45, Isaiah 54:13). “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” (John 14:18) Christ made up for her poverty, her humiliations and suffering, by visiting and teaching her in

person. Now she is in the city of everlasting happiness, the heavenly Jerusalem, where all prophecies are fulfilled, all promises kept: "For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Revelation 7:17) "The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces: and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it." (Isaiah 25:8). A few years later Sixto died. The youngest son, Venancio, inherited the ranch. It is suitable to register and record these events in writing. Tragic events sometimes demonstrate how God uses the wickedness and malice of men to effect a greater good. "But as for you, you thought evil against me: but God meant it unto good,... to save much people alive." (Gen. 50:20) "And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God." (Rom. 8:28) "All things:" --even what happened to Isidra and her children.

For his anger endures but a moment; in his favor is life: weeping may endure for a night, but **joy comes in the morning.** Psalms 30:5

The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit. Psalms 34:17-18

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you: But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. -- 1 Peter 4:12-13

Source of information: Oral testimony of Maria Luisa, as told to a reliable witness.

The Secret Revealed [written description of Isidra's strange experience] was not placed in the allegory, because it is a record of historical fact. All the names, except Bernardino's, are real.

Appendix 2

Norwich and the Scriptures

Norwich and the Scriptures

Contents

1. Adam's Sin Was the Greatest
2. Sins of the Chosen
3. The Ground of Our Beseeching
4. All Shall Be Well. Haps and Adventures
5. Despised and Laughable
6. We Should Take Our Trials Lightly
7. Everlasting Joy

Introductory note. There is an admirable harmony between certain passages of Scripture and the revelations given to Julian of Norwich, England, in the 14th century.

1. Adam's Sin Was the Greatest

Our Lord revealed to Julian that the first sin, the disobedience of Adam, was the greatest sin ever committed. He revealed unto her that when Christ died on the cross, he made up for and atoned for the greatest sin and evil. The revelation is similar to the 5th chapter of Romans. "Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men..." Rom. 5:12.

Our Lord told Julian that just as he made well the greatest evil (the sin of Adam) by his atoning death on the cross, so he would make well everything else, and that she would see it.

He also told her that not even the least thing would be forgotten, that all manner of thing would be well, and that she would see it.

Adam's sin was the greatest, because through it, death, destruction, calamity and misery spread to all men. Because of Adam's disobedience, the entire earth was under a curse (Genesis 3:17, 5:29).

Paul wrote that the gift was greater than the offense. (Rom.

5:15) "But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many..... for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous." The 5th chapter of Romans is like a commentary to Julian's revelation. Also First Corinthians 15:21-22. "For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."

2. Sins of the Chosen

It was revealed to Julian that in Heaven the sins of the chosen (the saved) will be turned to worship. Christ called to her mind David, Peter, Mary Magdalen, those of Inde (Thomas and Jude) and many others who are known in the church for their transgressions. God sees the souls of the saved as if they had never sinned. All these truths are based on Scripture.

It is written: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." Psalms 103:12. "He will again have compassion on us; and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19.

"For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sins I will remember no more." Jeremiah 31:34 Hebrews 8:12 Isaiah 43:25

If the sins of the chosen, the saved, are removed as far as the east is from the west (that is, an infinite distance), if they are cast into the sea and remembered no more, then it is as if their transgressions had never existed.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." Psalms 32:1-2. Paul quotes this passage in Romans 4:7 and says that this blessedness will come upon all the saved, whether Jew or Gentile.

Paul also writes: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Rom. 8:1. No condemnation, no accusation, no guilt, no blame --the blood of Christ, of infinite value, removes it all. The souls of the saved are washed, they are sanctified, they are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:11. See also Jeremiah 50:20

Julian wrote: "But if anyone should think, therefore I will sin, so that I will have the more meed, let him beware, for this stirring is not of God. For a kind soul hath no hell but sin."

Paul wrote: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!" Rom. 6:1.

3. The Ground of Our Beseeching

It was revealed to Julian that God inspired the prayers of the saved and then granted them. "I will that thou shouldst have it. How then shalt thou not have it?"

Scripture declares that God inspires our petitions. "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. 8:2.

The psalmist says that those who fear the Lord will obey Him and fulfill his desire; then he answers by fulfilling their desire: "He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them." Psalms 145:19

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." 1 John 5:14-15.

"He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee." Isaiah 30:19

"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isaiah 65:24

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jeremiah 33:3

"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." Psalms 34:17

4. All Shall Be Well. Haps and Adventures

The Lord said: "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and thou shalt see, that all manner of thing shall be well." The Scripture witnesses, that for those who love God, all things, even misfortunes and accidents, work together toward a happy ending. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God." Romans 8:28. Even humiliation and injustice work toward good.

"But as for you (Joseph's brothers) you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive." Gen. 50:20

The Scripture states that, for the souls of the righteous, a period of affliction and humiliation is followed by a period of joy and spiritual prosperity: "And the Lord restored Job's losses; indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before, and the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning." Job 42:10

"His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." Psalms 30:5

The Lord told Julian that some events seem to be haps and adventures, but that they are ordained by the wisdom and providence of God, who declares the end from the beginning. (Is. 46:10)

In Genesis 40 it is related that Joseph interpreted the dream of the chief butler, and then petitioned him, "Remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me, and get me out of this dungeon." But for two full years the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

This forgetfulness was not by chance; rather it was ordained by the all-foreseeing providence of God, who determined to

release Joseph from the dungeon at a particular time, and in particular circumstances, in order that he might be set over all the land of Egypt, and so that God could make him forget all his toil, and so he would be made fruitful in the land of his affliction. Gen. 41:41, 51

In the book of Esther it is related how Haman plotted to kill all the Jews living in Persia and Media, and how God intervened to save and deliver his people. His intervention did not consist in performing great signs and miracles, as in the days of Moses, but rather by directing the minute events of daily life. It was not by chance that queen Vashti disobeyed king Ahasuerus and had to be deposed. It was not by chance that Esther, a Jewess, was chosen to be the new queen. It was not by chance that the king promoted Haman to be above all the princes. It was not by chance that Esther invited the king and Haman to a banquet. And finally, it was not by chance that the king could not sleep that night, that he had chronicles read to him and that he promoted Mordecai and had him receive honors.

Then followed one of the most dramatic scenes recorded in the pages of Scripture. Esther invited the king and Haman to a second banquet. The king asked her what was her petition and she replied, "If it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated." The king asked her who was responsible for this abomination and she replied, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!" It was as if a sword had gone out of her mouth. Haman was terrified. Then the king had him hung on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.

Esther and Mordecai turned the tables on Haman, not by power and might, not by working miracles, but by wisdom, by sagacity, and by submitting to God's will. In all these events we see the verification of the words he spoke to Julian: "I never take my hands off my works."

5. Despised and Laughable

In the 4th chapter of Acts it is written, that after Peter and John had been threatened by the Sanhedrin, they went to the disciples. The entire congregation raised their voice to God and said: "Lord, you are God who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said, Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord, and against His Christ. For truly against your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done." Acts 4:24-28.

They quoted the first verses of Psalm 2 as referring to what happened in Jerusalem on Good Friday: the nations and rulers plotted against the Messiah, the Christ, in order to prevent Him from taking possession of His kingdom and from ruling. They hated Him, and with their actions they proclaimed, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Luke 19:14. With their deeds they said to God: "Depart from us, for we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways." Job 21:14

In Psalm 2:4 the scene changes from earth to heaven. God is looking down from above upon the sons of men. He tests the righteous, but the wicked his soul hates (Ps. 11:4). All nations before Him are as nothing; the inhabitants of the earth are like grasshoppers (Is. 40:17, 22), smaller than tiny insects in His sight. No one can restrain His hand. (Dan. 4:35).

Little man's puny efforts to overthrow the design of God, to fight against the Messiah, are despicable; they are ridiculous, laughable.

"He who sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall hold them in derision." Psalm 2:4

Then the Psalmist advised the rulers to serve the Lord with fear; otherwise they would be broken with a rod of iron, and dashed to pieces. (Psalm 2:11). Notwithstanding His warnings, some of them still continued to set themselves against the Lord,

hardening their hearts against Him. One of them reaped the bitter fruit of his actions a few years later.

"Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him (Herod), because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died." Acts 12:23.

It was as if the king set him at the left and said, "Depart, you accursed, into the everlasting fire." (Mt. 25:41). He deserved to hear the terrible sentence, that the condemned will hear on the day of judgment, for he had murdered John the Baptist, had mocked Christ (Lk. 23:11) and had killed James the brother of John with the sword. (Acts 12:2).

Christ said, "With the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." Lk. 6:38. It is a fact of history, verified by Scripture, that if people do not listen to God, later they will call out and he will not listen (Zech. 7:13; Is. 1:15). Herod did not listen to God, not even when Christ visited him, and later God did not hear him. He made a joke out of God (Lk. 23:11) and later on the Lord laughed at him. (Acts 12:23).

In the Scriptures it is stated that the Lord will laugh at the obstinate, when the day of the wicked comes.

"Because I have called, and ye refused: I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." Proverbs 1: 24-28.

"The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming." Psalms 37:12-13.

The Lord said to Julian: "that demons and damned souls are despised, as in God's sight."

6. We Should Take Our Trials Lightly

Our Lord said to Julian: "It is God's will that we should take his behests and promises as heartily as we may, and that we should take our travails and dis-eases as lightly as we may, and make little of them, for thus shall we feel them less, and shall have more meed for them."

Many passages in Scriptures corroborate this truth. Christ told his disciples that they would have sorrow and tribulation in the world, but not to be discouraged, for he had overcome everything. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (Jn. 16:33). "...and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy... And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." (Jn. 16:20-22). He told the local church of Smyrna: "Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10)

He wants his disciples to receive their trials lightly: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Mt. 11:30)

The apostles received their trials with joy: "When they had called the apostles, and beaten them... they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." (Acts 5:41)

The apostle Paul said that suffering with Christ was followed by glory and joy: "If we are children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:18). "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." (2 Cor. 1:5)

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:17).

7. Everlasting Joy

Our Lord told Julian: "The children of God, holy Church, shall be shaken by tribulation, even as a cloth is shaken in the wind. Of this I will make a great feast in Heaven, of everlasting joy, that shall last for ever and ever."

Christ said that on the day of reckoning, his servants would have great joy. "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Mt. 25:21)

The prophets Isaiah and Daniel stated that the Messiah would establish a kingdom that would last for ever. Isaiah 9:6-7; 60:20. Daniel 2:44 7:13-14. Luke 1:33 2 Samuel 7:13.

Isaiah continues saying that in the Messianic kingdom they will offer a prayer of praise, comfort and joy: "Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted." (Is. 12)

He also says that in the kingdom there will be joy and singing (Is. 35:2), that the blind and deaf shall be healed (Is. 35:5; Lk. 7:22), and that their joy will last for ever:

"The redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah 35:10

The prophet Jeremiah said that after the captivity of sin, the Messiah would come and would bring goodness and joy to the redeemed: "Because of their wickedness I have hid my face from this city (Jerusalem). Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah, and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity,

whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and ye shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it." Jer. 33:5-9. He said the voice of joy and the voice of gladness would be heard (33:11).

The prophet Jeremiah also said that the Messiah would make an everlasting covenant; therefore the joy of his kingdom would last for ever. "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, with my whole heart and with my whole soul." (Jer. 32:39-41; Hebrews 13:20)

The prophet Isaiah was mourning, because Jerusalem was in ruins. "Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste." (Isaiah 64:10). Then the Lord consoled him. He spoke to him and said that the former troubles would soon be forgotten. The Lord was going to create a new city, a new congregation, a new assembly and a new covenant. "But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." (Is. 65:18) "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:" "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." (Isaiah 66:10, 13).

The Son of man came down from heaven (Jn. 3:13; 6:38) in order to make all things new. "For the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth;" Jer. 31:22 "And he that sat upon the throne said: Behold, I make all things new. It is done. I am Alpha and Omega." Rev. 21:5

He came upon earth to put new wine into new bottles. (Mt. 9:17) "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now." Jn. 2:10

He came to establish a new covenant (Jer. 31:31; Hebrews 12:24) in a kingdom which cannot be moved (Heb. 12:28) with new commandments, (Jn. 13:34), where the redeemed sing a new song (Rev. 14:3) in a new city (Rev. 21:2). "Former troubles are forgotten." Is. 65:16 "The old covenant, which decays and waxes old, is ready to vanish away." Heb. 8:13 "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17

The Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah has established a kingdom not of this world, but visible in the world, a new city that cannot be hid (Mt. 5:14) "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." (Hebrews 12:22) "the holy city, new Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:2). Paul wrote: "God hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Col. 1:13). The Scriptures declare that the Messiah has established a new covenant, in which saved souls, as new creatures, (2 Cor. 5:17), praise and exalt him for ever, all sorrow and tribulation having passed away.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Rev. 21:4

The first chapters of Genesis relate how the earth was placed under a curse. The last chapter of Scripture declares the curse will be removed. "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."



Notes

1. Adam's Sin Was the Greatest

Our Lord told Octavio Michelini, a soul in Italy, that the sin of Adam had such horrifying consequences and was so great, that the full extent of its magnitude would not be understood until the day of judgment.

2. Sins of the Chosen

Our Lord told Julian that Saint John of Beverley committed some sins in his youth, and that after he repented, he had more meed than if he had not sinned.

Psalm 103 does not state, "As far as the north is from the south," because the distance from the north pole to the south pole is finite and can be measured. "As far as the east is from the west," is a circle that goes around forever, an infinite distance.

Jeremiah 50: 20 declares: "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve." --- "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him." Numbers 23:21

3. The Ground of Our Beseeching

Our Lord told Julian that if he did not grant our requests, "we abide a better time or a better gift." He told her he was pleased with our prayers even when offered in dryness or in distress. He also told her that if we prayed but without confidence, it was not enough, and if we had confidence but without prayer, it was not enough. He willed "that our trust and our prayer be alike large."

4. All Shall Be Well. Haps and Adventures

In the thirteenth shewing, Our Lord revealed to Julian: "Sometimes there be such great evils done, and such great harms taken, that it seems it should never come to good end, and we look upon it with great distress, sorrowing and mourning without measure. But our dear Lord told me not to be greatly dis-eased for any manner of thing, for he said: "By the same wisdom, power and goodness that I made well the greatest evil, I will make well all that is less, and thou shalt see it." --- Since God directs everything that happens, "we are living more in heaven than on earth."

Our Lord said to Gabrielle Bossis: “Do not believe in chance, but learn to see the hand of your father, your friend, the one who never leaves you, in everything that happens.”

5. Despised and Laughable

The word ridiculous is derived from Latin, *ridere*, to laugh.

Our Lord told a soul in Italy, Luisa Piccarreta, that when civil or ecclesiastical leaders press for the observance of laws but they themselves do not keep them, "they make a joke out of me, as Herod did." He foretold that on the day of judgment he would make a joke out of them.

Daniel 4:35 states how vain it is for foolish humans to oppose God: “All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” These words were spoken by Nebuchadnezzar, who also declared “Those that walk in pride he is able to abase.” (Dan. 4:37).

6. We Should Take Our Trials Lightly

Dis-ease: lack of ease, trouble. In Middle English *disese* meant inconvenience, trouble, sickness. From < OFr *desaise* , discomfort.

Meed: merited recompense or reward

Behest: an order, command, or request

7. Everlasting Joy

Our Lord told Gabrielle Bossis (1874-1950): “Everything I say to one of My children is for all of them. Each soul is My favorite. If only you knew My love for each one.”

Our Lord told Julian it was his will that we receive these manifestations of his love with great joy, as if they were made especially for us.

Biographical Note

JULIAN of Norwich was a recluse, a hermitess, who lived in a small room adjoining the parish church in Norwich, England. She made a petition that God would send her an illness so that she could suffer for Christ. She became so ill that those around her thought that she was going to die. On May 8, 1383, from about 9 a.m. until the afternoon, Christ granted her a series of thirteen revelations or shewings, in which great truths were revealed to her. A few years later she received the 14th and 15th shewings. She spent the remaining 40 years meditating on

what she had seen.

The most well-known shewing, or revelation, is the thirteenth, in which Christ told her "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and thou shalt see, that all manner of thing shall be well."

Appendix 3

A Prophecy Fulfilled

As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken. I will save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey: and I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. ---Ezekiel 34

CHRIST OUR LORD declared that he was the good shepherd, who gives his life for the sheep. (Jn. 10:11; Is. 40:11; Ezek. 34:23). His coming had been predicted by the prophets of the Old Testament. Many centuries had to pass before the prophecy of Ezekiel could be fulfilled. It did not come to pass until Easter Sunday. At that time, Christ began to gather his apostles and disciples, who had been scattered by the scandal of his passion, as was foretold by the prophet Zechariah: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered;" (Zech. 13:7) Christ wanted to gather his own people, his own nation, and for three years he preached to them, but because of their bad disposition, the prophecy could not be

fulfilled. He wanted to gather them, but could not. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Mt. 23:37)

It was prophesied about Christ that he would die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad, (Jn. 11:52) that is, all those who had been scattered by the sin of Adam, both Jew and Gentile, and who were destined to be the sheep of his flock and members of his body, chosen before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4)

During his public ministry Christ preached only to the Jews, but he prophesied that one day the Gentiles would enter into his kingdom. "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." (Mt. 8:11) St. Patrick quoted this verse in his *Confession*, revealing that this passage was fulfilled when he preached in Ireland, and so many were converted. Ireland was located at the extreme west of the world; at that time it was not possible to go any further. The Irish came from the west and sat down in the kingdom. The Irish and other nations were privileged to be associated with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the great ones of the Old Testament, they were privileged to receive so many privileges that the Jews had lost, being disinherited, because of their obstinacy. The Irish were privileged to see the fulfillment of the prophecy of Ezekiel and so many other wonderful promises made in the Old and New Testament. They saw the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham, that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed, in a particular manner, their own nation.

It is a truth of scripture that men have free will, and that God does not force them. This truth is especially evident in the book of Deuteronomy, when God asks the people many times to choose between good and evil, life and death. They had to make the decision themselves. In the book of Joshua, it is written: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." (Josh. 24:15). The

people had to make a choice.

In the scriptures it is stated that Christ stands at the door, and knocks, if any man hears his voice, and opens the door, he will come in. (Apoc. 3:20). If Christ knocks at the door a thousand times and the resident refuses to answer, could not this be an instance of arrogance, of pride, of hubris? Christ did not give the Jews just one opportunity; he preached for three and a half years, that is more than a thousand days; they had more than a thousand opportunities of responding to him, more than a thousand chances of opening the door and of allowing him to come into their lives, to fulfill the purpose of their nation. If something sinister happened to them afterwards, whose fault was it? Did they not have opportunities? Were they arrogant and obstinate? *Hubris ante nemesis*. Pride goes before destruction. (Proverbs 16:18)

In the year 70, the sinister part of the prophecy of Matthew 8, the children of the kingdom being cast into outer darkness, was fulfilled. The Romans came and annihilated Jerusalem; many of the Jews died in the famine and the siege, many were killed by the Romans, and those who were left were scattered among the nations, according to the prophecy of Deuteronomy. "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other." (Deut. 28:64) They had no right to complain of what happened. They could not complain that they had not had an opportunity of being saved; they had thousands of opportunities.

At the time of Moses the nation Israel made a covenant, that is, a contract, with the Lord. They were allowed to take possession of the land promised to their ancestors, and to live upon it and receive many material and spiritual benefits, on the condition that they kept the covenant and obeyed the Lord. Since they did not fulfill the terms of the contract, they were cast out of the land for 70 years, at the time of the Babylonian captivity.

The Lord revealed to the prophet Jeremiah that he would make a new covenant with the nation Israel; but even at the time of Christ, when the new covenant was accomplished, at the last supper, when Christ said: "This cup is the new covenant in my

blood," even after Christ had established his church and worked so many miracles, and afterwards, the apostles worked many miracles in the sight of the Jews, after all this, the majority of the nation was obstinate: they lost their privileges and were taken into captivity by the Romans. No one can blame the Romans or anyone else for what happened. They were the ones who made their decisions. They were more privileged than other nations, being, at that time, the only nation chosen by God. They could not allege ignorance as an excuse. They knew much more than the Gentile nations. They knew the prophecies. History was repeating itself. *Hubris ante nemesis*.

The prophecy of Ezekiel was fulfilled on Easter Sunday, on Pentecost Sunday, and during the course of centuries, it has been fulfilled by the preaching of missionaries and apostles who have preached the gospel to many nations, beginning in Europe and eventually going throughout the entire world. Christ's apostles and missionaries are his ambassadors, and they help him to gather into the fold of the church the sheep that were scattered because of the sin of Adam. All humanity was lost and was dead in sins and trespasses. (Ephesians 2:1) The result of preaching is conversion, and the result of conversion is salvation. Every time that a soul dies in grace and is saved, (gathered into the eternal sheepfold of heaven), the prophecy of Ezekiel is fulfilled.

Christ said that his church was like a city set on a hill that could not be hid. In the scriptures it is written that the gates of the city are open, and that they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. (Apoc. 21:25; Is. 60:3, 66:12). The gates are open. Who can enter? Anyone who wants to. Many have had the opportunity of entering into the church and of those who enter, many are saved. The church is like a sheepfold: if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall find pasture. (Jn. 10:9) Both Jews and Gentiles are in it: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." (Jn. 10:16). These verses have been fulfilled in the preaching of St. Patrick, who converted so many Gentiles, and whenever

preachers and missionaries bring souls into the fold of the good Shepherd.

The prophecy of Ezekiel harmonizes with other passages of Messianic promises:

And he shall set up a standard unto the nations, and shall assemble the fugitives of Israel, and shall gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.
--Isaiah 11:12

In Ephesians it is written: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. --Eph. 1:10

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather together the lambs with his arm, and shall take them up in his bosom, and he himself shall carry them that are with young.
--Isaiah 40:11

For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. --Isaiah 54:7

The Lord God, who gathereth the scattered of Israel, saith: I will still gather unto him his congregation. --Isaiah 56:8

Save us, O Lord, our God: and gather us from among the nations: That we may give thanks to thy holy name, and may glory in thy praise.

Psalm 105:47

The Lord gathers the outcasts of Israel.

He heals the broken in heart.

Psalm 147:2-3

And I will gather together the remnant of my flock, out of all the lands into which I have cast them out: and I will make them return to their own fields, and they shall increase and be multiplied. --Jeremiah 23:3

Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the islands that are afar off, and say: He that scattered Israel will gather him: and he will keep him as the shepherd doth his flock.
--Jeremiah 31:10

Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have

compassion on thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If you are driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee. Deuteronomy 30:3

They (angels) shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. --Matthew 24:31

Gather together all the tribes of Jacob: that they may know that there no God besides thee, and may declare thy great works: and thou shalt inherit them as from the beginning. --Ecclesiasticus 36:13

Even those who do not have the vocation of being a missionary, can still help Christ to gather into his fold the souls that have been lost and scattered. Any man or woman of good will can help him, by praying for the fulfillment of these magnificent scriptural promises, of souls being gathered, and kept safe from fear and their souls persevering in grace and being saved. By offering one's prayers, daily actions and sufferings in union with Christ, any man, woman or child can help in this apostolic enterprise.

Please pray and do what you can, in order to help Christ to save the souls of whom he spoke, the other sheep that are not yet in his fold, so that he may bring them in, so that they may be gathered into his fold and saved for all eternity.

Save us, O Lord, our God: and gather us from among the nations: that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and may glory in thy praise. Amen.



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