

Tales & Stories



Francisco C. Xavier
Irmão X

Offering

My friend:

Like old pilgrims journeying without rest, I seek your ears through the heart's door.

Sit here for a moment.

We are only a few around the sappy tree of perfect friendship.

Many have passed by tracing your path...

Many others have visited you, compelling you to bend your knees before Heaven...

I'm not imposing a set of outward attitudes on you.

I offer you the light of experience.

I'm not giving you rules for contemplating the stars.

I ask you to see the divine presence of Divine Goodness High Above.

I bring you only the simple and humble stories of other travelers.

Receive them; they are ours.

They hold the smiles of those who teach in the temple of love and the tears of the ones who learn in the school of suffering.

They resemble poor flowers interwoven with joy and cry, pain and blessing, which I place in your soul for the world's journey.

Receive them with tolerance and benevolence!

They will all tell you that beyond death, life flourishes, just as the splendor of the sun resurfaces from the night, and if there

is flagellation and despair in the face of men's misfortune, hope and joy shine forth, always pure and renewed, before the glory of God.

Irmão X

Pedro Leopoldo, October 30, 1957

The Saint's Cover

A certain disciple, extremely dedicated to the Infinite Good, after a long time at the side of the Divine Master, received the task of serving Him among the men of Earth.

He descended from the Superior Sphere and was born among creatures to be a carpenter.

A worthy and loyal worker, he often experienced bitter conflicts, but fervently, clung to the protection of the saints and completed his first mission admirably. He returned to heaven joyfully and received the duties of a sailor.

He came back to the flesh and worked diligently on countless journeys, spreading benefits in the name of the Lord.

There were times when the storm faced him threateningly, but the apprentice, in the struggles of the sea, turned to the Blessed Heroes and gathered strength to overcome.

He finished his service commendably and came again to the Celestial House, descending to the world to be a copyist.

Then, he patiently did his task, reminding the luminous teachings of the wise. When affliction or enigma visited his soul, he remembered the Consecrated Benefactors and never remained without the expected relief.

He came once more to the Abode of the High, always praised for his impeccable conduct, and went down to the circles of common struggle to become a farmer.

He served with inexpressible selflessness the land in which he was reborn, and if pain sought his heart or his home, he

implored the good offices of the Sinners' Advocates and was never left helpless.

After a precious rest, he reemerged in the human field to practice the sciences and arts. He was a student of philosophy and encountered numerous temptations against the spontaneous faith that sustained his simple and studious soul.

Though, in all the obstacles along the way, he implored the cooperation of the Great Instructors of Perfection, who had conquered the laurels of sanctity in the most diverse nations and had passed through the harsh trials unscathed.

Soon after, he became a doctor and was surprised by sufferings he had never imagined. He suffered thousands of times before the hardships of many lamentable destinies; he took refuge in patience and asked for help from the Protectors of Humanity, and with their patronage, he won once again.

He acquired such devotion that he no longer knew how to work without immediate recourse to the help of the Glorified Spirits in his sublimation.

For him, such benefactors would be champions of grace, privileged of the Supreme Father, or favored subjects of the Eternal Throne. And so, he continued to work, clinging to their collaboration.

He was a tailor, sculptor, poet, musician, writer, teacher, administrator, driver, legislator, and retired from the Earth with distinction.

Victorious in so many tasks, he was called by the Master, who spoke to him concisely:

- You have succeeded in all the tasks I have entrusted you with,

and now you can choose your own task.

The disciple, intoxicated with happiness, considered without hesitation:

- Lord, I have received so many graces from the Divine Benefactors that from now on, I would like to be one of them, with humanity...

- Would you like to be a saint? - Asked the Heavenly Instructor, smiling.

- Yes. - Confirmed the ecstatic apprentice.

The Master, in a grave tone, considered:

- The fruit that feeds must be sufficiently ripe...

Until today, as a worker, an artist, an administrator, and a guide, you have been in My service, with men, with Me. There is a great difference...

But the interlocutor insisted humbly, and the master did not deny him the concession.

He was thus reincarnated with great hope, and when he was years old, he received from Above the shining mantle of sanctity.

Sublime gifts manifested through him.

He could divine, heal, enlighten, console.

His intelligence, intuition, and tenderness were different and fascinating.

And the people, recognizing his condition, sought his blessings and guidance in large numbers.

Good and bad, just and unjust, ignorant and educated, young

and old, demanded from him without regard for his natural needs, the health, time, peace, and life. As a saint, he could not retreat from the fight nor despair, and no matter how much he was surrounded by delicacies and flowers, by devotees and recognized beneficiaries, he could not eat, sleep, think, or wash himself. He had to give, without complaint, his own strength, like a candle, keeping the flame burning at both ends.

No excuses, tears, tiredness, or service done could help. People always demanded it. After two years of bitter spiritual battle, tormented and displeased, he searched the Lord in prayer and claimed that the saint's cloak was too thorny and heavy.

Noticing his sincere crying, the Master listened to him, compassionate, and explained:

- You forgot that until now, you acted in command. As a carpenter, you shaped the wood; as a farmer, you cultivated the soil; as a doctor, you gave orders to the sick; as a philosopher, you gathered ideas; as a musician, you played the instrument; as a sculptor, you chiseled the stone; as a writer, you ruled over the letters; as a teacher, you instructed those less wise than yourself; as an administrator and legislator, you interfered in the destinies of others. I have always lent you authority and resources for the work of determination... To wear the mantle of a saint, however, it is necessary to learn to serve...

In order to achieve this glorious aim, you will be, from now on, shaped, polished, improved and educated by life. And while the Master smiled complacently and kindly, the disciple, in tears, but comforted, awaited new ordinations to enter the precious course of obedience.

The Heavenly Gates

The group of spirits wandered in the lower realms. Among them were Christians from different backgrounds who were surprised by the apparent indifference of Heaven.

They wondered why the Angels, Thrones, Archangels, and Genii of Heaven did not rush to welcome them.

Everywhere they looked, there was thick fog and an indefinable twilight. They couldn't find the peace and reward they were seeking.

They endured long days of affliction and anguished journeys.

After their surprise came rebelliousness, followed by complaints. Then, they experienced constructive suffering, which led to prayer, and eventually, they received an answer.

An enlightened messenger, dressed in radiant clothing, appeared on a high summit, defying the shadows of the plain.

The pilgrims prostrate themselves in haste. Could it be Jesus Himself? Wasn't He? Faced with the disturbance that had overtaken them, the emissary took the floor and clarified, fraternally:

- Peace in the name of the Lord, to whom you addressed your appeal. Your pleas have been heard. What do you wish?

- Heavenly angel - said one of them - don't you see?

We who were fervent believers in the world are broken, exhausted and defeated. Where is the Redeemer who won't save us, the Prince of Light who leaves us in total darkness?

What do we want? Nothing more than the struggle's prize...

He couldn't go on. Tears welled up in his eyes, choking his throat and infecting his companions, who broke down in pained weeping.

Christ's representative, however, remained calm and considered:

- Divine Justice has never failed in the Universe.

- Ah! But we suffer - replied the relieved interlocutor - and we are surely victims of some forgetfulness that we hope will be repaired.

Jesus' minister was unimpressed and said again:

- Let's see. Answer me in good conscience:

When you were incarnate, did you love God above all things, with all your soul and understanding?

If they were all brought before a human authority, they would probably attempt to avoid telling the truth.

The emissary's divine light, however, penetrated the very core of their being. After a moment of heavy expectation, they all said at once:

- No.

- Did you consider your neighbor's interests as if they belonged to you? Another moment of intimate struggle and another sincere answer:

- No.

- Have you denied your egoistic personality, borne your cross, and followed the Master?

- No.

- Have you put Divine Will above your desires?

- No.

- Have you made the light that Heaven has given you shine on Earth?

- No.

- Did you help your enemies, pray for those who persecuted you, minister good to those who slandered and tore you apart?

- No.

- Have you forgiven seventy times seven times?

- No.

- Were you faithful to the Father, until the end?

- No.

- Did you overcome the dragons of discord and vanity?

- No.

- Did you carry each other's burdens?

- No.

The messenger made a benevolent gesture with his hands and, showing a sweeter look, remarked after a long pause:

- If in ten of the Divine Master's lessons you haven't learned even one, by what right do you invoke His name? Do you believe that He has taught us something in vain?

The unfortunates began to cry harder, and one objected:

- What will become of us? Who will help us when we have a truthful belief?

- Yes. - Said the representative of Christ - I don't dispute that. However, how can we interpret the owner of a good book who has never examined its pages? How can we define the pupil who has wasted the school's possibilities and time without ever applying the lessons in practical terms?

- Oh, good angel, but we have already died on Earth! - Added the sad voice of the disenchanted brother, torn between affliction and bitterness. The messenger, however, finished serenely:

- Every day, millions of human souls leave the flesh and come again to it, learning about true life. Those who die in the coarse world solely lose their ephemeral form. What matters on the spiritual plane is not “stopping” or “starting again” the experience but lasting enlightenment for immortal life.

Do not waste time looking for new programs when you have not even begun to implement the old teachings.

No apprentice has the right to invoke the Master's presence again before attending lessons previously indicated. Go back and learn! There is no other way out of voluntary distraction.

At that very moment, the envoy returned to the plane from which he had come, as the pilgrims, instead of continuing their journey higher, obeyed the irresistible impulse that led them lower down.

In Practical Session

The situation in the doctrinal group presented significant abnormalities. People disagreed with each other and, forgetting respectable obligations, indulged in harsh criticism.

Hostilities were accentuated in the guise of discord, guided by misunderstanding.

No one remembered the humble and divine Servant who had washed the feet of His friends.

Every apprentice in the community claimed the position of command and the right to judge harshly.

To no avail, the spiritual mentors of the house invited them to ponder and understand each other.

The careless workers received their words without paying attention to the educational warnings.

Claudio and Elias, the two selfless invisible directors of the group, were not inclined to forceful exhortations.

Among disincarnates of noble birth, there is also courtesy, chivalry, and kindness; thus, they shouldn't treat their brothers and sisters as unconscious children.

One night, when the antagonistic vibrations became more intense, nullifying the best efforts in the field of uplifting spirituality, Elias made a hopeful suggestion:

- I think it would be very effective if some sufferers visited the nucleus of our incarnate friends. So, they could see the dark effects of vanity and indiscipline up close.

We will have a long-awaited practical session tomorrow, and I welcome the opportunity to have a class like this.

- An excellent measure! - exclaimed the friend, pleased - it would be unreasonable to directly remind our co-workers of their obligations when they study the Gospel every day.

After all, even though they are in the flesh, they have just as many duties towards Jesus as we do, and if they have already received countless messages about the need for order and fraternal cooperation, how can we insist on their service? The suggestion is, therefore, providential.

We will bring some unfortunate people who have strayed from the right path. By observing their sufferings, we might help them learn the lesson and come back to their rightful paths.

Indeed, on the following evening, two disturbed entities were brought to the session.

More than thirty people were listening to the painful conversation.

The indoctrinator Silvério Matoso strived patiently to calm the unfortunate, crying loudly through the mediumistic organizations: "Wretched me!" said one of them. "I'm a reprobate, cursed by everyone! Where's my balance? I've lost everything. I don't have the resources to get around as I used to. I live in a storm with no calm."

As tears streamed down his cheeks, the other cried out:

- What will become of me, relegated to darkness? Where have the wretches who tied me to the post of martyrdom gone? Damn them!

Accustomed to indoctrination, Matoso said fraternally:

- My friends, abstain from despair and rebelliousness! Let's trust in Divine Power!

Inspired directly by Elias, the spiritual benefactor who was making an intense effort to the lesson of the hour, he continued energetically:

- You are now seeing the realities of the soul. You have now noticed that inner relaxation in the world causes great harm. Woe betides all those who know good and do not do it! Woe to the rebels, the hypocrites, and the indifferent, for the death of the body reveals the pure truth, and misguided souls find nothing but abysses and darkness, tears, and torment. Jesus, however, is the inexhaustible source of the renewing peace blessings. Be calm and hopeful!

- I am, however, an infamous person - Sobbed one of the communicating entities. - I've heard words of sanctifying faith and saving good, but I've never given in to anyone. I wanted to live with my weaknesses, feed them, and defend them with all my strength.

I never pondered about eternal realities. Within reach of my heart were all kinds of teachings and help. I was often invited to the Gospel of Christ; however, I scoffed at every opportunity for spiritual renewal.

I considered my best friends in the religion chapter as selfish and liars as myself. Now... how many tears must I cry, as I despised divine peace and preferred the vibrations of hell?

- And what about me? - Exclaimed the angriest of them all.

- Can there be any darkness denser than mine?

Is there any greater pain than this that devastates me? I feel unbalanced, without direction... A castaway lost in the abyss is happier than me... Pictures of horror surround me... I experience fire and ice at the same time... Can you possibly understand me, the one who has penetrated the deep valley of misfortune?

Matoso, however, spiritually guided by Elias, interfered:

- My brothers and sisters, forget the shackles of material life and connect with the Lord through your hearts. You must root out the deceptions you have acquired on Earth!

Life is not just about physical impressions.

It is the vibration of eternity, of divine eternity!

Calm your unbalanced feelings in order to receive the gift of higher knowledge. Forget evil; return to the straight path!

You are now crossing the dark zone of errors' consequences. You must renew your strength in order to rekindle the lamp of faith.

Thus, Matoso slowly convinced the poor, disillusioned, and desperate souls.

He stressed the need for discipline, giving up selfishness and vanity, and giving up bad habits and vulgar vices.

At the end of the long lecture, both communicators were different.

They said goodbye, full of courage, hope, and good cheer.

The assembly of incarnate listeners remained under a strong impression, and among the invisible ones, Elias and Claudio anxiously awaited the harvest of teachings.

Had they understood that the lessons were meant for themselves? That they were still in the flesh, with sublime opportunities in hand?

Would they treasure the experiences they had heard? Would they ponder the struggles that await the quarrelsome and reckless beyond the grave?

Would they change their guidelines?

Both guides, benevolent and wise, were waiting for their friends to respond, to identify the advantage that they could have taken, when Mrs. Costa broke the silence, murmuring:

- Did you see how harsh and uncompromising they were?

- Yes... yes... - Commented old Silva Torres - They play numerous tricks in this world to cry in the other...

- And we, the mediums - added Mrs. Segismunda Fernandes - must put up with such Spirits as if we were punching boxes.

- These unfortunates were not identified. - Observed Alberto Lima, one of the most enthusiastic companions of the group - And it was a pity. They seemed very learned and, above all, versed in religious matters.

- However, - said another confrere - if it hadn't been for Matoso's convincing words, we would have suffered a disaster. I have the idea that we are dealing with entities that are not only suffering but equally perverse.

And the doctinaire of the house, who had received Elias' brilliant inspiration, shared the conversation, saying happily:

- In short, I'm satisfied. I am sure these unfortunates are part of the disturbing phalanx that haunts my home.

Elias and Claudio, invisible to the common eye, looked at each other with unspeakable disappointment.

The incarnate companions were ready to make lively and scintillating comments.

They described the communicants and complained about the sacrifices they were obliged to make for such visits.

However, none of them understood the legitimate lesson of the night, recognizing in it a warning from on High to readjust their itinerary while there was still time.

No one realized that by indoctrinating the Spirits, the indoctrination was also addressed to them.

Seriously Ill

A mother's tormented soul carried to Heaven on the blandish wings of sleep, bumped into before the splendorous visions of Paradise.

A solicitous angel welcomed her at the portico.

- Friend angel - She said in a pleading voice - I am a mother on Earth and have two children. I pray for the generous and august blessings of God.

The messenger wrote down her petitions and, observing his fraternal care, the afflicted woman added anxiously:

- I have come here to ask, in particular, for one of them who has been seriously ill for a long time, between life and death. All my care and medical resources have been ineffective. I can no longer tolerate the painful tears that afflict my heart.

May the Almighty grant me the grace to see him restored in his health.

The emissary from the Higher Spheres thought for a moment and asked:

- Which of your two children is more united with God?

– My ill son – The newcomer replied – Because he meditates on the greatness of the Heavenly Father, day and night.

With His name, he submits himself to the bitter medicines, and it is by waiting on the Lord that he sees each dawn break. In the suffering that disintegrates his strength, he turns to Heaven with such faith that he feels, unmistakably, the connection with the Loving and Invisible Father.

– And the other one? – Asked the divine messenger.

– This one – explained the beggar, somewhat confused, which she couldn't hide – is a man happy in the world's affairs. Since he is favored by fortune, he seems to feel no need to seek help from Divine Providence...

– Which of them understands the sublime meaning of work? – Asked the emissary again.

- The sick person, thrown into immobility, retains a high understanding of the service spirit. He constantly refers to the goods of effort and edifies those who hear his words, touched by painful experiences.

- And the other?

Perhaps because of the kind of life he devotes himself to, he no longer sees the beauty of his work.

With many servants at his disposal, he rests on the work of others. He doesn't know the radiant invitation of the morning, for he gets out of bed too late in luxury hotels and remains a stranger to the blessings of the night, as his body, satiated at opprobrious and extravagant tables, doesn't allow him to feel the sanctifying suggestions of Nature.

- Which of them understands the need to fraternize with our brothers and sisters? - The messenger smiled kindly.

– The one who is suffering from a distressing illness receives friends of any social position with undisguised gratitude. He receives expressions of affection with tears of joy springing from his eyes. He is deeply moved even by the slightest acts of kindness and now exhibits an intense and genuine love for those who were once his enemies or persecutors.

– And the other?

- The favors of the world - the mother's word nobly commented - isolate his personality, at a distance from domestic jubilations, in restricted and fanciful circles, or in elegant regions where fortunes equal to his roll in. Harassed by the world, whose ideas change with the wind, he never finds the time to probe the affective feelings of the companions Heaven has sent him on the daily path.

The attentive angel reflected with great interest and asked again:

- For which of them do you ask God's blessing in particular?

- In favor of the poor child who is dying on the bed. - Said the tender mother.

The envoy of Providence looked at her with extreme kindness and concluded wisely:

- Come back to Earth and reconsider the attitudes of your affection! The sick body child is doing very well; he already understands the need for union with the Divine Father, and what distinguishes people from one another is the degree of their relationship with the Higher Life.

So, renew the vows of your ardent prayers, for the seriously ill is the other.

The Providential Accident

Martinho Sousa was an intelligent, highly cultured young man, yet excessively attached to fixed ideas.

Once he had established this or that point of view, he wouldn't give in to anyone in the opinion field.

He renewed his opinions only when forced to do so by facts, and even then, only when events hurt his eyes. He declared himself absolute in his interpretations and, rebelliously, brandished heavy arguments at those who did not adhere to his way of seeing things.

With such characteristics, he was caught in the subtle plot of a terrible obsession.

The depressing influence of the unfortunate entities enveloped his mental field in a network of disturbing vibrations. And the psychic imbalance progressed singularly, taking over his nervous system.

The unfortunate friend had quit his daily job and isolated himself at home, where he thoroughly analyzed his situation, causing concern for his wife and their young children.

Martinho carried on strange conversations, gesticulated wildly, squinted his eyes as if staring at horrendous landscapes, overwhelmed by incoercible dread.

He couldn't identify the shadows that surrounded him, menacing and unrelenting in their implacable pursuit; however, he signaled their presence and captured their sinister thoughts in cruel suggestions.

Suffering from constant insomnia, he would only rest for a few minutes in the early morning to rest his body, spending his time moving through the rooms, the garden, and the yard, always wandering, obsessed with invisible evildoers.

Every now and then, someone would comment on the situation, inviting him to study the supposed illness in the light of renewing Spiritism, but the stubborn sufferer held back on the scientific interpretations.

He was sure that it was a case of successive shocks to the nervous system, aggravated by significant avitaminosis.

In addition, he added, he suffered from an enormous deficiency in his pancreas. He wasn't getting enough nourishment and was exhausted by the imperfect assimilation.

His companions of daily struggle, interested in his well-being, could not stop him.

The obsessed man made extensive technical remarks and listed complicated diagnoses.

He attentively read the medical notes, referring to the symptoms that concerned him, and, to refute his friends, he exasperatedly and irritably brought texts and pictures of a scientific nature into the conversation to exalt his ailments.

His torment worsened day by day.

Thus, Martin had reached a dangerous mental position.

The adversaries of his peace almost totally deprived him of food and accentuated his worries in his sickly vigil.

He spent hours in strange contemplation of horrible landscapes on the dark screen of his tormented mind.

As his situation worsened, the spiritual benefactors, who were interested in him, multiplied resources of salvation, mobilizing new incarnate collaborators, indirectly, who began to visit the sick man as true emissaries of the indispensable solution.

They were bearers of consolation, medicine, enlightenment, and light; however, the sick man did not favor the help given.

It would have been enough to listen calmly to a few spiritualizing pages, and he would have found within himself the resource to react; however, he refused, impatient and less delicate.

- Psychic influences? - He exaltedly asked the visitors -

It is just craziness from you. I am a victim of general exhaustion due to a lack of adequate vitamin supply. I am devastated. My liver is apathetic, my kidneys are intoxicated, and my intestines are inert...

And stretching out his skinny arm towards a helpful elder who visited him frequently, he exclaimed stentorian:

- And you, Mr. Luís, still come to talk to me about otherworldly workings! Isn't it ironic?

The crowd fell silent, disappointed.

Luís Vilela, the old one mentioned by name by the sick man, translating the thoughts of unseen mentors, replied without irritation:

- You should calm down enough to examine your own needs. How can you judge so rigorously edifying and healing principles that you know absolutely nothing about? We mustn't condemn without a firm basis.

You don't know how many disturbances a man can go through under occult persecution. I know that your current state prevents you from reading meditatively; however, I offer to read for your ears and provide any necessary clarifications. I believe you will learn in this way to consolidate your own energies and reflect more clearly, repelling inferior suggestions, because, my friend, in any process of remedy, the health of the body, it is imperative to sanitize the mind.

The obsessed rebel, however, didn't listen.

He didn't even stop to even to register affective considerations. He nervously paced back and forth the other, wringing his hands or gesticulating without purpose, shouting blasphemies and complaints. There was no way to calm him down in bed.

Almost discouraged, the friends consulted each other.

And it wasn't just in the circle of incarnates that worries were rife.

The spiritual nurses shared their afflictions and fears. Martin didn't offer a suitable field for understanding, and the intangible tormentors were becoming stronger.

The dangerous impasse continued when, one night, one of the executioners suggested to the patient to climb the old mango tree in the backyard to breathe a purer atmosphere.

The patient was delighted with the idea, without realizing that his enemy was trying to plunge him to the ground in a spectacular fall.

He took the trick and liked it. He would wait for the early morning, when the little family would be resting in sleep.

He'd look for the thin air in the crown of the ancient tree and possibly obtain some new strength from the contact with the highest atmospheric currents.

Recognizing his firm disposition to carry out the project, some spiritual collaborators sought out the director of his activities to draw up rules for urgent help.

However, his boss was very calm:

- We can't violate Martin's individual preferences. If he esteems the guidance of those plotting his loss, how can we prevent him from suffering the just consequences?

Let's leave him to his painful ordeal. Perhaps it is the key to the solution we are looking for.

In fact, at dawn, the sick man suffered a disastrous fall from a great height after quickly climbing the old slippery and very high hose.

Screaming in pain, Martinho Sousa was rescued by his family and restless companions. Then, the doctor came and strapped him to the bed so that his broken legs could heal. While immobilized in a plaster cast, Martinho Sousa listened to comforting readings by Luís Vilela, participated in prayer services, and received healing passes, freeing himself from obsession.

When he could walk again a few weeks later, he felt rejuvenated.

His fall from the mango tree had been the miraculous cure.

The Greatest Gift

In the light-filled assembly of Jerusalem Temple, the descendants of the chosen people displayed generosity in front of the precious ark of public contributions.

Everyone brought some tribute of consideration to the Holy of Holies, each showing the liberality of faith.

Linen garments and valuable furs, golden ornaments, and undefinable aromas made delicious impressions on the senses.

The Pharisees, above all, showed great zeal in external worship, standing out for the beauty of their robes and rich gifts to the sanctuary.

When passing by the Edification, Jesus and some of his disciples followed the popular demonstrations with justified interest.

Among them, Judas, excited by the volume of the offerings, approached the open coffer, following the slightest movements of the donors, with greed blazing in his eyes.

At a certain point, he approached the Messiah and informed him:

- Master: Jeroboam, the carpet dealer, has given twenty pieces of gold!

— Blessed be Jeroboam — Jesus said calmly — because he managed to renounce considerable excess, perhaps avoiding heavy sorrows. Too much money, when not supported by service to others, is a dangerous tyrant of the soul.

The disciple returned to the observation post disappointed.

Though, after a few moments, he reappeared, announcing:

– Zechariah, the old perfumer, feeling ill, and at the end of his days, brought a hundred pieces!

- Blessed be Zechariah. - Said Christ in a meaningful tone. - It is better to entrust one's fortune to the movements of faith than to bequeath it to ambitious and ungrateful relatives...

Zechariah did himself an incalculable benefit.

On his own motion, Judas returned to the observation, to report back to the Galilean group:

- The widow of Cam, the horse merchant who recently died, has just handed over all the money she received from the Romans for the sale of a large number of animals.

And, lowering his voice, he cautiously completed the note:

- Rumor has it that some centurions were planning to steal the goods...

Jesus smiled and considered:

- Many resources piled up without profit provoke the suggestions of evil. Happy is this woman who knew how to protect herself against evildoers.

The curious apprentice came back to his position and spoke loquaciously:

- Master: Ephraim, the Levite from Caesarea, has handed over two hundred coins! Two hundred!

- Blessed be Ephraim. - Said the Divine Friend, without affectation. It is a great virtue to be able to give what is left over amid so many miserly people who rejoice at the table, forgetting the unfortunate people who don't have a crust of bread!

Just then, a pauper widow entered the Temple, judging by the simplicity she presented herself.

In the face of Judas' sarcastic smile, the Lord followed closely behind her, followed by the rest of His companions.

The humble woman prayed and presented two small coins to the religious pageantry of the famous shrine.

Many of the crowd laughed derisively, but Jesus hastened to clarify:

- In truth, this poor widow has given more than all the mighty gathered here, for she did not hesitate to entrust to the Temple what she had for her sustenance.

The charitable and beautiful remark froze the prevailing criticism.

Little by little, the enormous room returned to calm.

Noble and nameless Israelites noisily abandoned the home of faith. Jesus and the apostles were the last to leave.

As they were about to leave the huge empty room, a slave with an aged face and unsteady steps appeared on the threshold to attend to the cleaning.

She moved in quick minutes. Here, she collected crushed flowers, there, she absorbed with damp cloths the debris left by careless patients. She had a smile on her lips and patience in her eyes, polishing the floor in silence, so that the air may be purified in the sublime abode of the Law.

Peter, now alone with the Messiah, still impressed by the lessons he had received, dared to ask:

- Lord, was the poor widow the highest donor in the Temple?

- In fact - Jesus explained in a fraternal tone - the widow gave a great deal, as while the great lords here witnessed their vanity, intelligently getting rid of possessions that only hindered their future tranquility, she gave to the Almighty that which meant food for her own body...

After a slight pause, He pointed with his index finger to the anonymous servant who was in charge of the sacrificial cleaning and concluded:

- The greatest benefactor to God here, however, is not yet the humble widow who gave up her bread for a moment...

It is that woman bent over with work, frail and emaciated, who is providing the grandeur of the Temple with her sweat.

Surprise in Session

Aguinaldo Limeira's mania bordered on incomprehensible recklessness.

He valued the service of indoctrinating the disincarnate, was remarkably punctual at meetings, and contributed willingly to the assistance services; yet in his dealings with the unseen, he was not very cautious in the conversations.

He was particularly fond of practical sessions dedicated to suffering and ignorant entities.

However, he preferred to hold them with large audiences, with whom he took great pains to demonstrate his energetic and vehement words.

He wasn't satisfied with the astray, giving spiritual bread to those hungry for light and medicine to the sick soul.

Aguinaldo multiplied his questions and demands.

Undoubtedly, he was consoling and, as a sincere worker, spread many goods; however, he would engage in long conversations to establish the origin of the communicants.

Sometimes, the entities, due to incredible suffering, could not give detailed explanations, but the instructor complained, pleaded, and insisted.

The more the visiting Spirit was known, the more Limeira became overwhelmed with idle questions.

When he obtained some sad statements, he seemed to rejoice like the vicious hunter when catching his prey, and pretexting

identifying suffering souls, he tended, without realizing it, towards a lack of charity.

From time to time, the group's respectable spiritual advisor used the medium Silvaes and clarified directly:

- Aguinaldo, my friend, be careful when it is up to identifying the invisible. If the needy knock on the door, let's answer without too many questions.

What's the point of scrutinizing the situation of our poor, ignorant, and suffering brothers and sisters? On many occasions, as happens to seriously ill people on Earth, disincarnate people who are unbalanced don't have clear memories, which are disturbed by the worries that fill their minds. Give them the bread of Christ and let them pass.

Forcing them to give informative details about their landscape means intensifying their painful humiliation. It would be cruel to ask the dying for certain clarifications that those who assist them should be sure of.

Besides that, those who teach and indoctrinate always create different mental images in those who listen and learn, and it is essential not to forget that you have a large visible and invisible audience.

Sometimes, unreasonable questions are in line with scientific pretension in intellectual research, but here, my friend, we are in service of enlightenment of the spirit for the improvement of feelings.

Don't turn from a missionary of good into an accusatory lawyer. Ask the Divine Master to enlighten your understanding!

Limeira listened, but didn't ponder.

In the immediate session, he referred to the inquisitive work of the eminent scholars of scientific Spiritism, and, when some poor person in need manifested, he began the crucial questioning.

The situation of the group remained unchanged, when one night, in front of a huge audience, in the middle of the work, an entity appeared and seized the medium Silvaes, collapsing in convulsive tears.

- Tell me, my brother, - said Aguinaldo, restless, - tell me what you are suffering and what you want...

- What am I suffering; what do I want? - Moaned the unfortunate man bitterly - I cannot! I cannot!

I'm a miserable wretch turned into a monster!

- What do you mean, my friend? - Limeira asked, piqued by curiosity.

- Oh! - Sighed the tearful entity - How the results of hypocrisy hurt!

On Earth, I deceived people and mystified others, but now I feel like I'm facing my conscience. I cannot deceive myself!

- So, you were a hypocrite in the world? - Limeira asked, with a superior attitude - Certainly, you deceived people, masking your purposes and intentions, and very late on, you recognize that you committed a crime...

- It's true, it's true... - Cried the unfortunate man, sobbing.

The unfortunate communicant's tears were so moving that the whole audience wept under strong emotion.

However, as Limeira wished to give the picture maximum effect, he showed an enquiring and convincing attitude.

- Go on, my brother! - He continued with authority.

And instead of comforting him, in the name of Jesus, by lifting his fallen hope, the indoctrinator insisted:

- Clarify your case appropriately, my brother! Where did you come from? Can you identify yourself?

The unfortunate man tried in vain to answer. The tears choked his voice.

Seemingly insensitive, Limeira said:

- Look, my friend, the distressing state you are now for your habit of lying. The crime of hypocrisy determined your present tears. Death, which unveils the veils of illusion, has revealed your true conscience.

Now you know the suffering that awaits liars, pretenders, and all those who appear to be sincere but run away from it, hiding behind their backs, welcoming crime.

Tell me, my friend, in what area of life did you try to deceive the divine laws... What is your name?

What did you do on Earth? How did you deceive your neighbor? Did you have any religious beliefs?

At that moment, the entity managed to stop sobbing and spoke:

- Aguinaldo, don't torture me with so many questions!

Hearing the voice, tinged with a new characteristic, the indoctrinator shuddered, became livid, and asked, astonished:

- Who are you, my brother?

The unfortunate communicant, in a supreme gesture, replied in a pitiful tone:

- I am your father!

It was when Limeira let his forehead hang down and began to cry too.

The Disciple Up Close

Ephraim, the son of Atad, as soon as he heard that Jesus was surrounding Himself with a small college of direct apprentices to announce the Good News, hurried to get precise information.

One could find all sorts of comments about the Messiah everywhere.

The people felt oppressed. There was an intolerable environment of domination.

And Jesus healed, consoled, blessed...

He even turned water into wine at a wedding party...

Wasn't He the awaited prince with enough power to redeem the People of God?

Surely, at the end of His public ministry, He would share positions and prebends, advantages and spoils of high value.

Therefore, it was advisable to dispute His presence. He would be His close disciple.

With his head inflamed with dreams of earthly greatness, he sought out the Lord, who received him with kindness although tinged with an indefinable melancholy.

Christ had entered Jerusalem victorious, but felt imminent anguish.

Deep sadness overflowed from His eyes, foretelling the coming flogging and the cross.

Serene and gentle, He asked Ephraim to open his heart.

-Lord! - Said the boy, burning with idealism - Accept me as a disciple. I also want to follow You, but I want a place closer to Your compassionate breast!...

I've come to dispute Your affection and permanent companionship!

I want to belong to You, heart and soul.

Jesus smiled and spoke calmly:

- I have many followers from afar; will you aspire to the position of the disciple from nearby?

- Yes, Master! - Exclaimed the candidate, intoxicated with hope in human power. - What should I do to win such glory?

The Divine Friend, who was probing the recesses of his conscience, explained, slowly:

- The learner from afar can believe and disbelieve, approaching the truth and periodically forgetting it, but the disciple from close by will commit his life to the execution of the Divine Will, remaining day and night on the mountain of decision.

The follower from afar will probably entertain himself with many obstacles to steal his attention, but the close companion will live in supreme vigilance.

Those from afar feel free to seek honors and pleasures, mixing them with their vague hopes for the Kingdom of God, but those close by will suffer the anguish of sacrificial and unceasing service.

The one from afar has the resources to get angry and hurt; the one from near will arm himself through the years with unalterable patience to understand and help.

The one from afar will find it difficult to concentrate on prayer, experiencing sleep and fatigue; the one from near, however, will worry about the solution to their work and walk without tiring, in constant vigil.

Those from afar will breathe on flowery roads, taking their time on the journey as much as they wish; those close by, however, will often follow Me down thorny paths.

Those from afar will be in a hurry to possess; those close by, however, will find the pleasure of giving without reward.

Those far away will only find joy in material prosperity; those close by will discover the divine lesson of suffering.

The one from afar will suffer many grievances; the one close by will have the strength to forgive constantly and restart the effort to do good as many times as necessary.

Those from afar will not cooperate without honors; those close by will serve with humility, hidden and happy.

Those from afar will postpone their testimonies of faith and love before the Father; the others will be ready to accept martyrdom in obedience to the Heavenly Designs, at any moment.

After a long pause, He fixed His sweet eyes on Ephraim and asked:

- Will you still accept?

The candidate, somewhat confused, reflected, reflected, and exclaimed:

- Lord, Your teachings dazzle me!

I'm going to the House of God to thank the Holy of Holies, and I will be back in an hour to embrace You in Your sublime apostolate, under oath!...

Jesus accepted his effusive and noisy greeting and bade him farewell, smiling, but Ephraim, son of Atad, never appeared there again.

Health Problem

We were commenting on some problems related to human health when Olímpio Ericeira, a former doctor on Earth, said:

- The general field of life changes significantly when examined through our superior goals. From a spiritual point of view, all the classic concepts of medicine are renewed here due to the fundamental needs of the soul.

With very few exceptions, every illness reflects deficiencies of a profound nature. Strictly speaking, there is no pathology without psychic imbalance, just as no microbial flora without a suitable environment.

For this very reason, a large number of illnesses function as elements of reincarnated intelligence.

Of course, man cannot do without the fight against invading forces to preserve the precious organic vessel in which it lives. However, they shouldn't fight the dread of the convict but the worker's attention.

Accidental illness can be a helpful warning; long-lasting illnesses usually symbolize rescue work; migraines sometimes linger in the body in response to Divine Providence.

If I had the authority, I would ask all reincarnated brothers and sisters to accept the pathogenic manifestations with the highest serenity so that they produce all the goods they bear.

- Such an attitude, however, is very difficult! - Eduardo Lessa, another disincarnate doctor, remarked: People think they live in the philosophy of immediacy. They demand improvement and

healing at the same time, and it's a complicated task to attend to insatiable people.

- The opinion is fair - Said Olímpio, in a serious tone. - We are invariably faced with it, in all our work of assisting our companions of physical experience.

There are patients who have been in bed for many years who demand restoration in a few days; needy people who don't understand the moral impositions that shackle them to that transitory suffering and people who, intoxicated by the dark thoughts they cultivate, do not recognize the shadows of their own sick mind.

Reflecting to give us an example of what he was saying, he continued: - Just now, I witnessed a significant event. Through it, I observed once again that the rush to heal among those who move in the flesh can aggravate the real illnesses of the soul. Olímpio paused and continued:

- Mrs. Ramos is a creature of excellent qualities. Yet, in her maternal position, she has a passion for her children, which does not prevent her from being a creditor of numerous friendships on our plane due to her spontaneous kindness.

She is charitable without ostentation and humble without fanfare. No one leaves the presence of this noble woman without feeling better.

Helpful and fraternal, her pleas mobilize many of our friends, who are bound to her by the indestructible bonds of gratitude.

Not many months ago, I was invited to help treat Anacleto, the son of this valuable missionary of good. I made myself available for the requested help and looked into the case; soon I

recognized, together with other companions, that the insidious illness would have to be treated very slowly, given its moral origins.

Anacleto had easily remediable organic disorders; however, his real personality showed enormous imbalances. His addiction was pretty hard to heal.

The family doctor treated him well; however, the boy's wayward mind required harsh tests.

Mrs. Ramos lived in fear. She feared for her son's health and fervently hoped for his immediate restoration. However, if the earthly help was rushing resources to the end in view, here we were stressing the delay.

The boy should not recover easily. Such a concession would be dangerous. Anacleto needed to make the most of his illness, and he had to enlist the help of many incarnate friends to understand his obligations.

Reflections from his bed would be beneficial. His ailing liver, bruised stomach, and wounded legs would teach him valuable inner lessons without words.

Over time, they would provide him with patience, fraternity, gratitude, and, above all, some understanding of life.

Until he went for rigorous treatment, he was nothing more than a useless creature. He spent his youth in trouble and vice.

He didn't know how to thank, much less cooperate in extending the good. However, as a result of his relentless illness, he was beginning to be kind and recognizable.

He already knew how to deal with visitors, to endure a conversation in which his points of view were not respected, and had learned to smile at less sympathetic people.

Nevertheless, his mother, like most earthly mothers, did not look at the situation outside of unjustifiable worries. She was very comfortable with the tranquil faith of the rosy days but didn't understand trust in the dark days.

She begged for her son's health to be restored immediately and devoted herself passionately to this idea.

Here and then, we met in the spiritist group through the mediumship organization. She worriedly told us about her afflictions and fears.

- Keep calm, my sister. - We would say - Anacleto will be cured; at any time, it's better to pay attention to God's Will than to imprison ourselves in our own desires, which are almost always linked to disorientation and selfishness. Let's wait calmly.

Deep down, our friend wanted to uphold a high standard of faith, but she always ended up in harmful vacillations within her affective labyrinth. From our spiritual meeting, she discussed the subject with the doctor in her home, demanding more efficient remedies, safe improvements, and objective results.

Harassed by his mother's pleas, the incarnate doctor mentioned the opportunity of a water season. Anacleto would go to the healing springs and, sure enough, restore his poisoned liver. Mrs. Ramos asked us about the suggestion.

We knew that the measure, in terms of the physical field, would be excellent, and the boy would find relief quickly.

However, we were aware that his spiritual condition was still regrettable, and due to this very reason, the boy did not qualify to receive that blessing.

We saw not only the sick organism, but also the vital interests of eternal health. After examining all these factors, we decided otherwise. The poor mother received our negative opinion grumpily, and after a new agreement with the earthly doctor, she agreed that the rest of us, the spiritual helpers, had made a mistake, deciding that her son should leave for the waters without wasting any time, completely unconcerned about our fraternal remembrance.

In a few days, Anacleto found himself in an elegant station. At this point in the narrative, Olímpio paused for a long time, as if to exhume the strongest reminiscences, and concluded:

Indeed, within two weeks, the boy was almost radically cured. Mrs. Ramos was overjoyed. However, as soon as Anacleto got rid of his physical impediments, he no longer wanted to hear her edifying talks.

Not far from the bathhouse, there was a large gambling section, which immediately fascinated his sick mind. Unable to seek healthy entertainment, helpful to his ailing nervous system, he threw himself wildly onto the green cloth, overcome by a strange thirst.

Hiding from his mother's vigilance for eight successive nights, he gambled away enormous sums. When he lost the contents of his purse, he used two blank checks that his father had entrusted to his mother, duly signed, for occasional expenses on the healing excursion.

He made two large withdrawals but lost irretrievably. When he saw the final chip roll in, he left, hallucinating; blinded and crazy, he couldn't register the spiritual assistance and, alone in his bedroom, grated with hatred and shame, he committed suicide.

And that was the end of the experience. Mrs. Ramos left the house carrying his child sick, and returned home without him.

The Testimony

A holy man was resting by an old well in Caesarea when some young Gospel apprentices approached him, asking for clarification on the testimony to which all the teachers of Christian virtue refer in their spiritual preparation.

The elderly made a gesture of blessing and spoke without a preamble:

- A devoted Jew, converted to the Good News, took the word of the Lord to a rural community in ancient Phoenicia where he lived to lead the friendly hearts from darkness to light.

Enthusiastic, he left Jerusalem for the new homeland he had adopted, in a familiar environment, after receiving the Messiah's teachings through the apostles.

With his mind transformed and heart remade, he began to teach the new truths without losing the warmth of his faith before his former companions' cold indifference.

No one wanted to hear about forgiving or helping enemies, let alone using their resources for the cause of unity. Consequently, the poor indoctrinator was insulted and stoned in the town square.

After a long time of futile effort, he moved to a prosperous village on the banks of the Euphrates, where he had many friends, and he set off without hesitation.

He continued along the road, his thoughts turned to the sky, all blue and gold, thanking the Master for the blessing of the flowers and the breezes that sweetened his walk, when, at a

determinate point in a marshy area, he surprised a cunning crocodile that was sneaking up on him.

He understood the extent of the danger and tried to avoid it.

He retreated instinctively; however, two fearsome animals of the same species tried to attack him from behind. He knew there was a small hut nearby where he could take shelter, and he hurried to reach it. When he did it, he noticed, to his surprise, that the hut was set on fire by an anonymous criminal.

He looked for the bank of a large canal nearby, where a small bridge would provide him with passage to the other side of the region.

However, the rustic bridge got swept away by recent floods.

By this time, other crocodiles had joined the first three, and to protect himself, the traveler, terrified, headed towards an old cave not far away; however, when he approached it, he noticed that an enormous snake was occupying the bottom, showing him an aggressive head.

Stunned, he headed for two vigorous trees and tried to escape through one of them, but within a few seconds, the plant fell fragilely, returning him to the ground.

He climbed the second one and repeated the experiment. Invading worms had destroyed the roots.

The convert remembered a mound of stones and, concluding that he must have something to defend himself properly, ran to look for it; however, he only found signs of workers who had undoubtedly transported them to some nearby building.

Eagerly, he searched for some natural defense.

Nevertheless, copious rains had washed the ground, and he didn't see even the slightest speck of firewood.

Disconcerted, he climbed a small eminence with the intention of pouring himself into a valley, but as he reached the top, he saw the abyss and understood that it meant death.

Then, that man who had tortured himself so much looked up at the sky, knelt, and in the face of the beasts that were approaching, he confidently cried out:

- Master, may the Lord's designs be fulfilled in the slave!

At this point in the experience, the astonished disciple saw a faint mist, from which, in a minute, Jesus Himself emerged, radiant and beautiful, who said to him kindly:

- Don't be afraid! I am here. My grace is enough for you.

A strong gust of wind blew swiftly, and the ferocious saurians retreated in astonishment.

The narrator paused for a moment and concluded:

- All the Lord's followers will encounter adversaries on the path of purification...

The further they go along the path, the greater the number of testimonies and lessons, for difficulties, obstacles, persecutions, and misunderstandings are always symbolic beasts.

Some disciples encounter one crocodile a year, others meet a crocodile every month or week, and many are confronted by a pilgrimage of crocodiles every hour, depending on their progress experience...

At these precious and important moments, however, there is no point in resorting to the protection of external forces, as in the

divine school of ascension, each apprentice must find the help, the answer, or the solution within themselves.

Before the young people could ask the new questions, the elder stood up, leaned on his humble staff, said goodbye, and moved on...

II

The Intellectual Candidate

The story goes that Jesus, after fruitless disagreements with doctors of the law in Jerusalem regarding the services of the Good News, was approached by a candidate for the new Kingdom, characterized by profound intellectual capacity.

The Master received him cordially and, following the questions of the future apprentice, began to explain the enterprise's objectives.

The Gospel would be the light of the nations and consolidated at the cost of the renunciation and devotion of the disciples. It would teach men to repay evil with good, infinite forgiveness with infinite hope.

The Heavenly Fatherhood would shine for all. Jews and Gentiles would become brothers, children of the same Father.

The intelligent candidate, fixing his shrewd eyes on the Lord, asked:

-Which philosophical school will you follow?

-The school of heaven, the Divine Master responded, complacently.

And other improvised questions rained down.

-Who will preside over our organization?

-Our Heavenly Father.

-On what basis will you accept the political domination of the Romans?

-On the basis of mutual respect and assistance.

-How will we proceed if we face persecution by the Sanhedrin in our activities?

-We will excuse ignorance as many times as necessary.

-What rights will the followers of the New Revelation have?

-The right to serve without demands.

The young man opened his eyes wide and continued asking:

-What will the disciple's salary consist of?

-The joy of practicing kindness.

-Are we being organized into a large party?

-We will be everywhere, an assembly of workers attentive to the Divine Will.

-The program?

-It will remain in the new teachings of love, work, hope, harmony, and forgiveness.

-Where will the immediate voice of command come from?

-In the conscience.

-And the coffers that will sustain the movement?

-They will be located in our capacity to do good.

-Who will we count on immediately?

-Above all, on the Father and on the common path, on our strength.

-Who will hold the best position in the ministry?

-The one who serves the most.

-The candidate scratched his head, frankly disoriented, and continued, after the pause:

-What will be our fundamental objective?

-Jesus answered, without getting angry:

-The world regenerated, ennobled and happy.

-How much time will it take?

-The necessary time.

-How many reliable companions do we have to begin the work?

-Those who can understand us and want to help us.

-But will we not have the resources to force our followers to actively collaborate?

-There is no violence in the Divine Kingdom.

-How many philosophers, priests and politicians will accompany us?

-In our apostolate, the transitory condition is of no interest and quality remains above numbers.

-How many countries will the mission cover?

-All nations.

-Will there be a distinction between masters and slaves?

-All men are children of God.

-Where will the first buildings be built? Here in Jerusalem?

-In the hearts of the apprentices.

-Are the notebooks ready?

-Yes.

-What are they?

-Our lives...

The talented newcomer continued to ask questions, but Jesus remained silent, smiling and calm. After a long series of unanswered questions, the eager young man asked anxiously: "Lord, why don't You explain?"

Christ patted his restless shoulders and said: "Look for Me when you are ready to cooperate."

And, saying this, He left Jerusalem for Galilee, where He sought out the rustic and humble fishermen who, in fact, knew nothing about Greek culture or Roman Law, were nevertheless perfectly ready to work with joy and serve out of love, without asking questions.

Justice from Above

Four unmarried workers, almost all the same age, came to the court of Justice of the Above, after having lost their physical bodies in a dramatic accident.

On Earth, they were analyzed using the same standard:

Excellent young men, annihilated by death, with the same social and domestic honors.

In spiritual life, however, they were different from each other, requiring various studies and different assessments.

Each had a specific halo of radiation, and they were taken to the judge, who had been examining their case for a few days.

The magistrate invited them one by one to listen to his rulings in the name of Universal Law in front of a large assembly of people interested in the judgments.

At the first of them, surrounded by dark spots, as if enveloped in a gloomy atmosphere, the compassionate judge said kindly:

-Your notes reveal the heavy commitments you have made, using your work resources for unmentionable purposes. There are widows and orphans crying in the world, with bitter memories of your influence.

And when the questioner asked about the future that awaited him, the friendly referee remarked, without affectation:

- Return to the landscape where you lived and begin the endeavor for redemption again, readjusting the balance of those you harmed. You are naturally obliged to restore their peace and security.

The second one, who was moving under gray radiations, approached and heard the following considerations:

-The records reveal that you harmed the factory where you worked. You received a salary and benefits that do not correspond to your efforts.

And, noticing his mental questions, he added:

-Come back again to your old service center and help your companions and the machines you exploited. It is essential to pay off the debts of several thousand hours with them in assistance activities.

To the third who approached, who stood out from the others due to his appearance, the judge generously said:

-The information from your pilgrimage on the Earthly Planet shows that you demonstrated commendable correctness in your conduct.

You did not use your possibilities of service to harm your neighbor, did not betray your obligations, and only received what was truly due to you. Your conscience is up to date with the Law. You can choose your new type of experience, but still on Earth, where you need to continue on the path of your sublimation.

Then, the last one appeared. He was surrounded by beautiful splendor. Rays of sapphire clarity enveloped him, emitting happiness and light in all directions.

The judge bowed before him and said:

-My friend, the harvest of your sowing confers elevation on you. More noble services await you higher up.

The humble worker, as if wishing to conceal the light that crowned him, went away in tears of joy and gratitude, into the arms of old friends who surrounded him with joy, and because of the questions exploding from the spiteful companions, who claimed to know him as a simple working man, the judge clarified persuasively and kindly:

-The promoted brother is an anonymous hero of renunciation. He never caused any harm to anyone, always respected the workshop in which he was honored with his collaboration, and did not limit himself to being correct in his duties, through which he achieved what was necessary for life.

He sacrificed himself for the good of all. He knew how to be delicate in the hardest situations. He supported his friends with kindness and understanding, inspired confidence, distributed encouragement and enthusiasm, and always smiled and helped, especially when they were sick.

Hundreds of hearts followed him beyond death, offering him prayers, joy, and blessings.

Divine Law never makes mistakes.

And because the judgment was satisfactorily settled, the court of Justice of Above closed the session.

The Unprepared Lighthouse Keeper

The soldier Theophrastus, a man of excellent heart, had been appointed lighthouse keeper by Alcibiades in the Sicilian expedition to guide ships in a dangerous part of the sea.

There, sharp rocks waited mercilessly for unwary galleys. Even in stormy weather, when the gods' fury wasn't hissing over the Earth, overthrowing houses and trees, small and large boats were drawn to the destructive cliffs like sheep hastily led to the slaughterhouse.

How many travelers had already lost their lives and possessions in the treacherous passage? How many unwary fishermen no longer returned to the blessing of home? No one knew.

Wishing to preserve the fate of his commanders, however, the great general placed Theophrastus at the lighthouse that stood on the coast, with the mission of illuminating the high sea path in the night.

In order to guarantee his success, he sent emissaries with a vast supply of pure oil. The servant, honored with such a mandate, would remain in the ministry of light against the darkness, defending the salvation of all those who passed through the dark waters.

At first, Theophrastus carried out his task without difficulty. When dusk, he kept the light on, revealing the liberating route. However, when the neighbors learned that the soldier had a tender and kind heart, they often visited him.

They appreciated his warmth and gentleness, but they indeed looked for a supply of oil for their small needs.

The soldier was soon surrounded by engaging appeals.

Antiphon, the farmer, asked for half a barrel of fuel for the evenings on his farm.

Eunice, the seamstress, requested two full amphorae to finish some tunics in addition to the daylight hours.

Embolo, the shoemaker, claimed that his father was dying and begged for a few dishes of oil so that his father would not die in the dark. Chrysostomes, the ointment maker, asked for five jars to prepare medicines.

The merchant Cyrus begged for a higher quota to support some torches. All the neighbors made sympathetic and moving requests to satisfy their household needs.

Theophrastus was touched by their requests and distributed the precious fuel to fulfill their needs. He could not suffer the distressing situation, he said. The requisitions, in his opinion, were fair and timely. So it was, and after two weeks, the twelve-month reserve was exhausted.

The official could not easily communicate with the advanced command posts, and as soon as the solitary lighthouse was extinguished, for several consecutive nights, the cliffs shattered vessels of all types.

Prestigious contingents of troops lost their lives. Trusted fishermen never returned to their family nest. Various merchants, bearers of valuable solutions, and disturbing problems of human struggle descended distressed into the abyss of the sea.

Alcibiades, naturally indignant, relieved the servant of his high office, recommending that he be subject to the penalties of the law.

The Christian medium is always a lighthouse with oil reserves of divine possibilities for the benefit of all those who sail in the open ocean of earthly experience, indicating to them the rocks of darkness and revealing the path to salvation.

However, how many of them lose the opportunity for victorious service through undue imprisonment in particular cases that generally arise from the trifles of life?

The Christian's Surprise

The happy devotee experienced the sweet commotion of the celestial spectacle. More than the prospect of the divine plan, however, he saw, ecstatic, the Lord in front of him.

He wept with joy. Yes, it was the Master who stood there, flooding his spirit with joy and light.

He felt compensated for all the torments of human life.

He had forgotten thorns and stones, difficulties and pain.

Wasn't he now living the supreme moment of realization?

Hadn't he been waiting impatiently for that divine minute?

For many years, he had sighed to rest in bliss. He had retreated spiritually in himself awaiting that hour of immortality and beauty.

He had run away from men, renounced the simplest pleasures, kept himself away from the contradictions of earthly existence, and distanced himself from all his companions who remained attached to illusion or evil.

He was haunted by the social upheavals of his time, and fearing complicating himself in the realm of responsibility, he retreated to the mystical sanctuary of adoration and awaited the Lord who shone glorified before his eyes.

Jesus approached him and greeted him.

Such an expression of affection filled him with joy. He felt more powerful and happier than all the princes of the world put together!...

The Divine Master smiled and asked him:

- Tell me, dear disciple, where did you put the teachings that I gave you?

The believer put his right hand to his chest, overwhelmed with joy, and answered:

- In my heart.

- Where did you keep my continued blessings of peace and mercy?

- In my heart. -Replied the man who had been asked.

- And the lights I lit around your footsteps?

- I have them in my heart. - Repeated the devotee, filled with intense joy.

The Master was silent for a moment and asked again:

- And the gifts I gave you?

- They remain with me - said the apprentice - in the depths of my soul.

Christ was silent, and after a long pause, He asked again:

- Listen! Where have you stored the faith, the gifts, the opportunities for sanctification, the hopes, and the infinite goods given to you in My name?

Reaffirmed the disciple, respectful and humble:

- I have deposited them in my heart, Lord!

At that point, the moving conversation stopped.

Jesus fell silent, a veil of sublime melancholy shining from His face.

The devotee lost his initial expression of beatitude and, noticing that the Master remained silent, asked:

– Divine Benefactor, can I henceforth take refuge in the unalterable peace of Your grace? Since I have made the sacred deposit of Your blessings in my heart, will I enjoy eternal rest in Your garden of infinite love?

The Master shook His head sadly and replied:

- Not yet! Work is the only tool that can build the palace of legitimate rest. For now, you would be an admirable well, valuable for its content, but incommunicable and useless...

So come back to Earth! Live with the good and the bad, the just and the unjust, the ignorant and the wise, the rich and the poor, distributing the goods you collected!

Come back, my friend. Return to the world from which you came and pass on all the treasures you have kept in the sanctuary of your heart to the workshop of your hands!

At that moment, the dedicated man, in tears, noticed that the Lord was looking away from him with a painful gaze.

Before He did, however, he noticed that Christ, although completely bathed in intense light, bore the deep marks of the cross' nails in His beautiful and compassionate hands.

Obsession and Debt

When cases of obsession arose in the group Sinfrônio Lacerda was immediately sought out. He was, without a doubt, the ideal companion for the situation.

Endowed with high magnetic qualities, he instructed and guided like no one else. He was, in fact, a generous and well-intentioned friend. He did not hold back on fraternal collaboration with the sick, nor did he bow to individual preferences.

He was polite and punctual whenever invited to help.

Through his admirable insight and willingness to serve, he achieved excellent results.

For this reason, he specialized in assisting the obsessed, in which he obtained real prodigies to crown his dedication.

Sinfrônio, however, despite his integrity of character and active kindness in certain areas of service, did not conduct himself in the best way with the suffering or ignorant disincarnate.

He gave the sick or persecuted mediums the greatest affection but treated the unbalanced entities with extreme harshness.

Like a large number of indoctrinators, he saw the obsessed as innocent victims and the invisible deviants, the usual executioners. Thus, he treated the unhappy spirits mercilessly.

Jerome, one of his spiritual mentors, often made himself visible to him and recommended:

- My friend, don't stray from the necessary understanding.

Don't be biased when it comes to obsessions... The persecuted are not always blameless. Those who show their sick flesh can be great debtors. I don't want to inhibit your spirit of charity and service to others; however, we must not forget the obligation to share charity resources with victims and perpetrators in similar portions.

Sometimes, Sinfrônio, the unfortunate entity deserves more support than the suffering incarnate.

Open wounds and painful needs remain on both planes. Don't address the poor entities of the shadow with unreasonable demands. Be energetic, for every system of building or restoring requires robust attitudes; however, don't be cruel in your words.

Attend to the disturbed in the invisible sphere with determination and strength of mind, but don't exclude fraternity and understanding.

Lacerda, however, seemed unwilling to heed their advice.

He didn't know how to treat disturbed communicants except in a harsh tone, like someone who orders, without considering the rights of others.

He often spoke calmly and kindly before talking to unhappy brothers. However, as soon as he found himself in front of the misguided of the afterlife, he took a different stance. He would emit heavy and aggressive concepts with outright hostility.

His experience remained unchanged when he was surprised by a painful experience at home.

His daughter Angelina, a young girl of fifteen, showed grave psychic disturbances. Her illness was marked by successive and torturous fainting spells.

Amid domestic tranquility, she would suddenly fall very pale, panting, and lose consciousness of herself.

The affectionate father, terribly impressed by the situation, began treatment through healing passes with no positive results. The family was alarmed by the frequent attacks and various measures were taken.

Sinfrônio's wife asked to see a psychiatrist, and his companion, although convinced of the legitimacy of the obsession phenomenon, as he could see the presence of the persecutor with his own eyes, was compelled to go to the specialist, who diagnosed common epilepsy.

However, injections and pills didn't solve the problem.

The patient's prostration was increasing.

The father, despite knowing hundreds of cases of this nature, was stunned. A daughter's obsession baffled him. He had mobilized all the resources at his disposal, without any satisfactory result. He saw the disturbing entity that was undermining his domestic tranquility, noting the occasions when it subtly approached the young woman. He made various efforts, but was unable to dislodge the strange pursuer.

Sometimes, in private, when Angelina suddenly collapsed, the devoted father would resort to strong words. He would accuse the unfortunate man harshly and admonish him rigorously.

His daughter, however, seemed to get worse and worse as a result.

Tormented by the inefficiency of his method, Sinfrônio, hopeful, organized a program of weekly meetings in the family's environment to address the complex case.

The manifestations through the obsessed woman began imprecisely; however, the disturbing entity could not articulate a word. It incorporated itself into Angelina and prostrated her painfully, but both the communicant and the medium seemed to be spiritually infirm in a serious position.

Most of the time, Sinfrônio would go into the hospital due to extreme excitement.

– The day I can speak to this infamous obsessor, with the certainty of being heard – he commented irritably – I will banish him forever. I will use all my magnetic resources to chase him away as if he were a dog.

One night, after ten months of systematic meetings, the unfortunate man uttered his first anguished sentences.

Sinfrônio listened to his lamentations with a mixture of contradictory feelings, experiencing, above all, a certain satisfaction for reaching his prey in the verbal sphere.

– Wretched robber of darkness – exclaimed the indoctrinator after hearing her –, the time has come for your surrender! Get out of here! Listen to my orders!... Do not return to this house again! Never, never again!

– It is impossible – groaned the unfortunate man – Angelina and I have been linked for centuries.

Not only have we both suffered in this situation.

You too, Sinfrônio, were my wicked enemy.

Shackles of hatred bind me to your home long before this house had been built.

Sinfrônio Lacerda, neurasthenic, intercepted his confession and,

concentrating all his magnetic potential, shouted authoritatively:

– Not another word! We do not wish to hear you! Get away, cruel persecutor!... I order you! Get away, get away!...

As if the wretched entity had been squeezed by a pair of pincers of vast proportions, it suddenly tore itself away, and Angelina fell into a terrible state of immobility.

Her father tried hard to wake her but in vain.

Three, four, five hours ran in distress.

As the problem worsened, the doctor was called, who diagnosed her comatose state.

After fourteen hours of anguish, Sinfrônio Lacerda, crying for the first time, invited some brothers to pray for urgent help, breaking down in tears as he asked for help from spiritual benefactors.

After the plea, Jerônimo, the wise mentor who was closely following him, spoke, offering advice:

– My friend, all obsessions, as well as illnesses of any origin, can be treated, but not all can be cured, according to man's purposes. In the case of Angelina, we have had her deeply united with the obsessor for several centuries, almost as long as the two have been intimately associated with your Spirit.

You disturbed their home in the past, and now, in accordance with Divine Law, they seek you anxiously for balance on the straight path.

With your magnetic power, you violently isolated the persecutor, but you cannot sustain such a measure without grave

harm to yourself. You cannot uproot a three-hundred-year-old oak tree without some work, just as you cannot undo a thousand-year-old construction overnight without offending the general harmony.

If you do not seek the same entity to be with your daughter, using the same magnetic influence through which you removed her, Angelina will disincarnate in a few hours to be reunited with her companion.

-Yes, now I understand. - Sobbed the afflicted father.

And, overwhelmed, he asked:

- Jerônimo, my benefactor, how should I proceed then? Teach me the path of action for the love of God!

The venerable friend, with a calm tone of voice, responded movingly:

– You forgot, Sinfrônio, that there are indoctrinations by words and by example.

Bring the obsessor and welcome him into your domestic sanctuary affectionately, as if you were welcoming a son.

Heal his sorrows, guide him to the Lord.

Love him as much as you can, for only love can heal hatred.

And, noticing that Lacerda was crying resignedly, copying the attitude of the restless apprentice when he had difficulty in the lesson, Jerônimo concluded:

– Do not feel humiliated, my son! You now have much knowledge and possibilities, but you also have many debts. And those who owe, Sinfrônio, need to get rid of their debts to continue, in peace, on the glorious and divine journey to God.

In the Fraternal Mail

My friend, you say in the precious vernacular that belief in disincarnate spirits is a characteristic of intellectual poverty.

In your conceptualization as a rhetorical prospector, the problems of contemporary Spiritualism can be summed up as exploitation of the lowest order, fed by a bunch of idiots, in whom suffering or ignorance has galvanized the unconscious faith complex.

With the highly unceremonious attitude in the world, you assert that the conviction of today's Spiritists is a mental plague, which arose with Allan Kardec in the last century, and you emphasize that the aristocratic thought of antiquity never considered such an idealistic movement.

Your novitiate on the subject is too clear for us to undertake a detailed scarification of the past.

However, if you can listen to us for a few moments, don't make us look ridiculous if we the idea of immortality was born with reason itself in the human brain.

I don't know if you've read the history of Egypt. Even without the expertise of a Champollion, it is clear that thousands of years ago, the pharaonic nobility accepted the belief in an afterlife. The deceased would be judged by a court led by Osiris, who represented the highest standard of justice.

Many centuries ago, the great Hindu conductors divided Heaven into several floors and Hell into various departments, according to the Laws of Manu.

The Chinese, no less attentive to the supreme question, declared that the dead were received, beyond the grave, in the pleasant or tormented places they had deserved.

The Romans lived around oracles and sorcerers, consulting the voices of those who had crossed the dark river of death.

Suetonius tells us that the assassination of Julius Caesar was revealed in dreams.

Nero, Caligula and Commodus were famously obsessed, haunted by ghosts.

Marcus Aurelius felt inspired by higher entities, leaving his reflections to posterity.

In Greece, the geniuses of Philosophy and Science asked questions to the dead in the sanctuary.

According to Thales, the world is inhabited by angels and demons.

Socrates was closely accompanied by a spirit guide, who gave him significant advice on his mission.

In Persia, Zoroastrianism ignited the belief in the law of retribution after the grave, under the guidance of Ormuzd, and Ahriman, the givers of good and evil.

In all circles of ancient and modern culture, we feel the marked groove of spirituality in earthly evolution.

Above all references, however, we invoke the Gospel, on whose sublime authority you base yourself to belittle the truth.

The New Testament is a source of divine Spiritism.

The birth of Jesus is announced through mediumistic means not only to the purity of Mary, but to the concern of Joseph and the hope of Elizabeth, Anna, and Simeon.

In every angle of the Master's passage, there are phenomena of matter transubstantiation, clairaudience, clairvoyance, materialization, healing, incorporation, levitation, and spiritual glory.

In Cana, water turned into wine; near the Jordan River, voices directly from Heaven were heard; on Tabor, sublimated Spirits were embodied; in various places, entities of darkness took possession of unfortunate mediums, coming into contact with the Lord; on the lake, Christ walked on the liquid mass and, after Calvary, the Heavenly Friend appeared before His companions, overcome with amazement, demonstrating individual resurrection, beyond death...

All this is historical reality, irrefutable, but you claim that it is necessary to have complications in the head and sores on the skin to believe in Spirits.

I, a "dead man" for sixteen years, will not be the one who will have the courage to contradict you.

Naturally, if this fraternal mail reaches your hands, a rosy smile will appear triumphantly on your happy cheeks, but do not glory excessively in maturity adorned with health and money, for although I wish you an existence in the body of flesh as long as that of Methuselah, it is likely that you will come here, in a few days, rehearsing the yellow smile of disenchantment.

New Year

When the devoted guide arrived on the Planet, guiding the apprentice to a new experience, the home was celebrating the New Year.

Joyful music rocked the house, and festive flowers decorated the lavish table. The young and the children laughed while the elderly drank wines of joy.

The devoted friend embraced his ward and said:

- A new existence, my son, is like a New Year. The heart is rich in the most beautiful hopes. The past is exchanged for the present. The soul rejoices in the blessed opportunity.

Divine promises blossom in the heart.

Time is the infinite treasure that the Creator grants to creatures.

Do not forget, however, that granting a treasure is a title of trust, and all trust translates into responsibility. The miser who restricts the circulation of valuables does as much harm to God's work as the spendthrift who dissipates them, forgetting sacred obligations.

Thus, time is both a loving benefactor and an impartial creditor.

On Earth, the majority of men have not yet come to understand this.

The ignorant lose it.

The foolish kill it.

The wicked poison it.

The indifferent mock it.

The vain confuse it.

Scoundrels deceive it.

Criminals disturb it.

Revelers laugh at it.

Liars ridicule it.

Fools forget it.

The idle fight it.

Tyrants abuse it.

The ironic despise it.

The arbitrary dominate it.

The rebellious accuse it.

The faithful workers take advantage of it.

Time, however, my son, belongs to the Lord and no one can subvert the order of God.

That is why, at the end of life, each person receives according to what he has used from the divine heritage.

Therefore, take advantage of this new opportunity without forgetting your duty, convinced that no one will speak or act in the world in vain.

Man rushes. Time waits.

The first experiments. The second determines.

If you achieve the joy of starting over, you will also reach the day of getting it right.

Remember that time will teach the ignorant.

It will nullify the mad.

It will poison the wicked.

It will mock the indifferent.

It will confuse the vain.

It will enlighten the scoundrels.

It will disturb the criminals.

It will surprise the revelers.

It will ridicule the liars.

It will correct the fools.

It will fight the idle.

It will wound the tyrants.

It will despise the ironic.

It will arrest the arbitrary.

It will prosecute the rebellious.

It will compensate the faithful workers.

The venerable elder was silent.

There was laughter at the domestic table, expectation in the candidate for reincarnation, and paternal smiles on the experienced old man.

The wise man hugged his disciple again and said goodbye:

- Don't forget that time is generous in its concessions and fair in its accounts. Go, but, my son, and do not fear.

“Me” Against “Me”

When the young man wanted to commit his first folly, Good Sense approached him and observed:

-Stop yourself! Why do you entrust yourself to evil like that?

But he answered proudly:

-I want to.

Later, when he became a spendthrift and adopted extravagance and madness as his way of life, Reflection appeared and advised him:

-Stop! Why do you devote yourself like that to inconsequential spending?

He clarified boastfully:

-I can.

Later, mobilizing others in the service of his foolishness, he received a visit from Humility, who piously begged him:

-Ponder! Why don't you take pity on the weakest and most ignorant?

The unfortunate man, however, retorted, angrily:

-I command.

Absorbing immense resources, uselessly, when he could have benefited the community, Love approached him and asked:

- Change yourself! Be charitable! How can you hold back the river of opportunities without helping others in need?

And the poor man said:

-I order.

Practicing reprehensible acts, which led him to the pillory of public disapproval, Justice approached him and recommended:

-Don't go on! Doesn't it hurt to wound so many people?

The unfortunate man, however, emphasized implacably:

-I demand it.

And so man lived on, believing himself to be the center of the Universe, complaining, oppressing, and dominating, without listening to the suggestions of the virtues that illuminate the Earth, until, one day, Death sought him out and forced him to give up his physical body.

The unfortunate man understood the gravity of the event, prostrated himself before it, and considered:

-Death, why do you seek me?

-I want to. It said.

-Why are you forcing me to accept you? - He moaned sadly.

-I can. - Replied the visitor.

-How can you attack me like this?

-I'm in charge.

-What powers move you?

-I command.

-I will defend myself against you. - Cried the man in despair.

- I will duel you, and you will receive my curse!

But Death smiled imperturbably and said:

-I demand it.

And in the struggle of “me” against “me”, it led him to the house of Truth for further lessons.

The Form

João Mateus, a distinguished preacher of the Gospel in the Spiritist field, went to bed on the night he reached half a century of age in the physical body after praying tenderly with his friends.

He dreamed that he had reached the doors of the Spiritual Life, and, dazzled by the lightness he felt possessed, he tried to rise to enjoy better the exaltation of Paradise when an employee of the Celestial Passage approached him, helpfully reminding him: João, it would be advisable to read your form before you proceed to avoid any unpleasant surprises.

And the traveler received an exquisite document, on the face of which he read with astonishment:

- João Mateus.
- Rebirth on Earth in 1904.
- A gentle cradle.
- Loving parents and friends.
- Precious intelligence.
- A clear mind.
- Dignified education.
- Good books.
- A relaxed youth.
- Good health.
- An enviable sense of comfort.

- Peaceful sleep.
- Excellent appetite.
- Safe domestic shelter.
- Constant spiritual protection.
- Never suffered any major accidents.
- At the age of 20, he got a job in commerce.
- He got married at the age of 25, under a regime of enslavement of his wife.
- A Roman Catholic until the age of 26.
- He attended 672 masses without much attention.
- At the age of 27, he joined the ranks of the Spiritists.
- He attended 2,195 Spiritist sessions, under the invocation of Jesus.
- He gave 1,602 lectures and doctrinal sermons.
- He wrote moving letters and pages.
- A notable narrator.
- A cautious polemicist.
- Four children.
- Good food at home.
- Does not find time to help his children in the search for Christ.
- Has made 106 trips for rest and distraction.
- Great intolerance towards neighbors.
- Reluctant to change his habits to provide service to others.

- Never realizes if he offends others through his conduct but reveals an extreme susceptibility to the conduct of others.

- Relates only to friends of the same level.

He is horrified by the complications of social life, although he constantly emphasizes the imperative of brotherhood among men.

- He knows how to defend himself with care in any difficult problem.

- In addition to the natural resources that have given him a respectable position and significant domestic comfort, under the constant protection of Jesus, through multiple messengers, he maintains real estate worth \$600,000.00, and keeps \$ 302,000.00 in a private profit account.

- He gave 90 cents to Jesus, who sought him out in the person of beggars, the needy, and the sick, throughout his life.

- In order to cooperate in the apostolate of Christ, he has already donated \$12,00 in social assistance works.

-Debt.....

It was early morning...

In the evening, in a good mood, he met with his companions and told them what had happened.

He was upset, he said. The dream had changed his way of thinking. From then on, he would dedicate himself to more active work in the Spiritist movement. He intended to renew himself from within and now combine words and actions. To this end, he felt willing to contribute substantially to build a home to rehabilitate homeless children he long wanted to help.

The experience of that unforgettable night was surely a valuable warning. And, smiling, he said goodbye to his brothers in ideal, asking them to meet again the following day.

He hoped to lay the foundations for the work he intended to carry out.

However, the following night, when his friends knocked on his door, João Mateus, a victim of a coronary accident, was not alive anymore.

The Objective Remedy

Despite his devotion to evangelical principles, Isidoro Vianna, a collaborator in Christian charity services, was endlessly tortured by the blows of criticism.

During the group sessions, he constantly complained. As soon as Policarpo, the spiritual benefactor who ran the house, joined in, Isidoro would intervene, complaining:

- Brother Policarpo, I am exhausted! What do you advise me? Bad judgment suffocates me. If I fulfill my obligations, they call me a sycophant; if I stray from my duty for a few minutes, they call me lazy.

If I take the initiative to do good, they declare me hasty, and if I wait for someone's cooperation, they say I am slow.

What should I do? The disembodied mentor delicately sidestepped the problem and ended by stating:

-The Earthly plane, my friend, is still one of enormous contrasts. Light is fought by darkness, evil by good. The hostility that ignorance opens up to us favors the general work of enlightenment. Let us remain calm and continue in the service of Our Lord, who helped us until the cross.

The companion whined and, at the next meeting, asked again:

-Brother Policarpo, what can I do to promote harmony?

My goodwill is unsurpassable. However, how should I proceed before gratuitous adversaries?

The siege of these people is unbearable. I cannot walk in peace.

If I give in to kindness, opening my mind to the tenderness of friends, they say I am an exploiter of other people's trust. If I seek to isolate myself, mindful of the commitments I have made, they say that I am nothing more than a proud and bad brother.

The protector responded tolerantly:

- The task, my friend, is just like that. Those who know Jesus must forgive the frivolity of those who do not know Him yet.

Evangelizing souls demands patience and forgiveness, as well as self-sacrifice. If we are not willing to suffer in some way for the cause of victorious good, who will free us from evil?

Let us have enough courage and imitate the example of the Master's supreme renunciation.

Isidore groaned, agreeing reluctantly; however, the following week, he repeated:

-Brother Policarpo, what will become of me? The world's opinion is an insurmountable obstacle. I can't stand it any longer. Censorship punishes everything. If I contribute with material resources to works of fraternal compassion I'm singled out as vain with a mania for ostentation, and if I try to hold back, somehow people shout that I have a gangrenous heart.

The incomprehension is maddening. What should I do?

The generous friend replied serenely:

-Such conflicts are the injunctions of the sanctifying struggle. Those who talk a lot will later learn to keep quiet...

Don't get caught up in other people's disharmonies.

Connect with the good and follow suggestions.

As long as imperfection dominates souls, criticism will be a sharp stiletto summoning us to demonstrate the highest virtues. Place your mind and heart in the Lord's Will and walk forward. Parched or barren trees never receive stones; they have no fruit to tempt those who pass by. Let's move forward courageously in Christian work.

Isidore lamented, and the subject was transferred to the next meeting.

From week to week, the whiny apprentice kept asking questions until one night, perhaps irritated by the instructor's appeals to him for serenity, he exclaimed in despair:

- What I want, Brother Policarpo, is decisive guidance against undue attacks. What measures should we take to avoid being disturbed? How can we eliminate discouraging reproof? By what process can we free ourselves from it?

How can we avoid being mocked, distorted, and wicked?

The spiritual benefactor smiled magnanimously and added:

-Ah! I know... You are asking for an objective remedy...

-That's right! - Isidoro replied anxiously.

- Well - Concluded the spiritual friend, benevolently -, the only advisable measure is the paralysis of conscience.

Take half a kilo of anesthetics a day, rest your body in armchairs and beds, sleep for the rest of your existence, forget about all duties, avoid the aspiration to elevate yourself, resign yourself to your ignorance and cling to it, as much as an oyster clings to a rock, and, as soon as you make yourself completely useless, by doing nothing else, criticism will retreat. Try it, and you will

see.

Isidoro listened to the strange formula, wide-eyed, and from then on, he began to serve without asking.

The Providential Hunter

We were talking about suffering when the Hindu guide who accompanied us told us a childlike simplicity:

- The Angel of Liberation descended from Paradise to this world, landing on a green mound shortly distant from the sea.

A blackbird, a vulture, a turtle, and a butterfly approached him.

Recognizing that this was the assembly he could call upon for the revelation he was bringing, the enlightened pilgrim began to exhale the virtues of the Higher World, inviting them to the Higher Life.

With convincing sentences, he explained that the blackbird, hoisted to the heights of light, would transform into a white pigeon; that the vulture would be metamorphosed into a celestial bird; the turtle would receive a new form, soft and light, in which it would be possible to glide in the blue immensity, and the butterfly would become a luminescent star.

The listeners noted the promises with emotion; however, as soon as silence reigned again, the blackbird declared:

-Good angel, excuse me! A nest awaits me in the grove... My chicks would not understand my absence...

And it hurried away.

The vulture confessed in an enigmatic tone:

-Your description of the Divine Plan is moving; however, I have valuable interests in the world. I need to fly... And it took off, flapping its wings, to throw itself onto nearby carrion.

The turtle moved slowly and explained:

-I would like to follow you, leaving the prison under which I crawl on the ground, however, I have my eggs on the beach...

And it returned slowly to its home. The butterfly approached the preacher of bliss and said delicately:

-Saint, I cannot travel with you. I live in a flowering tree trunk, and my relatives would not excuse my escape. And it returned to the forest's breeze. The angel, who could not force them, walked alone, forward...

Nevertheless, the butterfly had only advanced a few meters, and on the way back home, it found itself confronted by a skillful hunter who coveted its shining wings.

After a long struggle, it tried to reach the tree where it lived, but, pursued, it witnessed the death of some of her family members who were resting there. In tears, it sought refuge in an old cave, but was easily dislodged by the implacable executioner. It tried, in vain, to hide among old boats forgotten on the sand...

All in vain, because the tenacious man was cunning and knew how to frustrate all its attempts at defense, setting traps for it that were increasingly disturbing.

When the poor victim felt weak, it remembered the Angel of Liberation and flew to meet him. The divine messenger received it happily and, offering it shelter in his arms, assured it salvation. The narrator paused briefly and considered: - Suffering is like a providential hunter in our experiences.

Without it, Humanity would not ascend to renewal and progress. Those who settle for the lower planes will hardly be able to glimpse the Higher Life without the help of pain. Let

us, therefore, learn to tolerate affliction and take advantage of it.

When someone finds himself in the condition of a distressed and maladjusted butterfly, he learns to receive help from Heaven on Earth.

The wise mentor became silent, and because no one commented on the beautiful apologue, we all began to reflect.

Field of Hatred

- No! I don't want you in my arms! - Said the young mother, to whom the Law of the Lord had conferred the sweet mission of motherhood, to the child blossoming in her womb - You will not take beauty from me! You mean work, renunciation, suffering...

- Mother, let me live! The little child begged her in the sanctuary of her conscience. We are together! Give me the blessing of the body! I must fight and regenerate. I'll drink the cup of sweat and tears with you, trying to redeem myself...

We will be complete. Give me support, and I'll give you joy. I will be the sapling of your love, just as much as you will be the tree of light for me, whose branches I will weave my nest of peace and hope...

- No, no...

- Don't abandon me!

- I'll drive you out.

- Have mercy, mother! Don't you see we come from afar, soul to soul, heart to heart?

- What does the past matter? I see in you only the intruder, whose presence I did not ask for.

- Do you forget, Mother, that God brings us together? Could you not close the doors to me?

- I am a woman, and I am free. I will suffocate you before the cradle...

- Pity me!...

- I can't. I am youth and pleasure; you are a disturbance and an obstacle.

- Help me!

- Helping you would be cutting into my flesh. I am fighting for my happiness and my feminine lightness...

- Mother, help me! I seek the service of my restoration.

Day after day, the same wordless dialogue...

Until when the child tried to come to light, the blind and unfortunate mother said to it, forcing it to drink the bile of frustration:

- Return to the shadow from where you came! Die! Die!

- Mother, mother!

Don't do it! Protect me! Let me live...

- Never!- Help me!- I can't.

Harshly repelled, the poor son fell into the darkness of revolt and, in the desperate desire to preserve his tender body, he clung to her heart, which went crazy, like a broken clock...

Then, instead of continuing in the grace of life, they both threw themselves into the precipice of death. Deprived of their carnal shell, they projected themselves into Space, shouting mutual accusations. However, they found themselves linked to each other by the magnetic chains of heavy commitments, dragging themselves along for a long time, hating and recriminating each other...

The sowing of cruelty attracted the harvest of hatred.

And the harvest of hatred imposed a disastrous imbalance on both of them.

Years and years unfolded, dark and disturbing, for both of them, until, one day, a charitable Spirit of a woman remembered them in prayers of affection and pity as if offering them her breast.

Both responded, hungry for consolation and renewal, accepting the generous shelter...

Wrapped in maternal caresses, they finally rested. A gentle sleep pacified their aching minds.

However, when they awoke again on Earth, they bore the stigma of the clamorous debt in which they had reunited, reappearing among men as two souls in love with the flesh, fighting for the same physical vessel, in the sad phenomenon of a single body, supporting two heads.

The Charity Test

In a populous city in Brazil, the three friends, Ribeiro, Pires, and Martins, inspired by the consoling Spiritism, founded a prestigious doctrinal nucleus exclusively dedicated to studies of Christian charity.

A significant number of companions joined their ideal and friendly entities, through mediums devoted to the Cause, showed themselves sympathetic to the work they proposed to develop, collaborating brilliantly so that a better understanding of the Gospel would reign in the group; among them, the benefactor Custodia stood out, who took upon herself the maternal task of guiding the three companions who had intertwined hopes and aspirations around the redeeming virtue.

Sister Custodia rehearsed the most beautiful verbal tasks as an enlightened instructor, and Ribeiro, Pires, and Martins completed her work, giving luminous commentaries to the welcoming community.

Edifying books were interpreted with inimitable brilliance.

The invisible protector of the incarnate workers rejoiced happily.

She explained to us exultantly that she had finally found a promising seedbed, which gave her the right to the greatest expectations. Charity there would soon become a blessed and leafy tree, resulting in a source for the thirsty, a plentiful table for the hungry, and a calm refuge for the suffering. Evangelical conferences multiplied into admirable oratory tournaments. The house had become a precious flower garden.

Each brother in faith, supported, above all, by the convictions of the three founders, tireless in their comforting lectures, was a bearer of fraternal and convincing observations.

Countless scholars visited, with rapture, that enlightening stronghold, and when they said goodbye, they almost always had copious tears before the emotion captured in the sublime speeches.

Authors such as Richet, Delanne, and Crookes, inclined to scientific research, when read in such a parliament of love, sounded strange, as deep down, the institution was a temple exclusively dedicated to saving evangelism.

The radiations of charity from Above would visit the three human pillars of that divine work and thus invited the trio to solemnize the event with words of praise to the Master of masters.

Ribeiro, Pires, and Martins were overjoyed. They agreed to give three different lectures on the appointed day.

One would speak on the theme “Charity and Humanity”, the second on Charity and Enlightenment”, and the last one on “Charity and Harmony.”

When the night of peace and light arrived, in the temple adorned with flowers, the guiding trinity enchanted the listeners with their refreshing and inspired dissertations.

There were touching prayers mixed with uncontrollable tears.

The house's spiritual mentor communicated through constructive and moving concepts, explaining that, having reserved a small task for herself during the upcoming hours, she

would return to the group the following week to appreciate the joys of the event with the desired amplitude.

And the remarkable session ended with undisguised feelings of happiness in the collective spirit.

Ribeiro, Pires, and Martins, unable to contain their joy, avoided the tram to better indulge in a long and intimate conversation upon returning to the domestic environment.

They had not walked a kilometer when a lady of humble expression came across them. Her facial features were not visible, but her poorly shod feet, modest and clean clothes, and dark shawl gave her a venerable dignity. She addressed them frankly and reverently:

- Gentlemen! Could you help me in the name of charity? I am alone, and it is past midnight... I have urgent work to do in a nearby suburb, but in my current position, I am unknown in the city.

And, in a pleading tone, she emphasized:

-Which of the three will grant me shelter until morning? Only until sunrise..."

The gentlemen looked at each other, frightened.

Ribeiro, embarrassed, said hesitantly:

– Unfortunately, I can't. My wife wouldn't understand.

Pires, encouraged, added:

– I also feel difficulty. Without a doubt, I am ready to do good; however, you, despite deserving all my respect, are a woman, and my neighbors would not forgive me if they noticed your presence near me...

Martins, finally, spoke firmly:

– As for me, there’s nothing I can do. I’m not a homeless man. My family, however, wouldn’t understand the concession you’re asking for. Besides, what you’re asking for at this time of day isn’t even polite...

I can’t risk it...

A huge silence fell upon the four of them, but Ribeiro reminded them to contribute by offering her a bed for a few hours in a cheap hotel. Each of them provided five cruzeiros, and the lady left with words of thanks.

However, it so happened that neither Ribeiro nor Pires nor Martins could rest.

Worried about the incident, they got up before dawn and found themselves, infinitely surprised, at the door of the modest guesthouse they had indicated to the stranger.

Something was hurting their conscience and their hearts. They wanted to know how the lady who had spoken to them with such great confidence and intimacy had been. However, they were unable to get the slightest news until, at the meeting the following week, by the promise she had made, Custódia appeared and, in a perfect mood, explained through the medium to the astonished trio:

With the grace of Jesus, I materialized in the middle of the street to examine your progress in matters of charity.

I noticed that it is still tough for you to open the door of your home.

But if, after ten years of study, you could untie your purse and give away fifteen cruzeiros, I will be very happy if you open your heart to true fraternal love in a hundred years' time...

She smiled expressively, although somewhat disappointed, and concluded:

– The essential thing, however, is not to interrupt, in any way, your study and work in the direction of the High...

There is no reason to be discouraged!

Let us continue.

The Divine Vision

For many years, a devoted woman had prayed, begging for a vision of the Lord. She mortified herself. Painful penances had broken her body and soul.

She practiced rigorous fasts and difficult spiritual training and treasured precious Christian virtues in her heart. In truth, worship had driven her to withdraw from the world. She lived secluded, almost alone. But pure humility was a crystal-clear source of holiness for her. Prayer had become a shining light in her life.

She had renounced human possessions. She barely ate. From the wide window of her high room, converted into a prie-dieu, she gazed out into the blue expanse between prayers and invocations. She often noticed that a loud murmur of voices came from below, from the public road. However, she did not stop at the quarrels of men. She was pleased to cultivate unblemished faith, hungry for integration with Divine Love.

On many occasions, with tears in her eyes, she would plead with the Higher One, asking: "Master, when will You come?" After these profound moments of conversation, she would return to her household chores, dedicating herself to the well-being of those she loved.

She would lovingly serve water and bread at the table and then immerse herself in reading uplifting, spiritual texts.

She would reflect on the examples set by the saints and seek their strength to guide her soul to the Divine Friend.

Thousands of days stretched her hopes and expectations. Deep wrinkles began to form on her face, and her once thick, black hair was starting to gray.

With her eyes fixed on the sky, she meditated constantly, awaiting the Celestial Visit. One sunny morning, suppressing her emotions, she saw a luminous point forming in Space, growing... Growing... Until it transformed into the sublime figure of the Eternal Benefactor.

The Unforgettable Beloved was coming to meet her. What precious favor would the Savior grant her? Would He take her to paradise? Would He enrich her with the miracle of holy revelations?

Ecstatic, stammering a moving plea, she noticed, however, that the Master passed by her, as if He did not notice her presence. Between disappointment and admiration, she saw that Jesus had stopped further ahead, in the intimacy with the distracted pedestrians.

Immediately, with difficulty containing her heart in her chest, she went down to the street and, dazzled, approached Him and begged, kneeling:

- Lord, deign to receive me as Your faithful slave!...

Show me Your will! Command and I will obey!...

The Divine Ambassador stroked her hair, sprinkled with snow, and replied:

- Help Me here and now!... Soon, a poor newborn boy will pass away. He has no father to love him on Earth nor a home to comfort him. In appearance, he is the unhappy offspring of a

dull woman. However, he is a valuable worker in the Kingdom of God, whose future is up to us to protect.

Let us help him as well as so many other brothers in need whom we must support with our love and dedication.

Soon after, no matter how hard she tried, she saw nothing more.

The Master seemed to have vanished into the fluttering mist...

With a renewed soul, however, she waited for the moment to serve. When the unfortunate mother appeared, holding a sick little angel in her arms, the servant of Christ immediately helped her with adequate food and warm clothing.

From then on, the transformed devotee no longer waited for Jesus, motionless and zealous, at the window of her high room.

After a short prayer, she would go down to work among the unknown crowd, carrying out seemingly unimportant tasks, whether it was to wash the wound of a passerby, help a sick child, or bring a word of encouragement or consolation. And doing so, radiant, she often saw the Lord smiling at her with recognition...

The Divine Encounter

When the knight D'Arsonval, a noble lord from France, set out on his journey for the first time, his armor gleamed in the sunlight.

He was traveling to Italy to address an urgent political matter.

As a devoted Christian, he had a central mission: to serve the Lord faithfully to discover His presence.

Not far from his estate, he unexpectedly encountered a beggar with severe wounds, extending his thin and pleading hands toward him.

Who could have been so unfortunate as to wander like this?

Preoccupied with his harsh task, D'Arsonval dismissed the beggar and threw his wealthy purse at him without a second thought.

After returning home, he faced misfortune in his endeavors and soon set out again. This time, he traveled to Spain on a mission for his friends among the clergy, to whom he had dedicated himself.

The unfortunate beggar stood in the same place with his arms raised in supplication. The nobleman, intrigued, rummaged through a large travel bag and took out a small diamond, throwing it to the sad traveler, who seemed to devour it with his gaze.

Not long after, the castellan, less fortunate in the financial world, had to travel to England, where he intended to solve several problems related to domestic organization.

While on the same ground, he was surprised by the bitter leper, whose old petition rose in the air.

The knight took a precious jewel of great value from his hat and proudly threw it at the well-known pilgrim.

After a few months, the feudal boss moves towards a distant port in search of a precious loan destined for his own economy, threatened with fatal collapse, and at the same place, with rigorous precision, he is approached by the beggar, whose hands, in open wounds, turn anxiously towards him.

D'Arsonval, extremely dedicated to charity, does not hesitate. He takes his fine cloak and hands it over from afar, fearing contact with him.

After a year, pressed by matters of immediate interest, he goes to Paris to ask for help from the authorities and, without any change, is confronted by the same Lazarus, with a painful expression, who repeats his old plea.

The Castilian throws him a precious cap without any pause in the gallop at which he was proceeding quickly.

The days go by, and the noble lord, in an act of faith, leaves the respected residence with a festive entourage.

He will represent his people together with Godfrey of Bonillon's expedition in the crusade to liberate the Holy Places.

At the same corner of the road, he is awaited by the beggar, who reiterates his request in a sadder voice. The illustrious traveler then gives him a hearty meal, without paying him any attention.

And in Palestine, D'Arsonval fought valiantly, falling wounded into the hands of his adversaries. Tortured, weakened, and

separated from his compatriots for years on end, he suffered misery and humiliation, attacks and humiliations, until one day, a man turned into a ghost, and he returned to a home that did not recognize him. When the false news of his death spread, his wife hurried to replace him as head of the house, and his children, enraged, released aggressive dogs that cruelly tore him apart without pity for the tears that flowed from his half-dead eyes. Seeking old affections, he suffered repugnance and sarcasm.

Now, interpreted as a madman, the former nobleman, in the dark twilight, left definitively, with hesitant steps... Where could he go? The world was too small to contain his pain. He was advancing sorrowfully when he came across the beggar.

He remembered his past greatness and looked at himself as if he were looking for something to give. He looked at the unfortunate man for the first time and, meeting his anguished gaze, he felt that that man, wounded and alone, must be his brother.

He opened his arms and walked towards the man, filled with sympathy as if he wanted to share the warmth of his blood. It was then, resting in the lap of his companion whom he considered a leper, that he heard the sublime words:

- D'Arsonval, come to me! I am Jesus, Your friend. Those who seek Me through the service of others find Me sooner. While you searched for Me from afar, I was waiting for you, so close by! I am grateful for the gold, the jewels, the cloak, the coat, and the bread you gave Me, but for many years I have been stretching out My arms to you, waiting for your own heart!

The old knight saw nothing but a vast path of light, stretching between Earth and Heaven. However, the next day, as the sowers returned to their work in the fields under the light of dawn, they stumbled upon a lifeless man on the dewy path.

D'Arsonval had passed away.