

*Yvonne A. Pereira*  
*By the Spirit Camilo Candido Botelho*

# MEMORIS OF A SUICIDE





# MEMOIRS OF A SUICIDE

---



YVONNE A. PEREIRA

---

# MEMOIRS OF A SUICIDE

*By the Spirit*

CAMILO CÂNDIDO BOTELHO

*Translated by Ily Reis, Darrel Kimble and Marcia Saiz*





Copyright © 2012 by  
BRAZILIAN SPIRITIST FEDERATION

First Edition – 9/2021

Original title in Portuguese:  
MEMÓRIAS DE UM SUICIDA  
(Brazil, 1956)

ISBN 978-85-9466-217-0

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any mechanical, photographic, or electronic process, or in the form of a phonographic recording; nor may it be stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, or otherwise be copied for public or private use without prior written permission of the publisher.

FEDERAÇÃO ESPÍRITA BRASILEIRA  
SGAN 603 – Conjunto F – Avenida L2 Norte  
70830-106 – Brasília (DF) – Brasil  
www.febeditora.com.br  
editorialexterior@febnet.org.br  
+55 61 2101 6161

Book orders to FEB:  
Commercial  
Tel.: +55 61 2101 6161 – comercial@febnet.org.br

Dados Internacionais de Catalogação na Publicação (CIP)  
(Federação Espírita Brasileira – Biblioteca de Obras Raras)

---

B748m Botelho, Camilo Cândido, (Spirit).

Memoirs of a suicide [livro eletrônico]/ dictated by the spirit Camilo Cândido Botelho; [received by] Yvonne A. Pereira; translated by Ily Reis, Darrel Kimble and Marcia M. Saiz. – Brasília, DF (Brasil): FEB, 2021.

1 Megabytes; e-Pub 3 – (Collection Yvonne A. Pereira)

Original title: Memórias de um suicida

ISBN 978-85-9466-217-0

1. Romance Spiritist. 2. Spiritualism. 3. Spirit writings. I. Pereira, Yvonne A. (Yvonne do Amaral), 1900-1984. II. Federação Espírita Brasileira. III. Title. IV. Collection.

CDD 133.93  
CDU 133.7  
CDE 85.04.00

---

# Contents

Introduction

Preface to the second [Portuguese] edition

## I - The reprobates

1. Valley of the Suicides
2. The reprobates
3. In the “Mary of Nazareth” Hospital
4. Jeronimo de Araujo Silveira and family
5. Elucidation
6. Communion with the Higher Realms
7. Our friends – the disciples of Allan Kardec

## II - The departments

8. The Watchtower
9. The archives of the soul
10. The Mental Ward
11. Jeronimo and his family again
12. Preludes to reincarnation
13. “To each according to his deeds”
14. First attempts
15. New pathways

## III - The University Sector

16. A Place of Hope
17. “Come unto me”
18. “Man, know thyself!”
19. The “old man”
20. The cause of my blindness in the 19th Century
21. The female element
22. Final entries



# Introduction

I owe this book to the charity of an eminent inhabitant of the spirit world, an inhabitant with whom I feel connected by a sentiment of gratitude that I can foresee being extended beyond my present life. Had it not been for the loving kindness of this illumined representative of the Doctrine of the Spirits – who, in the resplendent pages of the books he left to the world concerning the Spiritist philosophy, promised that, once he crossed over to the invisible plane, and if the mercy of Heaven would allow him, he would hearken to the plea of every sincere heart that appealed for his assistance with the intent of progressing – these pages would have been lost, pages I had been writing since the year 1926, that is, since the days of my youth and the first signs of my mediumship (which came into being at that time in my life). I had been receiving these accounts from the spirits of suicides who willingly came to the meetings of the former “Spiritist Center of Lavras,” in the town of the same name, located in the southernmost part of the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, and of which I had been director for a period of time. The eminent inhabitant I am referring to is Leon Denis, the great apostle of Spiritism, so much respected by adherents of the Spiritist philosophy, and to whom I have good reason to attribute the intuitions I received for the compilation and writing of this book.

For approximately twenty years I had the bliss of sensing the attention of that noble entity from the spirit world compassionately turned toward me, inspiring me on one day, counseling me on another, and drying my tears during telling moments when painful self-renunciation was imposed on me as expiation indispensable for the uplifting of my conscience, still enmeshed in the shame of the consequences of my own suicide in a past life. For twenty years I lived – so to speak – with that venerable Brother, whose instruction brought consolation and hope to my soul, and whose advice I always tried to put into practice; advice that today, more than ever, as my present existence

nears its end, speaks to me ever so tenderly in the privacy of the humble premises where these lines are being written!

Of all the many spirits of suicides with whom I kept in contact by means of my mediumistic<sup>1</sup> faculties, one of them stood out due to the assiduity and friendliness with which he always honored me, and especially due to the famous name he left in the area of Portuguese literature, for he had been a prolific and talented novelist, a highly cultured man. To this day I still ask myself why he showed such affection for me, for my intellectual capacity was quite reduced; thus, I was able to offer him only a respectful heart and my unwavering acceptance of the Spiritist teachings, since in those days I did not even have an efficient knowledge of the Doctrine of the Spirits!

In these pages we will call him Camilo Candido Botelho, even though he wanted to be identified by his real name.<sup>2</sup> This noble spirit, to whom I was connected by powerful spiritual ties, often made himself visible to me, happy to feel accepted and loved. Until the year 1926, however, I had only heard of his name in passing, and I certainly had no knowledge of his copious and erudite body of literary work.

Nonetheless, he came to me while I was at the table during an experiential mediumistic meeting held in the plantation home of Colonel Cristiano Jose de Souza, former president of the Spiritist Center of Lavras, and that is where I received his first message. From then on, whether during regularly scheduled meetings, whether during private mediumistic meetings in people's homes, or whether in the silence of my own room late at night, he would give me notes, periodic news – either in writing or orally – literary essays, and authentic reports regarding cases involving suicide and its dire consequences in the Afterlife. At the time, I found these things to be truly shocking. More frequently, however, he and other spirit guides would take me from my prison of flesh in order to more efficiently transmit his dictations and experiences. My spirit would then be in the spirit world and the messages would no longer be written but narrated, clearly presented to my mediumistic faculty, so that, upon waking up, I could more easily understand him, as, by the inestimable mercy of Heaven, he helped me describe the messages because I was not able to on my own! So, strictly speaking, these pages were not psychographed<sup>3</sup>, because I was able to see and hear the scenes described herein very clearly. I was able to observe the individuals and locations up close with absolute clarity and certainty, as if I were actually present, observing everything that was happening, and not just obtaining the

information through mere narratives. If a character or landscape was being described, I would immediately see that character or landscape while either following the superb words of Camilo or the vibrational wave of his thought as he transmitted them. It was through this essentially poetic and marvelous manner, and not through psychography, that I obtained the lengthy series of literary essays furnished by the inhabitants of the Invisible, materials which, till recently, I kept hidden away in a drawer. The spirits who assisted me utilized psychography only for the services of medicinal prescription and short instructional messages having to do with the environment where the mediumistic meetings took place. And I can honestly say that it was thanks to that wonderful relationship with the spirits that I enjoyed the only moments of bliss and happiness in this world, as well as the strength for the testimonies I was called on to present before the Great Law!

The notes and messages I wrote down upon waking up were rather formless, having neither the shape of a novel nor a doctrinal treatise; later on, however, they were fashioned by the book's compiler, Leon Denis, who wanted to use them as a means to gently expound bitter but necessary truths for the times we are living in. Of course, one might ask why Camilo himself did not do this... for of course he had the capability!

I can only say that, to this day, as I write these words, I still do not know the answer to that question any more than anybody else does! As a matter of fact, I never asked the spirits the reason for it. Moreover, for approximately four years and for reasons beyond my will, I was unable to maintain regular communication with the spirits at all. And once the obstacles were finally removed from my pathway, the author answered my reiterated pleas only to tell me he would be reincarnating soon. I was then left with the difficult job of finishing the work and giving the educational and doctrinal aspect to the revelations conveyed to my spirit during magnetic sleep, revelations that I knew high order spirits wished to be transmitted to society. However, I was not a writer and did not have the ability to finish the book myself, so I relegated it to a desk drawer and prayed, asking for assistance and inspiration. I prayed every day for eight years, always feeling in my heart the living flame of an intuition telling me that I should wait for the future and not destroy the aging manuscript. Then, about a year ago, I was told to proceed, that the necessary assistance would come my way!

I must say that I have the strongest reasons to affirm that the spirits' word is a living, perfect and real creative force! It is also a thought vibration,

capable of maintaining, through the action of the will, whatever it desires! For approximately thirty years now, I have somehow penetrated the mysteries of the invisible world, and that is exactly what I observed there. It must be noted, however, that, upon waking up, I would retain the memory of what had happened *only when the spirits authorized it!* In most cases, in which such flights were allowed, I only had an impression of what had occurred, the inner certainty that I had been with the spirits for a few moments, but I did not have a complete memory of it.

The most insignificant details can be noted when a high order spirit, or a merely enlightened one, “speaks.” For instance, a layer of dust on a piece of furniture; a slight breeze ruffling a curtain; a veil, or a pretty sash gracing a silk dress; the crackling of the flames in a fireplace, or even a scent – I had a chance to experience all of these things in the enchanting words of Camilo, Victor Hugo, Charles, and even the apostle of Spiritism in Brazil, Bezerra de Menezes, whom both my parents taught me to venerate from birth. Once, as Camilo was describing the interior of a house warmed by the flames of a fireplace on a harsh winter day in Portugal, I felt so cold that I shivered, seeking the flames, while Camilo, pleased with the experience, started to laugh... Of course, this phenomenon is nothing new. It was not in any other way that St. John the Evangelist received the communications for his Apocalypse and that the prophets of Judea received the revelations with which they instructed their people.

In Revelation 1:10, 11 ff., the eminent servant of God describes this phenomenon, using the brief words: “*On the Lord’s Day I was taken up in spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: ‘Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches . . .’*” and so on and so forth. This significant book was narrated to the Apostle in its entirety in this manner, through real images, palpitating and alive, in detailed and precise visions! Spiritism has amply studied all these interesting cases so that what we have expounded here should not be a cause for astonishment. The topic is addressed in the first chapter of Kardec’s superb oeuvre *Genesis*<sup>4</sup>, and students of the Spiritist principles are certainly familiar with it: “*Teachings may be transmitted in several different ways: through pure and simple inspiration, through the auditory word, or through the seeing of instructor spirits in visions and apparitions, whether in dreams or in the waking state, many examples of which may be seen in the Bible, the Gospels and the sacred books of all cultures.*”

Far be it from me to have the vanity of putting myself on par with the Missionary, John the Evangelist. Based on the difficulties I struggled with to compose this book, the feelings of unworthiness that still afflict my spirit became very clear to me. The Beloved Disciple, however, in spite of being a chosen missionary, was also a humble fisherman, and he undoubtedly had the assistance of his spirit guide to be able to produce the beautiful pages haloed with science and other teachings of uncontested value that have crossed the centuries, glorifying the Truth! It is very possible that the Master himself was that spirit guide...

I cannot judge the merits of this book. For a long time I did not even allow myself to bring it to light, recognizing my inability to evaluate it. I do not even feel capable of rejecting it, but I do not dare accept it either – you shall do that for me. Of one thing I am certain, however: these pages were written from beginning to end with the utmost respect for the Doctrine of the Spirits<sup>5</sup> and the sincerest invocation of the name of the Most High.

YVONNE A. PEREIRA

*Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), May 18, 1954.*

---

<sup>1</sup> The Portuguese term *mediúnico* is sometimes translated into English as *medianimic*. Webster's has an entry for *mediumistic* ("pertaining to a spiritualistic medium") but does not have one for *medianimic*. However, the latter is defined at <http://www.wordnik.com/words/medianimic> as a synonym for *mediumistic*. We have chosen to use *mediumistic* in this translation. – Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Real name: Camilo Castelo Branco. "Camilo Castelo Branco (born March 16, 1825, Lisbon, Port.—died June 1, 1890, Seide), Portuguese novelist whose 58 novels range from Romantic melodramas to works of realism. He is sometimes known as the Portuguese Balzac ... In 1885 he was awarded the title of Viscount of Correia Botelho for his writing. Despondent over his son's insanity and his own ill health and impending blindness, he committed suicide." (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/98505/Camilo-Castelo-Branco>) – Tr.

<sup>3</sup> Mediumistic writing. – Tr.

<sup>4</sup> See *Genesis* by Allan Kardec, International Spiritist Council, 2009. – Tr

<sup>5</sup> That is 'Spiritism'. The reader may want to view: Spiritism in a nutshell: "Get to Know Spiritism" at <http://www.spiritist.us/spiritist-instructions/get-to-know-spiritism/>. – Tr.

# Preface to the second [Portuguese] edition

A judicious revision of this book was imperative. It had been entrusted to me years ago for examination and compilation in light of the spiritual tasks under my care, as well as the ascendancy I had acquired over the mediumistic instrument<sup>6</sup> at my disposal.

However, I accomplished the project somewhat extemporaneously, as it was not possible for me to do it at the appointed time, due to reasons more strictly tied to the prejudices of human society – against which the same mediumistic instrument was struggling – rather than due to my will as a worker intent on fulfilling his duty. The revision was crucial, especially because, in transmitting the book, it had been necessary for me to intensify the still-rudimentary vibrations of the medium's brain, increasing its psychical capabilities for grasping the visions indispensable for the task. Increased to the maximum level that her brain could endure, the vibrations ended up overly stimulated to the point of becoming uncontrollable torrents that did not always yield very easily to the pressure to curb excesses of vocabulary and accumulations of metaphors, which only now have been suppressed. Nothing has been altered, however, concerning the doctrinal aspect of the work or its remarkable revelatory character. I give it to the reader this second time around exactly as received from my Superiors, who entrusted me with the thorny task of presenting it to humankind. And if, in my efforts to enlighten the public and facilitate their understanding of things spiritual, I did not always keep the literary characteristics of the originals I had before me, I did not modify either its priceless information or its conclusions, which I respected as being someone else's sacred labor.

Meditate on these pages, dear Reader, even if it is hard for your pride to accept them! And if tears sometimes well up in your eyes at the telling of a

dramatic account, do not fight your benevolent impulse to lift up your heart in compassionate prayer for those who suffer in pain and affliction in the tragic aftermath of their infractions of God's Laws!

LEON DENIS

*Belo Horizonte (Brazil), April 4, 1957.*

---

6 That is, the author, Yvonne Pereira. – Tr.

I

---

The reprobates



---

## Valley of the Suicides

It was the month of January, 1891<sup>Z</sup>, when I found myself being held in an area of the Invisible World. Its desolate landscape was comprised of deep valleys that were continuously enveloped in shadowy darkness. Within its winding gorges and sinister caves, spirits that used to be men and women on the earth howled like hordes of infuriated demons, demented by the absolutely unconceivable intensity and strangeness of the sufferings that tormented them.

In that awful place the distraught eyes of the condemned were unable to discern even the slightest gentle outline of a tree that might bear witness to their hours of desperation; or any comforting scenery, for that matter, that might distract them from the wearisome contemplation of those gorges, where no other expression of life could enter other than that of supreme horror!

The ground, covered with fetid, dark soot-like matter, was filthy, pasty, slippery and repugnant! The heavy air was asphyxiating, icy and darkened by threatening clouds, as if never-ending storms were roaring all around. When they inhaled, the spirits confined there would choke, as if the pulverized matter, more noxious than ash and lime, had invaded their respiratory tract, tormenting them with a torture unimaginable to a human mind used to the glorious light of the sun – that celestial gift that blesses the earth every day – and the life-giving currents of salutary breezes that invigorate the physical bodies of the planet's inhabitants.

There was no peace, consolation or hope there, nor would there ever be. Everything about those wretched surroundings was marked by misery, fright, desperation and horror. One might call it a dismal cavern of the Incomprehensible, indescribable even by a spirit that suffered the punishment of inhabiting it.

The Valley of the Lepers, that abhorrent place of ancient Jerusalem of so many emotion-filled traditions, a place that calls to mind the ultimate degree of human abjection and suffering, would be a consoling place of repose when compared to the place I am attempting to describe. In that ancient valley there would at least have been camaraderie among the afflicted! Men and women would have developed loving feelings for each other, at least! Friendships would have flourished amid the suffering to soften it! Its inhabitants would have created their own society, entertained themselves, done favors for one another, and slept and dreamt that they were happy!

However, in this dungeon I am describing to you, none of that was possible; the tears shed there were too ardent to allow any other focus than that derived from their own intensity!

Also, the Valley of the Lepers had the compensating blessing of the sun to invigorate hearts, along with the fresh air of dawn and its regenerating dew! Those confined there would have been able to glimpse a strip of blue sky... and follow, with tender gaze, flocks of swallows or doves flying overhead!... Perhaps, in their sorrow, they would have dreamed under the poetic light of the full moon, enamored by the gentle twinkling of the stars, which there, in the Unattainable, responded to their misfortune, providing consolation in the isolation in which they were forced to live according to the unbending laws of the times!... And springtime would have always returned, reviving plants to scent with their caressing aroma the currents of air revitalized daily by breezes carrying generous amounts of other balsams in their loving bosom... All these things representing heavenly gifts to reconcile men and women with God and to provide them with some respite in their misery.

But in the gorge where I endured the torment in which I found myself in the afterlife, there was none of that!

There, there was only pain without consolation, suffering never lessened by any act of kindness, and tragedy that no calming thoughts could sprinkle with hope! There was no sky, no light, no sun, no fragrances, no respite!

What there was plenty of, however, was the convulsive and inconsolable weeping of the condemned, who were never at peace! Only the dreadful “gnashing of teeth” of the prudent and learned warning given by the wise Master of Nazareth! The persistent cursing of the reprobate, accusing themselves with each new torrent of pain-filled memories flooding their

afflicted minds! The unchangeable madness of consciences torn open by the terrible lashes of remorse! And an abundance of the poisonous rage of those that could no longer weep, because they had become exhausted under their torrent of tears! There was an abundance of disgruntlement, the horrific shock of those who found they were still alive, in spite of having killed themselves! There was revolt, cursing, insults and the shrieking of souls, which the monstrous touch of expiation had transformed into beasts! There was an abundance of frenzied consciences, souls damaged by the imprudence of their actions, minds in upheaval, spiritual faculties enveloped in the darkness coming from within themselves! An abundance of the “gnashing of teeth in the outer darkness” of a prison created by crime, destined for torment, and consecrated to correction! It was hell in the most dramatic and heinous sense of the word, for it also displayed repulsive scenes of animality, despicable acts arising from the most sordid instincts, acts that I would be too ashamed to disclose to other human beings, my brothers and sisters!

All those who reside there temporarily, as I did, are great figures of depravity! They are the scum of the spirit realm – hordes of suicides periodically swept there by the turmoil of misery in which they have entangled themselves, exhausting their generally-intact vital energies that still enwrap their physical-spiritual bodies, all due to the sacrilegious consequences of suicide. They come mostly from Portugal, Spain, Brazil and the Portuguese colonies of Africa; wretched beings in need of the consoling aid of prayer; frivolous and inconsequential individuals, who, weary of a life with which they did not want to come to grips, took a chance on the Unknown, in search of Oblivion in the abysses of Death!

No, the Afterlife is not the abstraction normally imagined. It is not a heavenly region easily accessible by means of a few meaningless formulas. Above all else, it is simply the Real Life, and what we find upon entering it is Life itself! Intense life unfolding in infinite modalities and wisely divided into areas and phalanxes, just as the earth is divided into nations and races. It possesses exemplary social and educational organizations that serve as a standard of progress for humankind. It is in the Invisible<sup>g</sup>, rather than on some planetary world, that human beings gather inspiration for their slow progress on the earth.

I do not know how the correctional endeavors of suicides are carried out in other places or spirit colonies destined for that purpose under Portuguese and Spanish skies. What I do know is that I was part of a sinister phalanx

imprisoned in that one particular horrendous place – the memory of which, to this day, makes me sick – as the result of a logical and natural effect. It is quite possible that some might challenge the truthfulness of what is written in these pages. They might say that the morbid imagination of an unconscious mind, exhausted from having assimilated Dante, produced by itself the descriptions disclosed here... forgetting that, on the contrary, the Florentine poet would most certainly be ready and willing to acknowledge what the present century finds so difficult to accept.

I will not ask you to believe. This is not an issue submitted to belief, but to reason, to investigation. If you know how to reason and if you can investigate, go ahead! You will reach logical conclusions that will put you on the trail to truths of utmost interest for the whole human species! In that case, what I invite you to do, what I ardently desire and have the utmost interest in struggling for, is that you be spared from ever having to experience this reality via the dreadful channels I opened myself to, surrendering to suicide by disregarding the warning that death is nothing but the real way of living!

Furthermore, what might the reader think exists in the invisible layers that surround worlds and planets, if not the matrix of everything that is reflected on them?!... Abstraction or nothingness is nowhere to be found, since such words are meaningless in a Universe created and governed by an Omnipotent Intelligence! To deny what we do not know simply because we are unable to comprehend it is a folly incompatible with our times. This century invites people to investigation and free examination because Science, in its multiple manifestations and in its ever-expanding circle of action, is proving the inaccuracy of the impossible. In addition, the proofs of the reality of lands beyond the earth are found in the arcana of the transcendental psychical sciences, to which humanity has given relative importance to this day.

What do human beings know about their own planet, after all – a place where they have reincarnated for millennia – to categorically reject what the future will popularize under the auspices of Psychism?... Their country, their capital, their village, their hut, or if they are more ambitious, a few neighboring nations whose customs are close to their own?

Everywhere, all around them, real worlds exist, worlds teeming with exuberant and industrious life. If they are unaware of this fact, it is obviously because they take pleasure in their blindness, wasting time on futilities and passions that satisfy their nature. So far, they have never even probed the

ocean depths – and will not be able to for a while yet. Even so, beneath the green, lapping waters there is not only a fully organized world, but a world that would astonish them due to its magnitude and ideal perfection! In the very air they breathe and on the soil they tread, they would find other organized centers of life obeying the intelligent and wise impulse of magnanimous laws founded on the Divine Thought, which sets them in motion and drives their progress toward perfection! The use of highly sensitive equipment would suffice to prove the veracity of these unknown collectivities, which, some being invisible and others only suspected, are physical, harmonious and real, nonetheless!

That being the case, let them bring themselves up to par by developing the psychical abilities they inherited from their divine origin... Let them give impulse to thought, will, action and courage along the lofty pathways to the Higher Realms, and they will reach the astral spheres that surround the earth!

I, myself, was being held in that ominous cove of horror!

But I was not alone. I was kept company by an entire collectivity, an enormous horde of moral delinquents like myself.

At that point in time I still thought I was blind.<sup>9</sup> At least that is what I kept telling myself; and I remained blind, even though my blindness was actually caused by my moral inferiority as a spirit far from the Light. Unfortunately, I was not blind to all that was evil, ugly, sinister, immoral and obscene; my eyes retained enough sight to contemplate all such wretchedness, thus aggravating my misery.

Imbued with great sensitiveness, which served to intensify my anguish, I was now in a state of overexcitement that, in addition to my own suffering, led me to experience the sufferings of the other wretches, my companions. This phenomenon was caused by the mental currents that hovered over the whole phalanx, and which originated from the phalanx itself, a consequence of the remarkable affinity of the collectivity. In other words, we experienced the impressions of one another's sufferings in addition to the woes inflicted on us by our own torment.<sup>10</sup>

At times, brutal fights broke out in the muck-covered lanes along which the caves that served as our dwellings were lined up. Invariably angered for the most insignificant reasons, we would go at one another in violent, bodily fights, in which, just as in the lower social strata on the earth, the winners were those that displayed more deftness and truculence. Oftentimes, I was

scorned and ridiculed about my dearest and tenderest sentiments with insults and sarcasm that repulsed me to the depths of my soul. I was beaten and stoned to the point that, provoked by the same irrational fear, I would hurl myself in fierce reprisal against my aggressors, rolling with them in the muck of our spiritual sty!

Hunger, thirst, freezing cold, fatigue and insomnia; tormenting physical demands that the reader cannot easily fathom; our human nature sharpened by all its desires and appetites as if we still had our physical bodies; the shameful promiscuity of spirits that were once men and women; constant tempests – even floods – sludge, foul smells, perpetual darkness, despair from not being able to free ourselves of so many overlapping torments; supreme mental and physical discomfort – that was the “material” – so to speak – panorama that framed our even more pungent mental sufferings.

Not even dreaming about the Beautiful or getting lost in balsamic reveries or beneficent memories was granted to those who were conceivably capable of it. In that ambient overflowing with ills, the mind was imprisoned in the forge that encircled it and it was only able to emit vibrations that would adjust to the tone of the perfidious locale itself... And enveloped in such maddening fires, not one of us was able to experience one second of serenity and reflection to remember God and clamor for his paternal mercy! We could not pray, because prayer is something good; it is a balm, a truce, a hope! For the wretches that cast themselves there via the torrents of suicide, it would be impossible to receive such benefits!

We did not know whether it was day or night, because permanent darkness surrounded our every hour. We lost all notion of time. Only the crushing sensation of a far-off past that had remained to torment us with our questions about it, and it seemed to us that we had been yoked to that excruciating Calvary for centuries! We had no hope of ever leaving that place, although such desire was one of the burning obsessions that deluded us... for the despondency that caused the hopelessness created by our suicide convinced us that this state of affairs would last forever! For those in the bottom of that abyss, the counting of time stopped exactly at the moment in which they had made their sheath of flesh fall apart forever! From then on there was only fright, confusion, deceitful assumptions and insidious suppositions! Nor did we know where we were, or what the meaning of our bewildering situation might be. Desperate, we would try to escape, without realizing our situation derived from our own conflagrated minds, from our

own vibrations clashing with a thousand indescribable afflictions! We would try to flee from that cursed place and try to return to our homes, running with the maddening haste of the deranged! Accursed wretches without consolation, peace or rest anywhere... But irresistible currents, like powerful magnets, would drag us back to our gloomy dwelling to be enveloped in the dark turmoil of suffocating and mind-numbing clouds!

Other times, feeling our way in the dark, we would wander around among the gorges, lanes and dead-ends, never finding a way out... It was cave after cave, all numbered; or long swampy stretches like murky lakes encircled by abrupt walls that seemed made of iron and stone, as if we had been entombed alive in the profound darkness of some volcano! It was a labyrinth in which we would get lost without ever finding the exit! Sometimes we were unable to return to the starting point, that is, to the cave that served as our dwelling; this forced us to live outside, exposed to the elements, until we could find another empty den to be our shelter. Our most common feeling was that we were incarcerated deep underground in a dungeon carved out in the bowels of the earth, maybe in the entrails of a mountain range that held some extinct volcano, as those immeasurable wells of mud with walls recalling heavy mineral deposits seemed to suggest!...

Terrified, we would howl furiously in unison like a band of mad jackals, begging to be taken from there and have our freedom give back to us! The most violent manifestations of terror would then ensue. Amid the confusion of pathetic scenes invented by the irrational fear of Horror, everything the reader might imagine would not be even close to the reality of those hours created by our own thoughts, so far from the Light and Love of God!

As if obsessively hounding our faculties, imaginary screens would display a macabre sight: our bodies rotting under the attack of ravenous worms; the detestable work of decay taking the natural course of its organic destruction, gripping our flesh, our innards, our blood – finally, the entire body corrupted in stench, disappearing forever in the repulsive banquet of millions of ravenous worms slowly devouring it before our stupefied eyes!... Bodies that had died, it was true, while we, their owners – the thinking, intelligent, sensitive Selves that had taken possession of them only as transitory garments – continued alive, feeling, thinking, intelligent, downcast and horrified, facing the possibility of dying also! And – oh! Sinister trickery that surpassed all the power we had to ponder and comprehend! Oh! The irremediable punishment of the renegade who had dared insult Nature by

prematurely destroying what only Nature was competent to decide and do. Before our putrid bodies, we, alive in spirit, felt the process of decay!... In our astral body we could feel the pain of the gruesome chomping of the worms! It infuriated us to extreme madness to feel those tormenting repercussions that made our perispirit<sup>11</sup>, still animalized and filled with abundant vital energies, replicate what was happening to its former body of flesh – like the echo of a noise reproduced from slope to slope in the mountains throughout the whole valley...

Our cowardice, the same that had brutalized us by inducing us to commit suicide, would force us to retreat.

And thus we would turn back.

But suicide is an all-encompassing web, in which the victim – the suicide – thrashes around only to become even more confounded, trapped and entangled. Confusion would take hold. Now, in the present, the persistence of malefic autosuggestion recalled the superstitious tales we had heard in childhood, impressed over time in the layers of our subconscious; these tales would materialize in bizarre visions, giving them the feel of reality. We thought we were no less than before the tribunals of hell itself!... Yes, we were living in the depths of the realm of darkness!... And spirits from the lowest orders of the Invisible – obsessors that abound on all lower levels on the earth, as well as the Beyond, the same ones that had fed our minds with suggestions of suicide, laughing at our anguish – took advantage of our abnormal situation in order to convince us that they were judges that were going to evaluate and punish us, presenting themselves to our faculties disturbed by suffering, like peculiar beings, impressive and tragic phantoms. They would invent diabolical scenes with which to torment us. They would subject us to indescribable humiliations! They would force us to vileness and scorn, obliging us to take part in their malevolent obscenities! Young women that had committed suicide in the name of love, forgetting that true love is patient, virtuous and obedient to God; disregarding, in the selfishness of their passion, the sacrosanct love of their mother who had been left behind, inconsolable, and disrespecting the venerable white hair of their father – both who would never forget the blow to their hearts by the thankless daughter who preferred death to living in the temple of their home. These young women were now insulted in heart and modesty by those vile, animalized entities, who made them believe they were obliged to be their slaves because they were the landlords of the empire of darkness that these women chose in



detriment to the home they had forsaken! Actually, such entities were nothing but spirits that had also been men and women on the earth, but had lived in criminality – sexoholics, alcoholics, harlots, slanderers, hypocrites, perjurers, traitors, seducers, perverse murderers – in sum, that malefic horde that brings so much misery to society, individuals who may have had pompous memorial services and solemn funeral rites, but who, in the spirit world, comprise the repugnant rabble that we have just described... until miserable and harsh expiatory reincarnations stimulate them to new attempts at progress.

Such deplorable scenes would be followed by ones no less dramatic and extreme: offensive acts committed by us during incarnation – our wrongs, our sinful failures, our crimes – would materialize before our consciences as accusatory visions, intransigent in their endless condemnation. The victims of our selfishness would reappear in shameful and obstinate memories, coming to and going from us with persistent abuses, bringing to our already stricken spirit body the most anguishing, remorse-forged nervous imbalance!

But above all this lamentable heap of iniquities, above so much shame and cruel humiliation, was the paternal mercy of the ever-watchful and compassionate God Most High, the just and good Father who “does not want the death of the sinner, but that the sinner live and repent.”

In the maelstrom of events that suicides experience after the failure that put them prematurely in the grave, the Dreadful Valley is only a temporary layover. It is where they are drawn to by a natural pulling movement, to which they are attuned until the time the heavy shackles that bind them to their physical, earthly body, destroyed before the time prescribed by natural law, are unlocked. The powerful layers of vital fluids that used to clothe their physical body have to disaggregate, layers that Great Mother Nature had adapted by special affinities to their astral organization, the perispirit, with enough reserves for the commitments of an entire existence. These affinities have to be broken, and regarding a suicide, this task is accompanied by the most afflictive difficulties, an imposing slowness, to obtain, only later, the vibrational possibility that will allow for relief and progress.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, their character, their wrongs and the level of their overall responsibilities will determine their situation and the intensity of the torments they will have to endure, because, in such cases, it is not only the disappointing consequences of suicide that afflicts their soul but also all the sinful acts they committed previous to it.

Every now and then, a remarkable caravan would visit that den of darkness.

It was like an inspection by some charitable organization, an offer of caring assistance by a humanitarian institution, whose selfless objectives could not be doubted.

It would come looking for those of us whose vital fluids, diluted by the complete disintegration of matter, would permit transfer to the intermediary or transitional levels of the Invisible.

This caravan seemed to be composed of a group of living human beings, but they were actually spirits who carried fraternity to the extreme of materializing themselves enough to where they could be fully perceived by our precarious vision and imbue us with trust in their assistance.

They would appear, dressed in white and moving in single file along the mucky lanes of the Valley in a strictly disciplined column. Looking at them closely, we could make out, chest-high, a small sky-blue cross that seemed to be an emblem or badge of some kind.

Women made up part of the group. The column was led by a small platoon of lancers to open the way, while other lancers flanked it to provide a security barrier, making it very clear that they were very well protected against any hostilities that might come from the outside. The commander held up a white banner with his right hand, and on it we could read, written in sky-blue letters, this extraordinary inscription, which had the effect of infusing us with uncontainable and singular awe: Legion of the Servants of Mary

The lancers, shield and lance in hand, had a tanned complexion and were dressed frugally, recalling the Egyptian warriors of antiquity. Heading the expedition was a venerable-looking man wearing a white physician's coat and badge, in addition to the cross already mentioned. His head was not covered with the characteristic cap, but with a white Hindu turban, whose folds were bound in the front by the traditional emerald, the symbol of physicians.

Members of the caravan would enter the inhabited caves now and then to examine the occupants. Or, full of compassion, they would bend over the gutters here and there to uplift some wretch that had fallen due to excessive suffering. They would lift those who were in a condition to receive assistance and place them on stretchers handled by men that seemed to be helpers or apprentices.

A grave and commanding voice, hovering in the air and spoken by someone we could not see, guided them in their charitable task, clarifying details or clearing up sudden confusions. The same voice would call out the names of the prisoners to be assisted, compelling them to present themselves without having to be looked for. They were those in better conditions, thus facilitating the work of the caravan members. Today I can say that those friendly and caring voices were transmitted, for humanitarian purposes, via the sensitive and delicate waves of the ether with the sublime concourse of magnetic devices at determined points of the Invisible, that is, at the place to which we would be taken when we were able to leave the Valley. At the time, though, we had no idea of these details and felt totally confused.

The carefully carried stretchers were kept by the security cordon inside vehicles in a line that looked like a train. These trains displayed an interesting detail that warrants description. There were not made up of the railroad cars we are familiar with, but recalled a more primitive means of transportation. They were comprised of small carriages connected one to the other and surrounded by heavy blinds that prevented the passengers from seeing the places they would pass through. White and light, as if made of a special, skillfully lacquered material, they were pulled by a beautiful team of horses that were also white; noble animals whose extraordinary beauty and uncommon elegance would have gotten our attention if we had been in any kind of shape to notice anything beyond the misery that kept us absorbed within our own personal ambit. Strong and intelligent, they appeared to be examples of the best Norman breed, their beautiful wavy manes adorning their uplifted necks like mantles of white, finely fringed silk. The carriages also displayed the same sky-blue emblem and awe-inspiring inscription.

Usually, those who were assisted this way were unconscious, as if stricken by an odd comatose state. Others, however, demented or pain-ridden, would elicit compassion due to their state of extreme downheartedness.

After a thorough search, the strange group would head back to the train, which was also defended by Hindu lancers. Silently, it would travel down the lanes and narrow roads, getting farther and farther away... finally disappearing from our view while we were plunged once more into the heavy loneliness that surrounded us... Those who felt left behind would cry out in vain, unable to grasp the fact that, if they were thus left behind, it was because not all were in a suitable vibrational state to emigrate to less hostile regions. In vain did they clamor for justice and compassion, or they would riot in

rebelliousness, demanding that they be allowed to go with the others. The members of the caravan would not answer with the least gesture, and if someone more daring or desperate would attempt to assault the vehicles in order to get inside, ten or twenty lancers would force him or her to retreat.

Then, a heinous chorus of howling and sinister weeping, of diabolical cursing and laughter would follow. The usual gnashing of teeth of the reprobates that agonize in the darkness of the evil they forged for themselves would reverberate for a long and painful time down the mucky roadways, as if a collective madness had stricken those miserable prisoners, increasing their hatred to a state inexpressible in human language!

And as such they remained... For how long? O God of mercy! How long?...

For as long as their unimaginable condition as suicides, as the living-dead, would keep them from being transferred to a less miserable place...

---

<sup>7</sup> The spirit author actually committed suicide on June 1, 1890, six months before the January, 1891 date given here. In the next chapter he recounts how he wandered around for some time before finally ending up in this valley. – Tr.

<sup>8</sup> The Spirit World – Tr.

<sup>9</sup> The spirit author had gone almost completely blind from syphilis when he committed suicide. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camilo\\_Castelo\\_Branco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camilo_Castelo_Branco)). – Tr.

<sup>10</sup> After death, before the spirit gets a hold of itself, gravitating toward the true “spirit home” that it deserves, it has to undergo a phase in an “anteroom” in a region whose density and local afflictive configurations correspond to the newly-discarnate’s vibrational state. It remains there until it becomes naturally “de-animalized”; that is, until it rids itself of the fluids and vital energies that impregnate all material bodies. From this, one can ascertain that the stay on this doorstep to the Afterlife is always temporary, although usually harrowing. The character, the deeds, the type of life and the type of death of the discarnated spirit will determine the time and penury of this site. Some remain there for just a few hours; others take months or years, returning to reincarnation without having actually reached the spirit realm. In the case of suicides, this assumes special, complex and dolorous proportions. In most cases, they have to stay there for the length of time they still had remaining on the earth to conclude their commitments of the life they cut short prematurely. Carrying with them a substantial amount of animalized vital energies, in addition to the load of criminal passions and an entire mental, nervous and vibrational disorganization, it is easy to grasp the situation of these wretches, for whom there is only one solace – prayers from charitable souls!

If, by being too long, this stay exceeds normal measures, immediate reincarnation is the recommended remedy. Though arduous and dolorous, this remedy is still preferable to years and years in such a miserable situation. In this way, they complete the time that was cut short during their previous existence.

<sup>11</sup> “The spirit is surrounded by a substance that might look vaporous to you but which is still quite dense to us [the spirits in the spirit world]. . . . As a fruit seed is enveloped by the perisperm, the spirit per se is surrounded by an envelope, which by comparison, may be called the perispirit.” *The Spirits’ Book* (Question #93). – Tr.

12 The painful impressions and sensations which originate with the physical body and which accompany a spirit that is still overly materialized we will call **magnetic repercussions**, due to their affinities with the perispirit and the animal magnetism possessed by all living beings. This is a phenomenon identical to that often experienced by someone, who, having had an arm or a leg amputated, feels an itch on the palm of the hand or on the sole of the foot that is no longer there. In a certain hospital we got to know a poor laborer that had had his two legs amputated. He continued to feel them and his feet so completely that, forgetting that he no longer had them, he tried to stand up only to topple over, injuring himself. Such phenomena are commonly observed.

---

## The reprobates

In general, those who rush into suicide hope to free themselves forever from the troubles they believe to be insurmountable; from sufferings and problems they believe to be unsolvable due to the weakness of their uneducated will, which often turns cowardly in the presence of the shame of discredit or dishonor; and from the anguishing regrets that stain their conscience as a result of actions committed in transgression of the laws of the Good and Justice.

I, too, thought that way, in spite of the halo of idealism that my vanity believed glorified my brow.

I was mistaken, however. With warranted justice, struggles infinitely more vivid and cruel were waiting for me in the grave to flog my disbelieving and rebellious soul.

The first hours that followed my brutal act against myself passed by without my being able to get a hold of myself. My spirit, cruelly violated, sort of fainted, suffering an ignoble collapse. My senses, the faculties that represent the rational “self,” became paralyzed, as if an indescribable cataclysm had dashed the world to pieces, and upon the rubble a strong sensation of annihilation descended on my being. It was as if that accursed gunshot – which even today resounds sinisterly within my mind whenever I rend the veils of my memory and relive the nefarious past as if it were the present – were scattering, one by one, the molecules that had comprised my life!

Human language has not felt the need to invent words exact and clear enough to define the absolutely inconceivable impressions that start to contaminate the “self” of a suicide in the early hours following the tragedy. These impressions rise and increase, become intricate, take root and

crystallize in a crescendo that creates a mental and vibrational state that humans cannot at all comprehend because it is beyond their grasp as human beings, who, by the mercy of God, have been spared such abnormality. To understand and properly measure the intensity of that dramatic shock, it would take another spirit whose faculties had been burned in the fires of the same suffering!

Those first hours, which in and of themselves constitute the pattern of the abyss into which suicides hurl themselves, represent the prelude to the diabolical symphony they will be constrained to play by the logical dispositions of the natural laws they have violated. Suicides – semiconscious, numb, but not completely out of their senses – feel painfully wounded and nullified, dispersed in their millions of psychical filaments, violently stricken by their heinous act. Paradoxes whirl all around them, afflicting the tenuousness of their perceptions with tormenting pyrotechnic wheels of confused sensations. They are lost in the void... They do not know who they are... Nevertheless, they are terrified; they cower; they realize the horrific depth of the wrong they have just committed; they feel the anguish of the annihilating certainty that they have surpassed the limits of their allowed actions; they become disoriented, grasping the fact that they went too far, far beyond the demarcation traced out by reason! That is the psychical trauma, the noxious shock that tears them with its unavoidable claws and which, in order to be mitigated, will demand a pathway of thorns and tears, decades of bitter trials until they find their way back to the natural pathways of progress, interrupted by their arbitrary and counterproductive act.

From the confused darkness into which my spirit plunged after the fall of my physical body, I gradually felt, coming back to life within me, the supreme attribute the Divine Paternity has granted to those who over the course of the millennia are to reflect his image and likeness: Conscience! Memory! The Divine Gift of Thought!

I felt an iciness penetrating my whole being. I was shivering! The unpleasant feeling that garments of ice were clinging to my body provoked an indescribable, bad feeling. Moreover, there was no air in my lungs, which led me to believe that, since I had wished to desert life, death was indeed finally approaching with its cortege of excruciating symptoms.

Putrid and nauseous odors, however, brutally offended my sense of smell. An acute, violent, maddening pain instantly came over my entire body, particularly in the area of my brain and auditory system. Overcome by

indescribable convulsions of physical pain, I lifted my hand to my right ear: blood was coming from the hole caused by the bullet I had used to commit suicide, staining my hands, clothes, body... I could not see a thing, however. One must recall that my suicide was due to the fact that I was going blind – an expiation I considered to be above my strength, an unjust punishment by Nature against my eyes, which needed their sight so that I could make an honest and worthy living.

Thus I found myself still blind. And to further add to my state of disorientation, I was wounded – only wounded, not dead! Life continued in me just like before my suicide!

In spite of myself, ideas started to gather in my mind. I saw my life in retrospect all the way back to infancy; not even my final act was omitted, that added step for which I was completely responsible. Since I felt that I was still alive, I consequently deduced that the wound I had tried to kill myself with had not done its job, and this only added to the dreadful sufferings that had plagued my life for such a long time. I thought I must be lying in a bed in a hospital or one in my own house. However, since it was impossible for me to recognize the place because I could not see, the ailments that afflicted me and the loneliness that surrounded me distressed me to no end; meanwhile, sinister presentiments conveyed the feeling that an irreversible event had taken place. I cried out for my family members, for friends that had been kind enough to accompany me at critical times. But the most unnerving silence was all I received in response. I angrily called for nurses, for doctors that could possibly take care of me in case I was actually in a hospital and not in my home. I called for servants, maids, whoever they might be, to open the windows of the room where I thought I lay, so that streams of fresh air could bring comfort to my lungs. I needed them to bring me warm blankets and light the fireplace to alleviate the chill that numbed my limbs, providing relief to the grueling pain that had invaded my whole body; and to bring me some food and water, because I was starving and thirsty!

To my astonishment, instead of the kind answers I so desperately longed for, what I heard, instead, after a few hours, was a deafening roar. Vague and far away at first, as if arising from a nightmare, it gradually became defined, clearly and conclusively audible. A sinister chorus of many voices mixed together in turmoil, disoriented, like a gathering of the deranged.

Those voices, however, were not talking to each other in conversation. They blasphemed, complained about multiple misfortunes, lamented,



protested, howled, screamed furiously, moaned, agonized and wept disconsolately, a weeping rendered heinous due to its particularly desperate and despondent tone. Filled with rage, they begged for help and compassion!

Terrified, I felt that strange jolts, like irresistible shivers, were impacting me horrendously. They were coming from that roar, establishing a current of affinity between my own agitated being and those whose distressed voices I was hearing. That isochronous chorus, which I heard at regular intervals, infused me with awful terror. I gathered all the strength my spirit could muster in such a dreadful situation and tried to get away, to go someplace where I would no longer hear it.

I felt my way in the darkness as I tried to walk. However, it was as if strong roots held me to the same cold, humid place. I could not get away! Indeed, it felt like heavy chains had imprisoned me, shackling me to that eerie, unknown bed, making it impossible for me to leave! After all, how could I escape if I was wounded, weakened by a loss of blood, my clothes stained with it? Besides, I was blind, completely blind. How could I present myself to anyone in such a repugnant state?...

Cowardice – that hydra that had pulled me into the abyss where I now agonized – extended its insatiable tentacles even farther and clutched me to where I could never escape! Once more, I forgot I was a human being! That it was necessary to struggle to achieve victory, whatever the price of the suffering! At that point, I succumbed to the misery of defeat. I considered the situation unsolvable, surrendered to my tears and wept desperately, not knowing what to do to get help. However, as I yielded to my tears, the chorus of the deranged, always the same, always tragic and glum, regular as the pendulum of a clock, accompanied me with singular regularity, pulling me in as if I were magnetized by irresistible affinities...

I persisted in my desire to flee from that terrible roar. I made a desperate effort to get up. My body cold as ice, my muscles rigid from an overall numbness, made my intent extremely difficult, but I was finally able to stand. Upon doing so, however, a penetrating odor of blood and putrid viscera spread around me, revolting and nauseating. It came from the very spot where I had been laying. I could not understand how the bed I had been lying in could have such a disagreeable smell. In my mind it was the same bed I had slept in every night! But what a terrible stench! To explain this strange affliction, I attributed it to the wound I had inflicted on myself, to the blood that gushed out, staining my clothes! Indeed! I did find myself covered in a

viscous matter, a revolting sludge that oozed from my own body, drenching my clothes, which I was astounded to find were quite formal, in spite of my being constrained to a bed for the sick. But at the same time that I was offering myself these explanations, I was confounded by questions asking how it could be that way, how a simple wound, in spite of the blood it shed, could produce such foulness without my friends or the nurses cleaning it up.

Upset because everybody had abandoned me at such a critical time, I felt my way in the dark, intending to find the usual door to my room. At a certain point, I stumbled on a heap of debris and instinctively bent down to find out what it was. I was suddenly gripped by irredeemable madness and I began screaming and howling like a deranged demon, responding in the same dramatic tonality as the macabre symphony, whose chorus of voices had not ceased to strike my ears in intermittent and distressing expectation.

The heap of debris was nothing less than earth covering a recently dug grave!

I did not know how, but despite my blindness I could see the things that surrounded me in the darkness!

I was in a cemetery! The graves, with their sad crosses of white marble or dark wood flanked by pensive angels, were all lined up in the majestic immobility of the drama they were a part of.

My confusion only increased. Why was I here? How did I get here, since I could not recall doing so?... And what had I come here to do, all alone, wounded, hurting and exhausted? I had “attempted” suicide – true, but...

A macabre whisper, like an unmovable suggestion from Conscience explaining to my bewildered memory what it had just seen, reverberated thunderously in my alarmed inner being:

“You wanted to commit suicide, didn’t you?... Well, there you have it...”

But how?... It could not be... I had not died!... Did I not feel alive, right now?... So why was I alone, immersed in the gloomy loneliness of the place of the dead?...

Inarguable facts, however, impose themselves on humans and on spirits with majestic naturalness. I had not yet concluded my naïve, desperate questions, when I suddenly saw myself! And as if in front of a mirror, I saw

*myself dead, lying in a coffin, in a clear state of decomposition, in the depths of a grave* – the exact same one I had just stumbled over!

I fled in horror, wanting to hide from myself, overcome by the most frightful terror, while thunderous laughter, coming from individuals I could not see, exploded behind me, the nefarious chorus persecuting my tormented ears wherever I tried to hide. Like a madman – which I had truly become – I ran and ran and ran, while before my blind eyes appeared the diabolical hideousness of my own cadaver rotting in the grave, caked with a grimy slime, covered with revolting worms that voraciously fought to satiate their inextinguishable hunger, transforming it into the most repugnant and infernal heap I had ever seen!

I tried to escape from myself by focusing on the act that had disgraced me; that is, *I mentally reproduced the dismal scene of my suicide, as if seeking to die a second time in order to disappear into the realm where, according to my ignorance of after-death phenomena, I believed eternal oblivion lay!* But there was nothing capable of placating my dread-filled sight! It was true, after all! A perfect image of the reality of the matter reflecting upon my physical-spiritual being, accompanying me wherever I went, hounding my lightless eyes, invading the faculties of my jolt-stricken soul, imposing itself on my blindness as a spirit fallen in sin, tormenting me without remission!

In my hasty flight, I entered every door I could find open, trying to find a place to hide. But in my completely deranged state, I was pelted with stones wherever I went, but was unable to tell who was treating me so disrespectfully. Continuing to feel tormented and hounded, I wandered the streets, feeling my way along, stumbling here and there, in the very same city where my name had been idolized as that of a genius. Regarding events that had to do with me, I heard comments drenched in irreverent and mordant criticism or filled with sincere sorrow for my lamentable death.

I returned to my home. A surprising chaos had taken over concerning objects of my personal use, my books, manuscripts and notes, which were no longer in their usual spot. I was furious! Things were scattered everywhere! I was a stranger in my own house. I looked for dear friends and relatives, but their indifference towards my disgrace shocked me to the core, further aggravating my agitated state. I went to doctors' offices. I also tried hospitals, since I was suffering, feverish and deranged, a supreme discomfort torturing my being, reducing me to a desolate state of humiliation and anguish. But

wherever I went, no one helped me; everybody was unconcerned and indifferent to my situation. In vain did I utter bitter reproaches, together with the description of my condition and the personal qualities that my incorrigible pride still believed to be so irresistible. Nevertheless, everybody seemed completely oblivious to my confused speech and did not even grant me the mere courtesy of a glance!

Afflicted, suffering, deranged and absorbed by waves of agonizing anguish, nowhere did I find any possibility of regaining my mental balance in order to find comfort and relief! Something irremediable was missing from my being; I felt incomplete! I had lost something that left me feeling like that: completely dizzy; and that “something” I had lost, that part of myself, pulled on me with the irresistible force of a magnet to where it was, summoning me commandingly and irremediably! Such was that pull over me, such was the vacuum produced in me by that irreparable event, so profound and truly vital was the affinity that tied me to that “something,” that, since I could not remain in any of the places I had sought out, I ended up returning to the horrific site I had come from – the cemetery!

That “something,” whose void left me so demented, was my own body – my cadaver! – rotting in the darkness of its grave!<sup>13</sup>

Sobbing uncontrollably, I bent over the grave that held my wretched remains. Contorting myself in terrifying convulsions of pain and rage, wallowing in a crisis of diabolical fury, I understood that I had committed suicide, that I was in the grave, but that, nevertheless, I continued to live and suffer even more, so much more than before, superlatively, abysmally so much more than before my cowardly and thoughtless act!

For about two months, I wandered around dazed and confused, my head reeling, in a state of incomprehension. Bound to that decomposing corporeal burden, I felt all the imperative human-physical necessities, a torment that, along with all the other discomforts, brought me constant desperation. Revolt, blasphemies, raging outbursts would erupt from within me as if hell itself were breathing its nefarious influence on me, thus crowning the malefic vibrations that surrounded me in darkness. Despite my blindness, I could see ghosts, weeping and afflicted, wandering around the lanes of the graveyard, and at times unconceivable terror would shake my vibrational system to the point of reducing me to a peculiar fainting state as if, without any strength to continue to vibrate, my soul’s potencies were shutting down!

I was desperate because of this extraordinary occurrence and increasingly surrendered to the desire to disappear, to escape from myself in order to no longer ask questions I did not have the sufficient lucidity to answer because I felt incapable of reasoning. Of course, the physical-material body, molded from the decayable matter of the earth, had been destroyed by my suicide; what I now felt mingling with it – since it is solidly tied to it by natural laws of affinity that suicide definitely does not destroy – was the physical-spiritual, semi-material, indestructible and immortal living body meant for a much higher destiny, a glorious future of endless progress; a shrine where, like a safe holding valuables, our sentiments and acts, deeds and thoughts are stored; a garment arising from the sublime spark that governs human beings; in other words, our Soul! Eternal and immortal like the One from whom it descends!

I continued to roam around aimlessly, feeling my way along the streets, unacknowledged by friends and admirers, a poor blind man humiliated in the afterlife thanks to the dishonor of having committed suicide; a beggar in the spirit world, famished in the darkness; a tortured, wandering ghost without a home, without shelter in the immense and infinite world of spirits; exposed to deplorable dangers; hounded by malefic entities, criminals of the spirit world, who love to use hateful traps to capture individuals going through tormenting situations like mine in order to enslave them and increase the obsessing hordes that destroy earth's societies and ruin men and women, submitting them to the vilest temptations with their deadly influence. One day, I turned a corner and came across a horde of about two hundred individuals of both sexes. It was night; or at least that is what I thought, because, as usual, darkness enveloped me. Everything I have described so far I saw somewhat defined in the darkness, seeing more by perception than by eyesight per se. As a matter of fact, I considered myself blind, without explaining to myself how. Despite lacking the valuable sense of sight, I was nevertheless able to see all that vileness but not the light of the sun and the blue of the sky!

That throng, I found out, was the same sinister chorus that had terrified me earlier. I recognized it because as we joined up they started to howl in desperation, hurling blasphemies at Heaven that would make mine seem laughable in comparison!

I tried to retreat, to hide from that horde, horrified to become known to it. However, because it was going in the opposite direction, it quickly

engulfed me, sweeping me along with it, completely absorbing me in its folds!

I was pushed and pulled against my will, the throng so compact it swallowed me up. I only understood one thing, because I heard it being growled all around me: we were all being guarded by soldiers who were herding us somewhere. The horde had just been captured! At any given moment another wanderer and then another would be added to the mob, as had happened with me. Like me, they could not escape! It could be said that a contingent of cavalry was taking us to prison. We could hear the horses' hooves on the streets and see the sharp lances shining in the darkness, imbuing us with the utmost fear.

I protested against the violence I was being submitted to. I loudly proclaimed that I was not a criminal, giving my name, my titles and my qualifications. But the soldiers, if they heard me at all, did not respond. Silent, mute and erect, they advanced on their horses to close us in an insurmountable circle! The commander, opening the way in the darkness, held a staff, on the top of which a small, waving banner and an inscription could be glimpsed. However, the darkness was so thick that we could not read it even if the desperation that flogged us were to allow us a pause to do so.

The march was long. A freezing cold made us shiver. I mingled my own tears and cries of pain and despair with the horrific chorus, and I participated in the atrocious symphony of blasphemies and lamentations. We were trapped, unable to escape! Moving slowly, without getting a single word out of our captors, we finally started to proceed with difficulty down a deep valley. We were obliged to walk in pairs, while the guards did the same.

Caves appeared on both sides of the roads, which looked more like narrow gorges cut between steep and gloomy mountains; all of the caves were numbered. They appeared to comprise a strange "village," a town where the dwellings were all caves, possibly due to the poverty of the inhabitants, who did not have enough money to make them nicer and more inhabitable. What was certain, however, was that everything was in need of repair, making it without a doubt the dwelling place of Misery itself! It was impossible to make out the ground we were walking on: everywhere stones, bogs or swamps, darkness, downpours... From the feverish perspective of my wretchedness, I thought that if this were not actually a small area on the moon, there must certainly be places like it up there...

We were herded deeper and deeper into that abyss... We walked and walked and walked... Finally, in the center of a square that was wet like a swamp, the soldiers stopped, and after them the whole mob.

Amid the sudden silence we could see that the soldiers were turning around to leave.

And so they did! We saw them moving away, one by one, down the muddy and winding lanes, literally abandoning us there!

Confused and terrified, we ran after them, anxious to get out of that place too. But it was all in vain! The lanes, the caves and the bogs continued one after the other in a labyrinth where we always became lost. No matter where we ran to, we always encountered the same landscape and the same topography. Unconceivable terror fell over the horde. On my part, I was not able to think about or consider a solution for the situation. I felt I was being held by the tentacles of a horrible nightmare, and, bewildered in my crushing astonishment, the harder I tried to rationally explain what was happening, the less I understood it!

My companions were hideous, as hideous as were all the other wretches we had met in that accursed valley, those who had welcomed us in tears and torments similar to our own. Unsightly, horror-stricken faces, squalid and disfigured by the intensity of their sufferings, disheveled, unbelievably tragic, those wretches would be unrecognizable even to those who once loved them, and would stir in them nothing but repulsion! I started to scream desperately, stricken by an odious phobia of the Horror before me! A normal human being, one that had not fallen into the clutches of madness, would have been unable to appreciate what I started to suffer once I grasped that what I was experiencing was not a dream, a nightmare arising from the deplorable madness of alcohol poisoning! No! I was not an alcoholic in the claws of delirium tremens! Nor was it a dream, a nightmare created by my mind, deranged by the debauchery of customs! Before my eyes, frightened with infernal dread, the most pungent reality that hell could invent presented itself – an accursed, bewildering, ferocious reality! – created by a phalanx of those suicide reprobates imprisoned in an environment appropriate for their critical and peculiar state as a cautious and charitable measure for living human beings, who would not be able to endure, without great upheaval and perturbation, the intromission of such wretches in their daily lives!<sup>14</sup>

Oh yes! Imagine a huge assembly of deformed creatures – men and women – characterized by hallucinations arising from their own personal situations, all of them wearing garments caked with the clay of their graves, their faces altered and tormented by the signs of atrocious suffering! Imagine a place – a whole village – enveloped in dense veils of cold and asphyxiating darkness, where those afterlife inhabitants, felled by suicide, dwelled, each one displaying the ignoble manner of the death he or she had chosen with the intent of sidestepping the Divine Law, that Law that had granted them corporeal life as a precious opportunity for progress, a priceless instrument for the redemption of the grievous wrongs of the past!

That was the multitude of creatures my bewildered eyes were able discern in the darkness that lent itself to such a horrific type of perception, forgetting in the insanity of my habitual pride that I too belonged to that repugnant ensemble, that I too was a demented hideous being branded by my own suicide!

Here and there, I could see some displaying in nervous twitches the spasms from their having hanged themselves. In emotionally charged instinctive gestures, they tried to free their engorged and purplish necks from the cords or tatters of cloth, reflected in their post-death perispirits as a result of the imbalanced mental vibrations that continued to torture them! Others, deranged and constantly racing around, cried for help in stentorian screams, believing they were engulfed in flames, terrified of the fire that they continued to feel consuming their physical body after their suicide, burning without relief in the semi-material sensitivity of the perispirit! I noticed that most of these were women.

There were others, too, displaying chests, ears or throats drenched in blood! Continuous, unchanging blood that nothing could erase from the physical-spiritual imprint except an expiatory and reparatory reincarnation! These poor wretches, in addition to the multiple modalities of torment that assaulted them, were constantly and worriedly trying to stop the flow of blood, sometimes with their hands, sometimes with their clothes, or with anything else they could find; but they were unsuccessful because of their deplorable mental state, which troubled and dogged them to total desperation! The presence of these wretches would impress anyone to the point of insanity, given the unconceivable sight of their unchanging repetitive gestures, which they were forced to make in spite of themselves! Others, suffocating in the brutality of drowning, flailed their arms furiously in search of something that



could save them, as registered by their minds in their final moment of death, when, exhausted, they were swallowing water in continuous gulps. These scenes prolonged their wild agony unendingly, something human eyes could not have witnessed without being overcome by insanity!

But there was more, still!... I beg the readers to forgive my remembrance of these details, which may be unappealing to their literary taste but surely useful as a warning to their possibly impetuous character as they are called on to live with the inconveniences of the times, in which the horrible malady of suicide has become an endemic evil. The truth of the matter is that it is not our intention to offer a literary work to delight artistic tastes and temperaments. We are merely carrying out a sacred duty, seeking to reach those who are suffering in order to tell them the truth regarding that abyss, which, with malefic seduction, has lured so many disbelieving souls amidst the disappointments common to everyday life!

Very close to the spot where I had hunkered down in an effort to get away from the sinister pack, half a dozen suicides, who had sought “eternal oblivion” by throwing themselves under the wheels of a train, appeared in all their striking hideousness. Their disfigured perispirits looked like the covering of a monstrous aberration. Their clothes were in fluttering tatters, they were covered in bloody scars, slashed, jagged, a web of gashes, as if the deplorable condition into which suicide had reduced their corporeal envelope had been photographed on that subtle and sensitive plate – the perispirit. The physical body, that temple – O, my God! – which the Divine Master has ordered to be a precious and effective vehicle to help us on our pathway in search of glorious spiritual victories! Crazed by superlative suffering, possessed by the supreme affliction that can strike the soul that has originated from the divine spark, and displaying to the eyesight of the terrified observer what the lower zones of the spirit world contain that is most tragic, gut-wrenching and horrific, those miserable wretches howled in lamentations so heartrending and impressive that their dolorous influence immediately infected all who defenselessly crossed their path, completely enveloping them in their inconsolable madness... This horrific type of suicide, one of the most deplorable that will ever be described in these pages, had profoundly and violently affected the nervous system and the general sensitivity of the astral body. The brutality of the impact had caused their mind to go numb, which, as a result, could not orient itself, scattered and confused as it was in the midst of the chaos that had erupted around it!

\* \* \*

The mind constructs and produces. Thought – it has often been said – is a creating power, and as such it manufactures, materializes, retains the images it engenders, realizes, preserves what has passed, and with powerful claws, maintains the present for as long as it desires.

Each one of us in the Sinister Valley, vibrating violently and retaining with our mental power the atrocious moment when we committed suicide, recreated the setting and respective scenes of our last moments as human beings on the earth. Such scenes, reflected around each one of us, brought confusion to the valley, spreading tragedy and hell everywhere, battering the wretched prisoners with superlative afflictions. Thus, here and there, one would come across makeshift gallows holding the dangling bodies of suicides as they recalled the moment when they rushed headlong into their willful deaths. Various vehicles, including speeding trains, would catch and grind under their wheels the deranged wretches that had killed their bodies in this execrable way. Having impregnated their minds with that sinister moment, they would unceasingly visualize the episode, displaying their hideous remembrances to their companions in misery!<sup>15</sup> Flowing rivers, and even broad stretches of the ocean, would suddenly appear in the middle of those gloomy lanes – the consequence of a half dozen deranged reprobates passing through, reliving the scenes of their drowning, bringing to mind the tragic memory of plunging into those waters!... Everywhere, men and women in utter desperation: some bleeding; others writhing in the torment of fatal poisonings, and, worse yet, showing their corporeal entrails corroded by the ingested toxin; still others screaming for help, running crazily, their bodies on fire, bringing even more panic to the rest of the inhabitants of the valley, who were afraid of catching on fire by contact; but ultimately, all possessed by a collective insanity! Furthermore, crowning the depth and intensity of those unimaginable torments, were the mental afflictions: remorse, longing for loved ones they could no longer hear from, as well as the very anguishes that had given rise to their desperate act in the first place, and which continued to afflict them in spite of it!... And in addition to that, the physical-material sufferings: hunger, cold, thirst, and the overall physiological demands, tormenting, irritating, and despairing! Fatigue, insomnia, debility, fainting! Imperative necessities and unsolvable discomforts of all sorts that defied any possibility of mitigation. And all the while, the insidious and inescapable vision of the rotting cadaver, its repugnant smell, the repercussion in the

suicide's frantic mind of the worms consuming the putrid matter, making the suffering wretch think that he or she, too, was stricken by decay!

And another peculiar thing! The rabble displayed fragments of a torn, phosphorescent luminous cord dangling from themselves, like a short cable made of electrical wires that had snapped violently, giving off fluids that should have stayed together for a certain purpose. This apparently insignificant detail was, quite to the contrary, of capital importance, for it was precisely in that cord that the troubles of the suicide's present state were established. Today, we know that this fluidic-magnetic cord, which ties the soul to the physical body and gives it life, is in the right condition to separate from the body only at the time of *natural* death, a separation that happens at the time without shock or abrupt violence. With a suicide, however, when this cord is cruelly snapped and not disconnected properly, when it is torn while still enjoying its fluidic and magnetic vigor, it produces most, if not all, the disequilibrium we have been describing. If the reservoir of magnetic forces for a certain life span on the earth is not yet depleted, it leads the suicide to feel like a "zombie" in the most expressive meaning of the term. However, when we first noticed this, we had no knowledge of that natural occurrence, which made it one more motive for our confusion and terror.

Such a deplorable state, which human beings cannot comprehend because they lack the words and images, is prolonged until the reserves of vital and magnetic forces are exhausted. This varies in accordance with the degree of each individual's life-force. The individual's character, as well as his or her attachment to coarse and inferior material sensations, also influences the length of this particular state. It is a complex process that only time, with its extensive provision of sufferings, is able to correct.

\* \* \*

One day, after a prolonged hyper-excitement, a profound weakness came over me. An unusual debility rendered me very quiet, as if I could pass out at any moment. I and other companions of my group were exhausted, incapable of enduring such a desperate situation any longer. The need for repose often made us faint, obliging us to remain in our uncomfortable caves.

Twenty-four hours had not yet elapsed since the start of this new condition, when once again we were alerted by the significant rumble of the "caravan" we had seen on other occasions.

I shared the same cave of pain with four other individuals, all Portuguese

like myself. In the course of our long, shared torment, we had become inseparable. One of them, however, aggravated me to no end, and inclined me to arguments, for, in spite of the chaotic situation, he continued to wear a monocle and a well-tailored tailcoat, and he carried a cane with a golden tip, a guise that, in my neurasthenic and impertinent way of thinking, made him pretentious and unpleasant in a place where one lived tormented by heinous smells and rot, and where our clothes seemed drenched in strange greasy substances, mental reflections of the decay that was devouring our physical bodies. However, I seemed to have forgotten that, in my own case, I continued to wear my pince-nez with its braided silk chain, my overcoat for ceremonial days, and my well-groomed full mustache... I must confess that, despite our long lodging together, I did not know their names. In that Sinister Valley the torment is too extreme for one to worry about other people's identities...

The familiar noise outside was coming closer and closer...

We leapt into the street... lanes and squares became filled with reprobates as on all previous occasions, and the same anguished shouting for help echoed in the gloomy atmosphere, trying to attract the attention of those who had come for the usual assessment.

Suddenly, from within the dense and dark surroundings, the white vehicles appeared, dispersing the darkness with their powerful spotlights.

The caravan stopped on the muddy square. A regiment of lancers stepped out. Immediately thereafter came men and women who looked like nurses, and then the same head of previous expeditions, in his Hindu turban and tunic.

Silently and discreetly, they began to examine those who would be assisted that day. The same austere voice that seemed to vibrate in the dense air patiently called out the names of those who were to gather there, and who, at hearing their names, stepped forward on their own.

Those who did not answer the roll call in a timely manner, however, imposed the need on the members of the caravan to go search for them. The strange voice indicated their exact location, simply instructing:

“Dwelling number such and such; lane number such and such...”

Or depending on the circumstance:

“Demented... Unconscious... Is not in the cave... Is wandering in such and such lane... Will not answer when called... Recognizable by this or that detail...”

It was as if someone from far away were focusing a powerful telescope on our miserable dwellings in order to give the details of the situation to the hardworking expedition...

The workers of Fraternity would then consult a map, go quickly to the indicated spot, and bring out those they were looking for, carrying some in their arms, others on stretchers...

All of a sudden, in the dramatic atmosphere of that hellish place where I suffered so much, I heard my own name resonating loudly in the deepest depths of my being – a call to freedom! Immediately thereafter, the names of my four companions, who were with me on the square, were also called. It was then that I finally got to know their names, and they, mine.

The far-away voice announced, as if through a powerful, unseen loudspeaker:

“Dwelling number 36, lane 48, attention! Dwelling number 36, get ready to join the caravan... Attention!...Camilo Candido Botelho; Belarmino de Queiroz e Souza; Jeronimo de Araujo Silveira; Joao d’Azevedo; Mario Sobral... Please join the caravan...”<sup>16</sup>

It was with indescribable tears of emotion that I climbed the small steps of the platform indicated by a very patient and devoted nurse, while the lancers closed the circle around me and my four companions, keeping the other wretches from joining us or from pulling us back, thus creating confusion and delaying the return of the expedition.

I climbed into one of the vehicles. It was spacious and comfortable, with individual seats that seemed padded with white cloth and positioned beneath air-ducts much like those of modern airplanes. In the center were four seats in identical format for the nurses, implying that they would be sitting there to guard us. At the entrance door was the inscription seen before on the banner held by the commander of the regiment of lancers: **Legion of the Servants of Mary.**

In a few minutes the task of the dedicated caravan was over. Inside, we heard the muffled sound of a bell, followed by a rapid movement of the lifting

of the access platforms and the boarding of the caravan workers. At least, those were the series of mental images I conceived...

The strange train started to move without the slightest shaking or wavering. We could not contain our tears, however, at hearing the deafening blasphemous chorus, the desperate and savage shouting of the wretches that had to stay behind because they were not yet sufficiently dematerialized to be able to reach less dense planes in the spirit world.

We were accompanied and cared for by women nurses who addressed us with tenderness, inviting us to rest and affirming their solidarity, and carefully making us comfortable in our seats like devoted and benevolent sisters of Charity...

The vehicle started to gain distance from the valley... Little by little, the gray fog started to dissipate before our eyes, which had been for so long tormented by the most harrowing blindness – that of a guilty conscience!

We were now moving faster... The smog of darkness had stayed behind like a cursed nightmare that disappears as we wake up from a painful sleep... Now the roads were broad and straight, stretching farther than the eye could see... The atmosphere became as white as snow... Benevolent breezes blew, bringing lightness to the air...

Merciful God!... We had left the Sinister Valley!

It had been left behind, lost in the darkness of the abominable!... It had been left behind, wedged in the invisible abysses created by the sins of humankind, flogging the souls of those who had forgotten their God and Creator!

Moved and fearful, I was finally able to lift my thought to the Immortal Fount of Eternal Goodness to humbly give thanks for the great mercy I had received!

---

<sup>13</sup> Once, about twenty years ago, one of my devoted spirit mentors, Charles, took me to a public cemetery in Rio de Janeiro in order to visit a suicide that roamed around his own rotting physical remains. It is not necessary to say that such visit was carried out in my astral body (the perispirit). The perispirit of this suicide, heinous like a demon, infused me with terror and revulsion. He was completely disfigured and unrecognizable, covered in scars, as many scars as the pieces his body had been reduced to, since the wretch had thrown himself under the wheels of a train that tore him to bits. There is no possible way of describing the state of that spirit's suffering! He was deranged, bewildered, sometimes enraged, unable to calm himself down enough to reason, and insensible to any vibration that was not his immense disgrace! We tried to speak to him, but he could not hear us! And Charles, with immense sorrow, with an indefinable touch of tenderness, remarked: "In a case like this, only prayer can make a difference! Prayer is the only relief we can offer on his behalf that is saintly enough to bring him some

respite after a certain amount of time ...” “What about those scars,” I asked, very impressed. “They will only disappear,” said Charles “after the expiation of the wrong, of its reparation in anguished existences, which will require uninterrupted tears, and which will take no less than a century, or perhaps much longer ... May God have mercy on him, because until then ...” For many years I prayed for that unfortunate suicide in my daily prayers. – (Medium’s note)

14 Actually, beyond the grave the mental vibrations of long-time addicts, like alcoholics, sexoholics, cocaine users, etc., can create and maintain nefarious and perverted visions and environments. If they also carry the added disequilibrium of having committed suicide, the situation can reach unconceivable proportions. – Medium’s note.

15 In various mediumistic sessions in which we took part in Spiritist organizations in the State of Minas Gerais (Brazil), the seeing mediums all agreed that they did not only perceive the distressed spirit of the suicide that was communicating, but also the scene of his or her suicide, unveiling to their mediumistic faculties the exact moment of the tragic occurrence. (Medium’s Note)

16 I beg the reader’s forgiveness for not disclosing in whole the names of these individuals as they were revealed to me by the spirit author of this book. (Medium’s Note)

## In the “Mary of Nazareth” Hospital

After some time, during which we had the impression of traveling great distances, the blinds were opened. In the distance we could make out an austere line of fortified walls enclosing a powerful fortress that imposed respectability and fear in the isolation that surrounded it.

It was a sad and desolate region, encircled by fog, as if the whole scenery had been covered with a cloak of continual snowfall, although we did not see any at the moment. At first, we could not make out any vegetation or signs of inhabitants in the vicinity of the immense fortress. Only vast white plains, with hills sprinkling them like little mounds piled up by the snow. And in the background, set in the middle of that desolate melancholy, appeared the menacing walls, the grand fortress with its half a dozen towers, similar to the old medieval fortifications, a greatly suggestive structure that would certainly impress anyone passing by.

A profound anxiety gripped us, awakening fears that had been put somewhat to rest during the trip.

What would be waiting for us on the other side of those walls?... It was obvious that we were heading that way...

Seen from afar, the edifice inspired fear, suggesting rigorous and austere discipline... An enormous impression of power, grandeur and majesty engrossed us, making us feel small and cowardly at the mere sight of it.

Getting closer and closer, the caravan finally stopped in front of a large gate, which had to be the main entrance.

Above the cornice, meticulously carved out in big artistic letters in the Portuguese language, we read the already familiar inscription. Like a miracle,



it calmed down our agitation as soon as we saw it: Legion of the Servants of Mary.

Beneath it was another sign that brought us new apprehensions: **Correctional Colony.**

As my reasoning was still slow and dazed due to the long torment I had endured, I did not ask for an explanation. I let events take their course and saw that my companions were doing the same.

The fortress even had a moat. A bridge was lowered over it, and as the caravan entered the Colony, serious worries came over us concerning the future ahead of us. At first glance, we noticed numerous soldiers nearby, as if the fortification held an entire regiment. We were amazed to see that these soldiers were very similar to ancient Egyptian and Hindu warriors. Over the portico of the main tower was another inscription, like a dream that filled us with even more uncertainty: **Watchtower.**

Where were we?... Had we gone back to Portugal?... Were we traveling through an unknown country, where snow dominated the whole landscape?...

We crossed the large military square without stopping, certain that it had to be a battle fortification similar to those on the earth, albeit covered with indescribable nobility, unlike the analogous citadels scattered throughout Europe. At this point we were not yet able to grasp the true purpose of its existence in the desolate regions of the lower realms of the Invisible, where it was surrounded by dangers much more serious than we could ever imagine.

We were surprised to realize we were entering a bustling city, even though covered by extensive layers of snow or heavy fog. We were amazed that it was not intensely cold, and the sun, timidly showing through the mist, gave us an opportunity not only to warm up but also to see what surrounded us.

Superb buildings invited our admiration. They had been built in the lovely classic Portuguese style, which spoke profoundly to our souls. Busy individuals entered and exited them in purposeful activity, all wearing a long white uniform with the sky-blue cross on the chest flanked by the letters L.S.M.

The buildings seemed to be public offices or departments. Gracious private homes of a refined, noble style were lined up forming artistic streets lacquered in white, as if paved with snow. The caravan stopped in front of

one of these buildings and we were asked to step down. On the portico, its purpose was written in visible letters: **Security Department** (Admissions and Registration).

It was the headquarters of the sector where we would be admitted and registered as wards of the Colony. From that moment on, we would be under the direct wardship of one of the most important groups of the Legion headed by the great spirit Mary of Nazareth, an angelic and sublime being that had merited the honorable mission of accompanying with maternal solicitude the One who became the redeemer of humankind!

We were taken to a large, stately courtyard that resembled those of the old monasteries in Portugal, and were immediately taken in small groups of ten to a room where various workers concentrated on the task of getting us all registered. We disclosed our earthly identity, the causes that had led us to commit suicide, the type of suicide, and the place where our remains had been laid to rest. If the new arrival was not in a condition to answer, the head of the expedition would rapidly fill in, as he was present at the time of admission, giving the director of the department an account of the important mission he had just carried out. Because the procedures were not the same as those known on the earth, the hard work involving such a large phalanx took a half hour at the most. The patients' answers were recorded on interesting disks, a type of record animated with scenes and movement thanks to the use of special magnetic devices. These records were able to reproduce the sound of our voices, images and individual reports when played on the proper equipment, just as records and film on the earth reproduce the human voice and all the varieties of sounds and images in need of being retained and preserved. Our identity, therefore, was photographed: the images transmitted by our thoughts as we answered the questions were captured by processes that at that time escaped our comprehension.

For a long time, we would not be able to see the women that had arrived with us. The rules of the Colony made it mandatory for them to be separated from their male companions in misfortune.

Immediately after their admission, they were entrusted to female workers to be taken to the Women's Sectors. So, as soon as we were admitted, we were separated from the women.

After a little while we were handed over to other personnel, whose tasks were performed within the walls of the institution, and we were taken to

board new means of transportation that seemed to be for inside use only, for we had to continue with the procedures begun in the Valley.

These vehicles had a capacity of ten each, and were light and graceful, like speedy and comfortable sleds pulled by the same remarkable teams of Norman horses. We left the Watchtower behind and proceeded at a moderate speed until we entered the so-called countryside, an uninhabited region, although provided with carefully planned roads that were lined with white bushes like flowers of the Alps. After an hour, other large landmarks appeared, like arcs of triumph, signaling the entrance to a new sector in a new province of the Correctional Colony, situated on the invisible border between the earth and the spirit world.

And finally, there it was – over the main arch, informing new arrivals and clarifying any possible doubts: **Hospital Sector**

On one side and the other were arrows indicating subdivisions, with signs further directing newcomers to the hospital's departments:

**To the right:** Mental Ward.

**To the left:** Isolation Ward.

The workers responsible for us led us through the door in the front marked: **Mary of Nazareth Hospital**

Once inside, we were surprised by a large landscaped park, flanked by tall, beautiful buildings, always in the classic Portuguese style, with broad arches, columns and towers, and terraces with climbing flowers accentuating the pleasing aesthetic. For someone like us, miserable and desperate arrivals from the lower regions of the spirit world, such a place, in spite of the blandness of its unchanging white scenery, seemed like a supreme hope of redemption! In addition, the park even had artistic fountains silently squirting limpid and crystalline water, their cascading drops looking like delicate pearls, while tame birds, groups of graceful doves, flew amongst the lilies.

Unlike the other hospital departments, such as the Mental and the Isolation Wards, the Mary of Nazareth Hospital, or the “Main Hospital,” was not walled off with barriers. Only leafy trees and beds of lilies and roses served as graceful fences. Many times, in my days of convalescence, I imagined how wonderful it would be if natural colors would break through the white cloak that covered everything, saddening the environment with its persistent monotony!

Fatigued, drowsy and downcast, we climbed the stairs. Groups of attentive male nurses, headed by two young assistants to the department's director, and dressed in Hindu garb – we found out later that their names were Romeu and Alceste – received us directly from the hands of the Security workers, who up to then had been responsible for us. Gently, they took us inside.

We entered magnificent galleries, lined with large glass doors with frames lightly tinted in blue. Through the glass doors we could see the interior of the hospital wards. They were configured in a way that patients would never find themselves alone. Our groups were separated following the nurses' directions: ten to the right... ten to the left... Each spacious room had ten comfortable white beds and a terrace facing the park. We were charitably given hospital garments and were able to take a bath, which brought us tears of gratitude. Each of us was served a delicious, warm and invigorating broth in dishes as white as the bed sheets, and each broth was flavored according to our desire. A remarkable fact: as we ingested our frugal meal, our childhood homes came to our minds – the family gatherings, the dinner table, the sweet figure of our mother serving us, the austere figure of our father at the head of the table... Remembrances that prompted us to mix indefinable tears with the revitalizing nourishment...

A fireplace, at an angle favorable to the ten beds, warmed the entire room, providing us much comfort. High up on the wall, which seemed to be made of porcelain, a fascinating painting, luminous and animated with life and intelligence, had caught our attention as soon as we walked in. It was a painting of the Virgin of Nazareth, somewhat similar to the famous picture by Murillo that I knew so well, but sublimated by a virtuosity nonexistent among earth's genius painters!

After we finished our meal, two Hindu-clad men came in, appearing to be physicians. They were accompanied by two other men who were in charge of the ward and were responsible for us throughout our hospitalization. Their names were Carlos and Roberto de Canalejas, father and son, respectively, who used to be Spanish doctors. We saw them only imperfectly, however, given our state of debility. The descriptions narrated to our readers so far were derived from brief glimpses, as if we were coming in and out of a dream...

The Hindus approached our beds and talked caringly with each of us, and they touched our tormented foreheads with hands so delicate and snow-

white that they seemed translucent. They arranged our pillows and urged us to rest. As they pulled the covers over our freezing bodies, they whispered in a tender and suggestive tone that immediately brought a heavy drowsiness over us:

“You need to rest... You can rest now without concern, my friends... You are guests of Mary of Nazareth, the sweet Mother of Jesus... This is her hospital.”

Judging from their care towards us, other assistants must have been doing the same for the rest of the tragic phalanx rescued by the Love of God!

\* \* \*

After a deep and restorative sleep that seemed to have lasted for several hours, I somehow perceived that my thoughts were becoming clearer, more capable of understanding and comprehending the circumstances. I realized that I was in possession of myself, relieved of that morbid nightmarish state that had brought so much exasperation. But alas! This mental invigoration only deepened rather than mitigated my torment because it compelled me to examine with greater serenity the depth of the act I had committed against myself! A burning sentiment of grief, remorse, terror and disappointment kept me from enjoying my improved situation. An uncomfortable feeling of shame flogged my being, shouting to my pride that I was there undeservedly, without any right, only tolerated by the magnanimity of highly charitable individuals illuminated by the true love of God!

Anguishing doubts continued to whirl around in my mind. It just was not possible that I had died. My suicide obviously could not have killed me because I was still alive, completely alive!

So what had happened, really?... My ward companions, and certainly everybody else from the extensive group that had left the darkness of the Valley, would surely be struggling with the same question! Astonishment, fear and inconsolable sorrow were displayed on everyone's disfigured face.

Furthermore, in addition to the new sorrows that assaulted us, and in spite of the hospitalization and the invigorating sleep, the physical pain originating from the wounds we had inflicted on ourselves continued to torment our sensibility, together with the recognition of our condition as reproachable reprobates.

Jeronimo and I would moan from time to time due to the wound above our ears inflicted by the weapon we utilized at the tragic moment. Mario Sobral, who had hanged himself, would squirm – his neck engorged – and jerk periodically due to strangulation. Joao d’Azevedo, retaining in his tortured mind the poisoning of the body that was decaying in the darkness of the grave, would weep quietly and ask for a doctor. And Belarmino displayed blood streaming from his aching and numb, already paralyzed arm – an early prelude to the physical drama he would endure in a subsequent reincarnation – because he had committed suicide by slashing his wrist!

The relief, however, was palpable. We no longer saw each other’s mental images reproducing the fatal moment in horrific detail, as had happened in the Valley, where there was no other scenery. The ward was very comfortable, proof of how well-settled we were. There were traces of art and beauty on the blue-framed doors, made of substances like polished porcelain, and on the blue-laced curtains. Even the white vines looked like words of art as they climbed up the balconies and onto the terraces, as if spying on our dramatic grimaces as criminals caught in the act.

Unexpectedly, the voice of a patient, one of our companions, broke the silence of our ponderings, expressing his thoughts as if speaking to himself:

“I have come to the conclusion,” he began slowly and filled with sorrow, “that the best we can do is to recommend ourselves to God and accept with goodwill whatever lies ahead of us... Desperation did us no good at all; it only made us even more wretched than we were in the first place!... So much rebelliousness and folly... to gain nothing more than the heightening of our already atrocious misery!... From this we can see that we have been choosing the wrong pathways in life... It is undeniable, however, that we are subordinate to a Higher Will, independent of our own!... This is highly significant... I’m not sure that I died, after all... Actually, I don’t think I did!

“My mother was a simple and humble person, not well-educated but devoted to the belief in and reverence for God. She would tell her children, with strange conviction, when she gathered them together around the fireplace to teach them the prayers for the night and the principles of the Christian Law, that all beings have an immortal soul created by the Supreme Being and destined to glorious redemption by the love of Jesus Christ, and that we would have to give an account of it one day to our Creator and Father! I haven’t heard anything more valuable ever since! I consider the lessons given by my mother at our nightly family gatherings to be much superior to those I

acquired later on at the university. Unfortunately for me, I just smiled at my mother's wisdom and plunged headlong into the distraction of the human passions... However, dear mother, I did accept the possibility of the beautiful belief you tried to infuse into my rebellious soul! I was not a complete atheist!

“Today, after so many years and so much suffering, and placed in situations that I could never figure out, I am convinced that my mother was right – I must possess a truly immortal soul! One might survive a gunshot and recover from it! One might also recover from ingesting a corrosive substance if the circumstances are right. But one cannot recover from a hanging, which I chose! And if I'm here, if I suffered what I suffered without being able to extinguish the forces of life in me, it is because I'm immortal! And if I'm immortal, it is because, in fact, I have a soul... The physical body is not immortal, because it decays in the grave! And if I possess a soul gifted with immortality, it is because it came from God, who is Eternal! Mother, mother, you spoke the truth! God, O God! You do exist! And I denied you always, through my acts, my passions, my disregard for your rules, and my criminal indifference towards your principles!... Now... now the time has come to give you an accounting for the soul you created – my own soul! And I have nothing to say to you, Lord, except that my passions brought misfortune to it, when instead, upon creating me, you determined that I lead it obediently towards your glorious embrace! Forgive me! O God, please, forgive me!”

At this point, his abundant tears mingled with the spasmodic agony of strangulation. Still characterized by intense sorrow, they were no longer accompanied by the macabre convulsions that the shedding of tears in the Valley always provoked.

It was Mario Sobral who had uttered those words.

Mario had large brown eyes, unkempt hair and a deranged stare. He had graduated from the University of Coimbra, and one could recognize in him the wealthy, good-looking bohemian type from Lisbon. His speech was usually flowing and tense. He would have made an excellent lecturer if he had left the university as a learned person and not as a bohemian. In the captivity of the Valley, he had been one of the most tormented entities I had come across, but in spite of that he would make quite an impression during our long internment in the Colony.

With this testimonial, a series of confidences ensued among the ten of us. I do not know why we wished to speak. Perhaps the need for mutual

consolation impelled us to open our hearts, however ineffective it proved to be to bring relief for our sorrows, because as difficult as it is for suicides to console themselves, it is certainly not by remembering past sufferings and misfortunes that they will mitigate the penury that oppresses their soul.

“You are strong in dialectics, my friend, and I congratulate you on the progression of your way of thinking. It was not in this manner that I had the honor of knowing you from somewhere else,” I mocked him, annoyed by the breaking of the silence.”

“I believe as you do and I admire your logic, dear friend Sobral!” interposed a Portuguese man with a full mustache, lying in the bed next to mine, and whose wound to his right ear bled without stopping, causing me great discomfort. Whenever I focused on him, I was reminded that I myself had an identical wound, which tormented me with atrocious reminiscences.

His name was Jeronimo de Araujo Silveira, the most impatient and pretentious, the most incoherent and exasperating of all ten of us.

“As a matter of fact, I have never doubted the existence of God, Creator of all things. I was... I mean, I am! – because I’m not dead! – I am a dyed-in-the-wool Catholic from Lisbon, a brother of the Venerable Brotherhood of the Sacred Trinity, with rights to special blessings and indulgencies when necessary.”

“I think, dear neighbor, the time has come for you to demand the favors you think you’re entitled to... You’re in great need of them,” I retorted, with increasing ill will, playing the role of obsessor.

He did not reply, but went on:

“I was very short-fused and impatient from my youth! I was very sensitive, restless and rebellious, sometimes melancholy and sentimental... and I must confess that I was never very serious about the true Christian duties conveyed in the pious advice of our counselor and confessor from Lisbon. That was surely why my commercial businesses fell apart... I don’t know if you knew this, but I was a wine importer and exporter. I was finally overcome by insoluble debts and was caught by a crushing and irreversible bankruptcy. I didn’t have the means to avoid the poverty that reared its ugly head at me and my family. I was accused by friends and family as bearing solely responsibility for the dramatic failure. I was shaken by what might happen to my wife and kids, whom I had habituated to living in too much comfort, even luxury, because I loved them so much... At seeing me



dispirited and suffering, they began cruelly blaming me for everything instead of helping me remove the cross of defeat that had stricken all of us... Under the weight of those events, the courage I had always had grew weak, and I then ‘attempted’ to desert everyone and even myself in order to escape reproach and humiliation. But I deceived myself – I only changed residency without finding death, in addition to losing contact with my family, which added unbearable vexation!”

“Yes, it is regrettable!” continued Mario in the same depressed tone, as if he had not heard Jeronimo at all. “I fell into the darkness of Misfortune!... when, my whole life, I had been given so many good opportunities to tame my passions, to make room for honest acquisitions!... I forgot that reverence for God, Family and Duty was the sacred goal, because, indeed, I had received good moral principles in my childhood home!... As a young man I was interesting, intelligent and educated, but I became conceited because of the gifts I had been granted. I cultivated selfishness and gave rein to base instincts that demanded ever more intense pleasures... Ostentatious life at the university turned me into a pretentious fool, whose only concerns were showy, if not scandalous, situations... which ultimately led me to be swept away by depressing passions... And when I could no longer find myself for self-redemption, I sought death, imagining that I could hide from my remorse behind the oblivion of the grave!... I deceived myself! Death did not accept me! It certainly thought me too vile to honor me with its protection! That’s why it handed me back over to life after the gravedigger had the honor of covering my repulsive figure from the light of the sun!

“My mother, however, was right! I am immortal! I will never, ever die! I will exist for all eternity in the presence of the One who is my Creator! Yes! Only an immortal being could have survived the torments that have assaulted me ever since that fateful spring night of 1889!”

His congested eyes had a far-off look, as if he was trying to bring past memories into the present, and then uttered breathlessly and fearfully as if looking at the darkest page flogging his conscience:

“O, dear God! Forgive me! Forgive me! I repent and surrender; I can now see that I erred! I lost myself, dear God, because of my desperate love for Eulina!... But if you would allow me, I will reform myself out of love for you!

“Eulina!... You weren’t even worth the bread I bought to satiate your hunger! I loved you above all appropriateness, in spite of honor itself! But you were treacherous and evil!... Even so, I was even lower than you, because I was married and my wife was noble and dignified! I was the father of three innocent children, to whom I owed love and protection! I abandoned them for you, Eulina; I lost interest in them because I fell head over heels for you, an exotic South American beauty! Oh, how beautiful you were!... But you didn’t love me back... You dragged me from downfall to downfall, exploiting my wealth and my heart. And then you left me in the despair of misery and ingratitude when you were conquered by that Brazilian capitalist, your countryman!

“I went to your house, only to be insulted... I begged; like the fool I’ve always been, I threw myself at your feet in sheer despair, desperate from losing you! I begged for scraps of your compassion when your love was no longer possible!

“I provoked you into an argument, knowing that you were deaf to my desperate attempts at reconciliation... and blinded by your repeated insults, I attacked you, wounding the face that I adored; I beat you without pity; I kicked you. God! Oh, God! Then I strangled you to death! I killed you! I killed you!... I killed you!”

He stopped, suffocating in the atrocious convulsions of a true reprobate, but then continued, as if addressing his companions:

“When, filled with terror, I saw what I had just done, only one thing occurred to me, swiftly as an obsessive impulse, that would enable me to escape the unbearable consequences – suicide! And so, right then and there, I hurriedly tore some of the wretch’s sheets... and hanged myself from a beam in the kitchen.”

“Not a very poetic way for a lover to die,” I mocked him, annoyed by the long tale I had heard him repeat every day in the Valley. “I’m sure that Mr. Professor here, who desired to die so elegantly, like Petronius, did it for the platonic love of some comely blond English lady... Illustrious Portuguese gentlemen, like yourself, have shown their propensity to fall for English women.”

I was addressing Belarmino de Queiroz e Sousa, whose name exuded high society.

This poor companion in tragedy had always aggravated me no end, and I made fun of him whenever I got the chance, a major defect that would cause me a lot of grief and unpleasantness until I was able to correct it through the efforts of inner reform I imposed on myself in the Spirit Homeland.

Belarmino was tall, slender, elegant and well-mannered. According to him, he had been wealthy and well-traveled, a professor of Dialectics, Philosophy and Mathematics, and also a polyglot – undoubtedly a respectable assortment of titles for any man that crawls the earth, but which did not prevent him and his monocle, tailcoat and cane from having to live in the slums of the Sinister Valley during his internment there on account of his suicide. I had said something like this to his face on many occasions, annoyed at his vain depiction of what he had been and done. The professor, however – because indeed he was a professor, with advanced degrees from more than one university – had never responded to my impertinence. Polite, cultured and sentimental, he could have reached true goodness of heart if, besides such admirable traits, he had not borne the defect of pride and the selfishness of deifying himself by deeming himself better than everyone else.

Upon hearing me, as usual he did not show one bit of irritation. He expressed his feelings with a gentle, even sorrowful, tone:

“I sincerely thought that the tomb would absorb my personality and transform it into an essence that would be dispersed in the abysses of nature – into complete nothingness!

“As a disciple of Auguste Comte, Philosophy led me to Materialism, to the accidental mechanics of things – the only satisfactory explanation I was able to offer my reasoning when confronted with the anomalies that at every step of life alarmed my heart and disappointed my mind!

“I always had great tenderness and compassion for human beings, who I considered brothers and sisters in misfortune – since to me life was the ultimate expression of Misfortune – in spite of trying to keep my distance from them as much as possible because I was afraid of loving them too much and thus suffer as a result! My understanding was that it was pure bad luck for a human being to be born, live, work, suffer and struggle under all pretexts... only to vanish forever in the dust of a grave!

“I was never inclined to form any relationships, whether of a high or lower class level. Philosophy had convinced me that Love was a secretion of the brain, so why love and raise a family just to bring more wretches to

life?... I was a devoted learner, that's for sure, and I would study in order to numb myself, avoiding the mountain of questions about the miserable situation of Humanity. Consequently, I had no time to cultivate love, whether with English or Portuguese ladies... I would rather study, in order to forget that one day I too would be lost in the void! I was an unhappy person, just like the rest of humanity! Only in the serene environment of my home could I find a bit of contentment... I held on to my home as long as possible, sorrowful that one day I would be forced to leave it to be reduced to nothing amidst the worms that would destroy my individuality! My mother shared my convictions because she had gotten them from my father, and she provided me with plenty of companionship in my spare time. So as you can see, the 'motive' for my 'attempted' suicide was not of a romantic nature at all. It was the loss of my health! I had always been physically frail, skinny and sad, an unhappy and unsatisfied dreamer, terrified of life! Incurable despair darkened the days of my life! Imprisoned in that depressing cycle, tuberculosis overtook my body, a hereditary ailment I was unable to combat! With no cure possible, I decided to end it once and for all, without further suffering; to annihilate that miserable matter that had already begun to rot under the disintegration of an incurable disease, matter that, due to its very nature, was destined for the decay of death, for eternal immersion in the abyss of Nothingness!

“Why should I have to wait for the dolorous progress of tuberculosis to extinguish my individuality in slow torment, without consolation and without a rewarding compensation in the afterlife, where I would find nothing but complete annihilation, perfect disintegration. I would become a discarded human scarecrow, from which everybody would flee, including its own mother – who would ever have thought it! – fearful of the danger of contagion?!

“Death was a good solution, very logical, for someone who, like me, could only look ahead and see the disheartening future of a body annihilated by disease, and the complete destruction of his being.”

“I do not possess your competence, Mr. Professor, nor can I reason with such poise,” interjected Jeronimo with simplicity, without perceiving the depth of the thesis he was presenting to the former professor of Dialectics. “But with all due respect, I consider it a deplorable sin for people not to believe in the existence of God, his Paternity towards all creatures, and the

immorality of the soul, no matter how criminal or wretched it may be. Fortunately for me, these were things I always believed in very strongly.”

“How and why, then, did you rebel against the natural circumstances of life, that is, the sufferings that were your share in this desolate assignment, to the point of confessing that you wanted to die, Mr. Araujo Silveira?... If I – disadvantaged by Faith, lacking Hope, forsaken by the disbelief in a Supreme Being, and at the mercy of the pessimism that my convictions had led me to, for whom the tomb meant only oblivion, annihilation, absorption into the void – could become disoriented when stricken by misfortune and could ‘attempt’ to kill myself in order to spare myself an uneven and useless fight, well that is quite conceivable! But what about the rest of you?... What about you, believers in the Paternity of a Father and Creator, the center of infinite perfection, as you say, under whose wise guidance you walk; you, with your certainty about the immortal soul, destined for its glorious Creator, heir to the same eternity of that Supreme Being towards which it evolves through the natural order of attraction and affinity? That you could fall into despair and rebel against the Law of the Absolute Power that prohibits the sacrilege of suicide is a paradox that is hard to accept. Possessing such knowledge, with your hearts illumined by the fervor of such a radiant conviction, with your energies invigorated by the power of such a sublime hope, you should have looked at yourselves as gods, blessed men for whom misfortune should have been a mere temporary setback! Oh, I wish I could convince myself of that truth! I wouldn’t be afraid to confront either the heartbreaks that ruined my days or the tuberculosis that reduced me to what you see!” replied the disciple of Comte with ferocious logic. His sincerity was finally beginning to awaken my sympathy.

“And now, what is your opinion of the present moment? What does Comte’s philosophy say about what is going on right now?” I asked, filled with curiosity, taking an interest in the discussion.

“Nothing!” he replied simply. “It doesn’t suggest anything at all... Nothing has changed; I’m just as I always have been... I was unable to die after all!”

What was obvious, however, was that disconcerting doubts had started to assault all of us, including him. But we were unwilling to yield to the evidence. We were too afraid to face reality.

“Tell us something about yourself, Mr. Botelho,” dared Joao in order to rebuke me. “You love to make comments about us, although you’ve been silent about yourself. But you seem like a very interesting person... As for me, I do not want to remain anonymous! You know very well the motive that pushed me into the ignoble abyss of suicide: my passion for gambling. I gambled away everything! Including my honor and my own life!”

“Pardon me, Mr. d’Azevedo, but how could you have gambled your life away... if you don’t mind talking about yourself?!” interjected Jeronimo disconcertingly.

Startled, but without answering, Joao insisted on provoking me to say something:

“Come on, illustrious writer, old bohemian from Oporto, come down from your ugly pedestal of pride... Come down and tell us something about your ‘majestic’ superiority.”

I felt the mordacity in Joao’s cruel words. He had taken a disliking to me in the same proportion that I loathed Belarmino, his good friend. Joao had stopped moaning for a moment in order to arouse my bad temper.

And I did get upset. I had always been very touchy and sensitive, and death had not yet corrected this grave defect.

Should I have to confess particularities to this bunch just because they were confessing theirs?... Was I obliged to offer any consideration to this rabble that I had met in the Valley of filth?... I asked myself, actually overcome by the pride of deeming myself far superior to them.

I had continued to abundantly show myself the very consideration that I was denying my companions in misfortune, thinking that if I had been flung into their midst, it was obviously due to a calamitous injustice; that I had not warranted such cruelty because I was, indeed, better, worthier, more deserving of favors than all the others that had lived in the Valley with me. Whatever the reason, I preferred not to talk – my pride would not let me to go that far. Individuals belonging to our unfortunate category, however, are not able to repress their impulses of thought and keep them silent in the company of similar individuals, nor do they know how to control their emotions to avoid the shame of inner scrutiny in the presence of strangers. Consequently, torrents of uneducated vibrations spill from them in ardent and emotional words, even if they do not desire it, as if the magnetic lock-gates that had kept them hidden in their deep mental recesses had burst open after the ordeal they

had experienced. As a matter of fact, the sincere tone, the gracious amiability of the Professor of Philosophy and Dialectics, inviting me to engage in an attitude more courteous than had been my habit until then, made me acquiesce to Joao d’Azevedo’s request. In answering, however, I addressed myself to the Professor, thinking that only because of his loftier education would he be capable of understanding me. And thus I began in a very intense, grave tone, giving myself ridiculous importance in my humiliating situation:

“In my case, Mr. Professor, I always looked at myself as an individual enlightened by superior knowledge, but in reality I’ve just now managed to grasp the fact that I didn’t know – and still don’t – what has always lain just a few inches from my nose. I was poverty-stricken (I say ‘was’ because something tells me that all of this belongs to the past) and had the unbearable defect of being a proud man, a man who did not disbelieve in the existence of a Superior Being presiding over his Creation, but who, considering God to be a Mystery that challenged the human ability to decipher its enigmas, offered neither any reverence to that Being with regards to his life nor any satisfaction by what he did or would do to satisfy his own whims and passions. Thus, it would be redundant to affirm, as wise as I judged myself to be, that I dragged around the dissonant ignorance of disbelief in the possibility of the existence of immutable, supreme laws coming from the Creating and Guiding Divinity to guide Creation, something that ultimately led me to commit very serious wrongs!

“I suffered, and my life was full of dismaying circumstances! Resignation was never a virtue that could have molded my innate violent and agitated nature. The depth of my sufferings turned me into a cantankerous and difficult person. Pride isolated me in the conviction that beyond myself nothing was bearable.

“After decades of failed struggles, of aspirations banished from my mind because they were not doable in reality, of disappointed ideals, of unfulfilled desires, of rejected efforts, of depleted energies due to successive disappointments, and of originally good intentions weakened and frayed due to merciless defeats – after all that, my friend, blindness! Blindness struck my weary eyes as the disconcerting prize for the struggles that had demanded supreme efforts from my strength!

“I went blind!

“The gloomy perspective of continuous darkness extended its black cloak over my terrified eyes, and neither the science of men nor the uplifting and naïve faith of friends who tried to get me to resign myself, nor the mystic requests to the Celestial Powers by the hearts that loved me, were able to lift it from me!

“As a result, I believed even less in such Powers.

“Blind! Me, blind?!

“How could I live without sight?!

“It occurred to me that if that Supreme Being, whom, until then, I had not doubted, did actually exist, this misfortune would not have happened, because he surely would not have wished it upon me. I forgot that there were millions of blind persons all over the world, some in conditions worse than mine, and that they were, just like me, creatures having come from the same God! I disbelieved because I thought that if there were other blind persons, so be it, but I shouldn't have to be one of them! This was indeed an injustice!

“Blind!... That was just too much!

“A profound and frightening desperation started to deplete my mental energy and my moral courage, reducing me to the inferiority of a coward! I, who had been able to so heroically overcome the obstacles that threatened my livelihood, would, from then on, be unable to continue my struggles! I felt defeated. Now blind, I saw my life as something that belonged to the past, a reality of something that ‘used to be,’ but which no longer was...

“The fatal obsession with suicide started to wander around in my mind. I became enamored with it and gave it shelter with all the abandon of my discouraged and defeated being. Death attracted me as an honorable end to an existence that had never yielded to anything! Death extended its seductive arms to me, deceitfully showing my mind, distorted by the disbelief in God, consoling visions of the peace of the grave!

“Once I firmed my decision based on morbid suggestions, depressed and alone with my superlative misery; unassisted by the serene consolation of faith, which would have softened the burning of my inner desperation; with my usually daring and intense mind now overexcited, I created a sorrowful romantic perspective around myself, and considering myself a martyr, I condemned myself without appeal.

“I was afraid and ashamed of being blind!



“I killed myself in order to hide from society, from other people and from my enemies the incapacity that I had been reduced to!

“No! No one was going to have the satisfaction of seeing me receive the bitter charity of other people’s compassion! No one was going to see the humiliating spectacle of my halting gait as I felt my way along in the darkness with unseeing eyes! My enemies weren’t going to rejoice with pleasure in the vengeance of seeing my irredeemable defeat! A thousand times no! I was not going to brutalize myself in the inertia of looking only inward while the Universe continued to radiate progressive and abundant life all around my poor shadow, impoverished by blindness!

“I killed myself because I realized I was too weak to continue, in the terrifying night of my blindness, that journey which, even with the light of my seeing eyes, had already been full of obstacles and pitfalls!

“It was just too much! I rebelled to the depths of my soul against the Fate that had held such a disconcerting surprise for me, and I remained inconsolable under the weight of the dramatic ingratitude I thought was deriving from God! As far as I was concerned, Providence, Destiny, the world, society were all wrong: I, only, was right, exaggerating the tragedy of my despair!

“Indeed!... I, who possessed such a remarkable intellectual capacity, was poverty-stricken, nearly starving, while around me the stupid and ignorant walked around with their coffers filled to the rim! I, an idealist and a good person, was constantly pestered by adversities that kept me cornered, placing me in situations that defied any possibility for victory! I, whose sentimental heart burned in generous and tender impulses of perhaps a sublime trait, saw myself constantly misunderstood, rejected, hurt by disregard that was as large as the impulses of my feelings! I, honest, honorable, righteous, always following salutary guidelines because they were more beautiful and fitting to the idealism of my character, had to deal with scoundrels, to trade with crooks, to compete with hypocrites, to trust rascals, to listen to rogues!...

“Oh yes, it was just too much!

“And after such an intense panorama of misfortune – yes, because for a person like me, impatient and not at all resigned, facts otherwise normal in daily life seemed like true moral calamities – after all that harshness, I still had to experience the cruel fate of becoming blind, being reduced to the

insignificance of a worm, the anguish of helplessness, the inertia of the cretin, the loneliness of the imprisoned!

“I simply could not go on!

“I lacked the understanding to grasp such a huge anomaly! I didn’t understand God! I didn’t understand his Law! I didn’t understand Life! A torrent of insoluble confusion flooded my mind, terrified of the reality before me! I understood one thing only: that I had to die, that I ought to die! And when a person stops trusting his God and Creator, he becomes a miserable wretch, a Godless reprobate! He wants the abyss; he seeks out the abyss; he plunges headlong into the abyss!

“And so I plunged headlong into the abyss!”

\* \* \*

I do not know what malefic suggestions my eloquent blasphemy spread in the morbid ambient of our sickroom. What I do know is that the sad assembly let itself slide back into disharmony, heart-wrenching outbursts and pain-filled weeping. Jeronimo, the wine merchant, and Sobral, the university professor, were the ones who suffered the most. As I proceeded with my anguished exposition, filled with the pitfalls of my past physical life and the dolorous and inescapable phases that had depressed me so cruelly, I felt burning tears roll down my gaunt face while my eyes lost the ability to see. Darkness replaced the details of the billowing blue curtains and the blooming vines that climbed up the columns of the balcony.

Helpful nurses rushed in to see what had happened, since this incident had not been foreseen. At the Mary of Nazareth Hospital, surrounded by the invigorating mental emanations of its guardians and supervisors, and touched by salutary and generous, beneficial magnetic waves, patients were to help with their own treatment by maintaining silence and not indulging in any conversations of a personal nature. They were to rest, to try to forget their tormenting past, to brush away shocking memories, and to recover as much as possible from the wounds that had tortured them for so long. Consequently, we were admonished as offenders of one of the most important hospital rules. Nor could we excuse ourselves by alleging ignorance. On the walls, permanent phosphorescent signs with requests for silence kept reminding us, and the institution itself offered an example by conducting its ongoing tasks very discreetly. Albeit benevolently, we were informed that recidivism could lead to a punitive measure, such as being transferred to the Isolation Ward. A

recurrence of the incident would produce serious disturbances of unknown consequences not only for us but for overall hospital discipline, which was to be strictly observed. By this we understood that the rules in Isolation would be much more austere, its discipline much more frightful. Furthermore, in order for such harsh measures to be avoided, a strict watch was set up in our quarters. From that moment on, a guard from the contingent of Hindu lancers from Security was appointed to keep an eye on us.

In addition to Romeu and Alceste, approximately fifteen minutes later a blond, smiling male healthcare giver of about twenty-three years of age, someone we had seen when we arrived at this astral establishment, came to meet with us accompanied by two other hospital workers. Radiating goodwill, he immediately put us at ease, addressing us kindly:

“My friends, my name is Joel Steel, and I am – or was, if you wish – a native Portuguese, but of English descent. In reality, old Portugal was always very dear to my heart... I could never forget my joyful days on its generous soil... I was very happy there, but fate dragged me off to Wales, the homeland of my dear mother Doris Mary Steel da Costa, and then... Well, it is as a compatriot and friend that I ask you to come with me to the O.R. for some tests. The surgery procedures have just started.”

We acquiesced promptly, filled with hope. We had been looking forward to this for so long! Our pain, as well as our general indisposition, excruciatingly reflecting what had happened to our physical-material body, had us yearning for the assistance of a physician for quite some time now.

Mario and Joao were in a very delicate condition and were taken on stretchers, while the rest of us walked, supported by the fraternal help of the kind assistants.

I could now surmise a few aspects of this magnanimous institution under the loving guardianship of the sublime Mother of the Nazarene.

Not only was the architecture worthy of admiration, but also the structure and the fantastic equipment, which entailed an assembly of extraordinary devices designed for the necessities of the astral hospital, demonstrating the high degree medicine had achieved among our guardians, even though the hospital was not located in an advanced zone of the spirit world.

Diligent, dedicated physicians tended with fraternal solicitude the poor wretches that needed their service and care. Their kind faces showed the

compassionate interest of the stronger toward the weaker, of the enlightened intelligence toward brothers and sisters still engulfed in the darkness of ignorance. Not all of them were dressed in the Hindu style. Many wore long, light, crispy white doctor's gowns that looked like unusual tunics made of a phosphorescent material...

I did not see what happened to my companions in misery. As for me, however, once I reached the ward where the assistance was to be given, I was transferred from the care of Joel Steel to that of the young doctor Roberto de Canalejas, who reassigned me to a room where my physical-spiritual body – the perispirit – was submitted to a significant and detailed examination. Carlos de Canalejas, his father, a venerable older man and former Spanish physician who had performed medicine as a sacred practice, filled with the heroic selflessness and compassion worthy of the approval of the Master, the Celestial Physician per se, and Rosendo, another of the Hindus that had assisted us upon our arrival, were in charge of me. Roberto helped with the medical procedures in the same way that a doctoral candidate would watch the work of the masters in the sanctuaries of science, attesting that he was still an intern at the hospital.

In my case, they provided physical-astral relief to the areas corresponding to those that, in my physical body, had been dilacerated by the gunshot used for my suicide, that is, the pharynx, auditory and visual organs, as well as the brain, since the wound had affected that whole delicate region of my poor earthly envelope.

It was as if while incarnate (and in fact it had been that way, as it is with all human beings) I had had a second body, a mold, a model of the one that had been destroyed by the brutal act of suicide; as if I had been a “dual” entity, and the second body, being indestructible, was able to feel everything that happened to the body of flesh; as if strange acoustical properties supported vibrational repercussions capable of prolonging themselves for an indefinite length of time and of sickening the astral body.

What I do know is that the profoundly affected semi-material tissues of these areas of my perispirit received treatments of light, applications involving magnetic properties, quintessentialized balms, and treatments using luminous substances extracted from solar rays; that photographs and resonance animated charts of these areas were also taken for special analysis; that these photographs and charts would later be sent to the “Physical Body Planning sector” of the Reincarnation Department for studies pertinent to the

preparation of the new physical body that would be my very own for the return to trials and expiations on the earth, which I had thought I could escape by means of the deranged act I had inflicted upon myself. I do know that, submitted to the strange treatment, covered with subtle luminous and transcendental devices, I was there for about an hour, during which the venerable Dr. Canalejas and the Hindu surgeon kindly tended to me, comforting me with encouraging words, urging me to have confidence in the future and hope in the Supreme Love of God! I also know that I was a lot of hard work, to the point of fatigue, for those selfless servants of the Good; that I was a cause for real concern, requiring profound dedication on their part until the physical-astral magnetic currents that were attuned to my earthly physical body were completely extinguished, because they maintained the dreadful disequilibrium that no human words are sufficiently capable of describing!

The fact is that the “astral body,” that is, the perispirit – or the “physical-spiritual” body – is not an abstraction, an incorporeal, ethereal form as is generally believed. On the contrary, it is a real, living body, the seat of sensations, where all the events that make an impression on the mind and affect the nervous system – which it commands – reverberate.

In this admirable envelope of the Soul – of this Divine Essence that exists in each of us, pointing to our origin – there is also a material component, albeit quintessentialized, that allows it to become ill and feel the effects of what happens to it. Endowed with a subtle nature, such a state of matter, indestructible, sublime and subject to progress, is highly impressionable and sensitive, and therefore unable to endure, without great harm, the violence of an act as brutal as suicide.

However, under so much medical assistance, my doubts grew larger as far as my own situation was concerned. Many times, during the desperate stay in the Sinister Valley, I had been convinced that I had indeed died! That my condemned soul was expiating in hell the tremendous follies practiced while alive on the earth. But now that I was a little more serene, finding myself treated in a good hospital, undergoing surgical procedures – although the methods were quite different from those I was used to – a new layer of uncertainties worried my spirit:

“No! It was not possible that I had died!

“Could this be death?... Could this be life?”

It was therefore with a flood of distressing tears that on that first day, under the dedicated care of Carlos and Rosendo, I suddenly blurted out, feverish and agitated, incapable of containing myself any longer:

“Where am I, after all?... What really happened?... Am I dreaming?... Did I die?... Am I alive?... Am I dead?”

The Hindu surgeon approached me, unalarmed by my behavior. Looking at me with kindness, perhaps to demonstrate that my situation inspired his pity or compassion, he used a very persuasive tone to answer, leaving no room for a second interpretation:

“No, my friend! You did not die! You never will!... Death does not exist in the Law that regulates the Universe! What happened was nothing but a regrettable disaster involving your physical-material body, annihilated before its time by an act ill-advised by your reasoning... Life, however, did not reside in that physical body but in this one, which you see and feel at this very moment, the one that really suffers, the one that really lives and thinks and carries the sublime attribute of being immortal; whereas the other, made of flesh, the one you rejected, the one suitable only for use during your stay on the earth, has already disappeared under a gloomy gravestone, having been a temporary garment for the one that is here right now... Be calm for now... You will understand more as you get better.”

I was taken back to my quarters on a stretcher. My condition demanded rest. I was served a revitalizing broth, for I was hungry, and was given crystal-clear, refreshing water to drink, for I was thirsty. The surrounding silence and serenity invited me to quietness, as I felt immersed in invigorating and beneficial vibrations. Obeying Rosendo’s caring suggestion, I tried to sleep, the disappointment brought by the unchangeable reality of his decisive words echoing in my tormented mind:

“Life does not reside in the physical-material body, which you destroyed, but in this one, which you see and feel right now, which carries the sublime attribute of being immortal!”

---

## Jerónimo de Araujo Silveira and family

We were unable to receive news concerning our families or friends. Excruciating longing, like a corrosive acid burning inside our emotional reservoirs, filled our poor hearts with the disappointing despair of a thousand anguishing questions. Many times, Joel and Roberto would find us weeping in secret, thinking about loved ones whose names we kept to ourselves! In their compassion these good friends would offer us encouragement, assuring us that our frustration was only temporary because our situation was going to improve, something that would necessarily resolve the more pressing problems.

Even so, there was permission for us to be informed about any mental visits and fraternal wishes for peace and future happiness, any kindnesses emanating from Love coming from those dear to us whom we had left behind on the earth, in addition to any kindnesses emanating from the spirit world from spirits that loved us and took an interest in our recovery and progress. As long as such thoughts came from minds truly engaged in lofty purposes, they were transmitted to us in a very curious yet effective way, a fact that at the time seemed perplexing to us due to our spiritual maladjustment. Later on, we would find out that it was a natural occurrence, an event quite common in educational quarters of the transitional spirit world.

Every room contained a highly sensitive apparatus made of electromagnetic substances, which was capable of receiving, selecting, reproducing and then displaying on its screen any images and sounds that were benevolently and charitably sent our way. Whenever a benevolent soul, whether one of our family members or even someone unknown to us, sent fraternal vibrations through the immensity of Space to our Heavenly Father,

asking for mercy for our despair-darkened souls, we would be immediately informed by a light on the device, which, in addition to transmitting the kind words of the prayer, also reproduced the image of those who prayed. Sometimes we were astonished by this. Individuals whom we had not always thought of with affection and devotion would frequently appear on the magnetic screen, while others who had received a great deal of our love rarely bothered to mitigate the harshness of our inner condition with the sanctifying tenderness of Prayer! Thus, we were able to ascertain people's thoughts about us, their pleas directed to the Divine Powers, and the good they wished for us or could do on our behalf.

Unfortunately for us, such an event, which would so greatly mitigate the despair of our loneliness, a cooling relief for the burning longing that assailed our minds and hearts, was very rare in almost the entire hospital. I am referring here to prayers from loved ones left behind on the earth. The remarkable device registered only sincere invocations, those that, due to the sublimated nature of the vibrations emitted at the time of the prayer, would be able to harmonize with the magnetic waves capable of breaking through the natural barriers to reach the sublime regions, where prayers are received amid radiance and blessings. On the other hand, this benevolent occurrence would not allow us to receive any news concerning the one who was doing the praying, as we so ardently desired; hence excessively distressing anguish, a desolating longing from feeling forgotten, deprived of any news!

However, these same precious devices constantly reminded us that we had not been forgotten at all by the inhabitants of the Spirit World. From other astral zones, as well as from other locales in our own Colony, fraternal wishes of peace, comfort and encouragement for the future would reach us. They prayed for us fervently, invoking not only Mary's maternal help for our immense weaknesses but also the merciful intervention of the Divine Master himself.

Furthermore, disciples of Allan Kardec, seeking to exemplify their conduct according to Christian guidelines, would congregate periodically in private quarters – just like the ancient initiates in the secrecy of their sanctuaries – and, respectfully obeying fraternal sentiments for the love of the Divine Christ, would send us charitable thoughts. Thus, they frequently visited us by means of vigorous mental currents sanctified by prayer, imbuing them with tenderness and compassion that penetrated the recesses of our mortified and forgotten souls as rays of consoling hope!



But that was not all.

Fraternal caravans of spirits on beneficent fieldtrips, assisted by venerable Mentors, would come to our sad region from higher spiritual realms to bring their compassionate solidarity on visits that we greatly appreciated. Thus, we were able to form meaningful relationships with individuals much more morally advanced than us, but who did not disdain honoring us with their esteem. These friendships, these tender affections, would prove to be everlasting because they were based on the selfless, lofty principles of Christian fraternity!

Only much later were we allowed the happiness of receiving visits from loved ones who had gone to the grave before us. However, we could only see them for short periods of time, because suicides in the spirit world are like the condemned on the earth: they do not have normal privileges. They live in a difficult expiatory arrangement, where only those in charge of their education can be present. Due to their precarious vibrational state, they cannot leave their limited circle of activity until the effects of their calamitous infraction have been completely expunged.

“... And you shall be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. You shall not come out of there until you have paid the last cent...” warned the wise Celestial Instructor many centuries ago...

\* \* \*

Two events of profound significance for our adaptation to the spirit world took place right after the first few days following our admission to the astral institute. We will dedicate this chapter to the more extraordinary of the two and will wait for the next chapter to describe the second event, which was no less important for our learning experience.

One morning, the younger Dr. Canalejas told us that we had been invited to an important gathering that afternoon. All the new arrivals would be meeting with the director of the department – the one that was in charge of us at the time – for a talk of general interest.

Jeronimo, whose bad mood had gotten much worse, formally declared that he did not care to participate, that he did not feel obliged to show servile obedience just because he was hospitalized, that the only thing he cared about for now was getting some news about his family. Roberto was not the least bit

irritated by this and gently stated that he was the emissary of an invitation, not an order, and that none of us were being forced to go.

Embarrassed and shocked by our companion's incivility, the rest of us acquiesced with the biggest smiles we could dig up from past memories and thanked Roberto for the honor extended to us.

At the time, we were undergoing specialized treatment (which we will describe later), something that did not suit the former brother of the Sacred Trinity from Lisbon either, once he found out it was based on psychical-magnetic principles, a procedure that he did not believe in in the least!

Right after the incident, however, irritable and inconsiderate, he seemed to have already forgotten about his lamentable attitude of a few minutes before and said to the kind doctor:

“Doctor, considering the generous sentiments that must certainly abound in your character, I think you might be able to do me a big favor.”

Roberto de Canalejas, who, before becoming a dedicated, fraternal worker and a spirit converted to the good, most certainly must have been a perfect gentleman while on the earth, smiled kindly and replied:

“I’m at your disposal, my friend! How can I help you?”

“The thing is... I urgently need to send a petition to the honorable director of this Institute... I’m anxious for news from my family. I haven’t seen them in a while – I’ve lost track of how long it’s actually been! I’ve been waiting for any kind of information, but to no avail... I don’t have any more strength left to endure the anxiety assailing my heart... I would like to get permission from the venerable director to go home and find out the reason for this ungrateful silence... I haven’t received any visits from my loved ones... I haven’t received any letters... Could you take this request to the director? Surely the rules here would not forbid it.”

As we can see by this request, the poor merchant from Oporto did not seem to have a full grasp of his situation. More than the rest of his companions, he was lost in mental confusion between the physical and spirit realms.

“Of course not, dear friend! It’s not forbidden at all! The director will be more than happy to hear you out!” affirmed the patient physician.

“Could the request be made today?”

“I will take it to him myself... and Joel will let you know about the decision.”

About half an hour later, Joel returned to the infirmary to inform the afflicted patient that the director had invited him for a personal meeting. He looked worried, however, and we could detect some trouble on his otherwise usually smiling face.

Our companion Jeronimo, who had the reputation of being the most rebellious and undisciplined of all ten of us, demanded that Joel give him back the suit he was wearing when he arrived. It displeased him to have to appear before the director in the ugly garment from the infirmary, worn by the rest of us.

With a serious demeanor, Joel did not argue. Jeronimo was given the suit.

They left immediately.

They had not yet reached the end of the long corridor lined by the dormitory doors, when Dr. Canalejas and one of the Hindu assistants entered our room, the latter declaring in an amiable tone:

“We have come to invite you to observe your friend Jeronimo de Araujo Silveira as he goes on his journey. We know that none of you are happy with the regulations of our hospital, which allow it to intercept all news coming from the earth. However, these rules are in place for your benefit and there is no prohibition against a brief visit to the earth, as you will see in a few moments. You can watch this remote viewing device – you are already familiar with it – and follow the steps of our brother Jeronimo. In case he obtains the permission he seeks – and I believe he will due to his insistence – you can watch what happens as he goes to see his family, and you won’t even have to leave the room... And tomorrow, if you still desire to go to your own homes on a premature visit, you will be allowed to immediately... so that the rebelliousness that has been assailing your minds does not continue to delay the acquisition of new values that would benefit you in the future... All the other patients in conditions identical to yours are receiving the same information at this very moment.”

He walked over to the device and adjusted it gently to display the life-sized image of a person.

Perplexed, but utterly intrigued, we left our beds – something we rarely did – to post ourselves in front of the screen that was starting to light up. The dedicated workers of the Good had us sit comfortably in armchairs, while they sat next to us. It felt like we were all waiting for a movie to start.

Suddenly, Joel appeared in front of us, looking so natural that we thought he was actually there in the same room with us, or that we had somehow trailed closely behind him... Supporting Jeronimo on his arm, Joel headed for the exit door... The scenes we were watching looked so real and intense that we completely forgot that, in reality, we were seated comfortably in armchairs in our infirmary.

Much more real and better than the movies and television of the time, this magnificent receptor of scenes and other phenomena, employed so often in our Colony and the cause of so much wonder, is used broadly in higher spiritual spheres, where it is so developed that it attains a sublime quality for helping instruct spirits in their efforts to acquire information that will enable them to act accordingly in a future incarnation. It enables research into the far reaching spheres of the Celestial Realm, and even into the past of the earthly orb and its humanities, its history and civilizations, as well as into the past of individuals, if necessary, a past that is scattered and confounded in ethereal waves that are eternalized in the infinite. As if on a screen – even though mixed in with other images – scenes and other phenomena have been recorded there like photographs, in the same way that people's personal deeds and daily have been recorded on their consciences!

As we followed Joel and Jeronimo on the screen, we crossed a number of pathways in the white-toned park and reached the Central Building, where the leadership of that remarkable team of learned scientists in charge of the Hospital was located.

Joel left and Jeronimo was handed over to one of the director's assistants. Jeronimo was immediately taken to a room with wide windows overlooking the garden, displaying the melancholy panorama of the community where so many sorrows collided!

It was a meeting room, a kind of consulting office or waiting area, organized in perfect Indian style. A subtle fragrance of an essence unknown to our senses delighted us, as our wonder regarding the device used to transmit these real images continued to increase. A light curtain made of a

flexible and gently shimmering fabric fluttered on the front door and the Hospital's director-general walked in.

Jeronimo, who had been sitting down, jumped to his feet and tried to flee the room, but was stopped by the assistant that had accompanied him.

Before him stood a man about forty to fifty years old, meticulously dressed in Indian garb: a white turban with an emerald twinkling like a star; a broad-sleeved tunic; a sash around his waist; and traditional sandals. His oval, light brown face displayed classic features, and his eyes, brilliant and piercing, sparkled with intelligence and magnetic depth. On his right hand he wore a ring with a precious stone similar to that on his turban, perhaps identifying him as a master among the other members of the splendid team of physicians that served at the Mary of Nazareth Hospital.

Like Jeronimo himself, we were vividly fascinated by this noble figure.

Without further ado, assistant Romeu told him the purpose of the visit:

“Dear Brother Teocrito, this is our ward Jeronimo de Araujo Silveira, the one who has caused us so much concern... He wishes to visit his family on the earth because he believes it is beyond his abilities to conform to and obey the rules of our institution... He says that he would prefer a heap of sufferings rather than wait for the appropriate time for the visit.”

Irreverently, Jeronimo interrupted nervously:

“That's right, Your Excellency!” he started, imagining himself to be in the presence of a sovereign. “I would rather go back to the turmoil of pain I just left than endure any longer the fierce longing that assails me from the lack of news about my family!... If there is no strict prohibition in the rules, I would ask of Your Excellency's generosity the permission to see my children!... My dear daughters! How beautiful they are! Three daughters and one son: Arinda, Marieta, Margarida, who was seven when I left her, and Albino, who had just turned ten!... I miss them so terribly!... My wife's name is Zulmira; she is so beautiful!... And very well educated!... I'm so desperate! I don't have the serenity I need to focus on my strange situation here!... So I would humbly implore Your Excellency to take pity on my sufferings!”

The head physician's luminous eyes lay tenderly on the restless spirit of that man who would still need a long time to learn to control himself. Filled with compassion for his mental disharmony, he gazed at him kindly,

foreseeing the long pathway of struggles that would be necessary before he would be able to adjust to the satisfying behavior of conformity and self-denial!

Jeronimo – who thought he would meet with the haughtiness of earthly bureaucrats, stagnated in the foolish boasting they enjoy so much and to which he was accustomed – was amazed to perceive in those scrutinizing eyes the humility of a tear oscillating near the surface.

The noble physician took him gently by the arm and helped him sit down across from him on a comfortable divan, while Romeu remained standing, observing them respectfully. The Hindu offered the suicide a glass of crystal-clear water, which he poured from an elegant urn gleaming like the mist under the caress of the sun. The Portuguese man was incapable of refusing it and drank the water, and then, somewhat more serene, waited for the answer to his plea.

“My friend! My brother Jeronimo!” Teocrito began. “Before answering your request, I must first clarify that I am not at all a Prince, as you have supposed, nor do I carry any such titles. I am simply a spirit that used to be a man! Someone who has lived, suffered and struggled throughout many existences on the earth, learning along the way a few things related to the planet. A servant of Jesus of Nazareth – that is what I am happy to be, albeit very modest, lacking any merits and still very deficient. A plain worker, who, around those who suffer, is taking his first steps in the cultivation of the Divine Master’s vineyard, temporarily appointed by his magnanimous will to the services of Mary of Nazareth, his august Mother!

“Between you and me, Jeronimo, there is only a small difference, a small distance: since I have lived many more times on the earth than you have, I have suffered more; I have worked a little longer, and therefore have learned to resign myself more easily, to practice self-denial in the name of God’s love, and to control my emotions. I have observed; I have struggled more fervently, and thus have acquired a greater number of experiences. So you can see that I am not the sovereign of these domains, but a simple servant of the Legion of Mary – Mary, the only Majesty that governs this Correctional Institute where you are temporarily lodged! To you I am like an older brother – which is how you should see me!... Someone truly wishing to help you solve the grave problems that have entangled you... Therefore, call me *Brother Teocrito*, and you will be right.”

He made a brief pause to gaze at the foggy vastness outside, and then continued tenderly:

“You want to see your children, Jeronimo?... That is quite natural, my friend! Children are part of our moral being. Their love makes us experience superlative emotions, but also frequently reduces us to excruciating sorrows! I understand your burning paternal anxieties because I know that you loved your children sincerely and selflessly! I know the extent of your current questions, away from the loved ones that stayed behind in Oporto, orphans of your guidance and support! Like you, I was once a father and experienced that love, Jeronimo! So, it is only fair that I validate your sentiments by how I felt, praising your aspirations instead of reproaching them, because they attest to your esteem for your family! Nevertheless, I would strongly advise against leaving these premises, where you are going through so much pain in your efforts to recover, for the deleterious influence of earth’s environment – not even for an hour! Not even to get news about your children!”

“But sir, with the utmost respect for your authority, I would ask for your compassion!... It will be just a short visit... I give you my word of honor that I will return... since I am well aware of my condition as an inmate,” was the obstinate reply of the impatient man, as he lost himself again in the mental confusion that seemed to make him content.

“Even so, I cannot authorize your desire at this time, however just I find it to be... You have to be able to control the impulses of your character, dear Jeronimo! Learn to control your emotions, to keep your anxieties in check, turning them into a stable aspiration under the sacred protection of hope! Remember that it was those unbalanced impulses based on rebelliousness, impatience and the lack of prudence that plunged you into the violence of suicide! Yes, you will be able to see your children! However, for your own good I would ask you to postpone your plans till a few months from now... You will be better prepared to confront the consequences that were put in play after your thoughtless act! Jeronimo, agree to submit yourself to the treatment pertinent to your state, just like your companions, who have been submitting themselves satisfactorily, trusting the loyal servants who wish to assist all of you with love and selflessness! Agree to participate in the meeting scheduled for tonight because it will benefit you immensely... whereas a visit to the earth at this moment, the contact with your family in your precarious state, would be in direct contradiction to the kindly plans already outlined for the much needed recovery of your strength.”

“But... unless I get the news I want, I won't have any serenity for any such future plans, sir!... Oh, dear God! My little Margarida, left behind while only seven years old, so blond and so pretty!”

“Have you ever thought of appealing to the paternal assistance of God Almighty in order to acquire strength and resign yourself to a prudent wait that would be crowned with success?... We desire your well-being, Jeronimo, and we want to give you some respite for the rehabilitation you need... Turn your thoughts to Mary of Nazareth, under whose care you have been rescued... you need to acquire good will to reach the Good... Pray; try to connect to the higher vibrations capable of inspiring you for redemptive deeds... It is crucial that you do so freely, because we can neither force you to do it, nor can we do it for you... Therefore, renounce this counterproductive plan and trust in our assistance and protection.”

The Oporto merchant, however, was unbending. That rebellious and forceful character, which in a sinister burst of freewill preferred to die rather than continue to struggle to assert himself against adversity until he had dealt with and overcome it, replied impatiently, not realizing the sublime charity that was being extended to him:

“I will trust, sir... Brother Teocrito... I will kneel at the feet of all of you for the rest of time if I have to!... But only after seeing my loved ones and finding out why they have abandoned me. That's the only way I can alleviate this longing that tears me apart.”

Having fulfilled his role as counselor, Teocrito understood that it would be useless to insist. While Romeu shook his head sorrowfully, he looked at the patient with tears pooling in his eyes, and said compassionately:

“You have spoken a great truth, poor brother! Yes, only after!... Only after will you find the pathway to rehabilitation!... There are inclinations that only the fetters of pain are powerful enough to correct, setting them on the pathway of duty!... You have not yet suffered enough to remember that you have come from an All-Merciful Father.”

He remained pensive for a few moments and continued:

“We could deny your request, prevent your visit and punish you for your attitude: we have the authority and permission. However, you are still too materialized, and consequently under the influence of too many earthly prejudices to be able to understand us!... As a matter of fact, our persuasive and non-controlling methods would be incompatible with an unyielding



prohibition, no matter how in tune with reason... I will consult with our Temple Instructors, as is my duty in dilemmas like the one you have just created.”

In profound concentration he retired to a private chamber nearby, where he communicated telepathically with the Temple’s upper leadership. After a few moments he returned with the final decision:

“Our Higher Mentors have granted you your freedom to act. While, on one hand, someone in your condition is unable to enjoy the natural liberty of the spirit free from connection to the flesh, on the other hand, you cannot be forced to do things that would be repulsive to you. You can visit your loved ones on the earth... You can go to Portugal, to the city of Oporto, where you lived, and to Lisbon, according to your wishes... And since the paternal tenderness of the Creator often leads us to extract from an imprudent or condemnable act a salutary example either for the moral delinquent himself or for those who observe him, I am sure that your obstinacy will be beneficial to yourself, as well as a dire warning to those who will become aware of it. However, listen closely, my dear Jeronimo: since you have not heeded our advice and have rebelled against the regulations of this institute, you are about to commit a wrong whose consequences will fall heavily upon you. This visit will be your responsibility and yours alone! There is no permission for it: it is your free will that imposes it! If the subsequent disappointments prove to be too much for you, you are to direct your complaints to your own self, since our efforts are only applied to soften misfortune and to avoid it when it is unnecessary... That is why we have not furnished the news you wanted, in spite of the means at our disposal, because, in reality, you would not even have to leave this place to get it.”

He turned towards the Assistant and continued:

“Prepare him to go... Satisfy all his earthly social desires... because he will quickly grow tired of the earth... Let him do what he wants... The lesson will be a hard one, but it will also elicit a more rapid understanding and thus progress.”

\* \* \*

A pause ensued in the sequence of events. We were overcome by a great anxiety, while at the same time we faulted Jeronimo for his reckless conduct. We agreed about his bad behavior and utter disrespect for the noble institution’s regulations, but the workers in the room explained:

“Good social manners are, of course, an enormous help in adapting to the spirit world’s environment. But that is not all that is required. Purified sentiments, a mental state attuned to lofty principles, and good qualities of heart and character that lead to ‘good moral behavior’ are actually the primordial elements for a promising situation beyond the grave... as long as suicide does not annul such possibility.”

“Couldn’t the hospital’s leadership furnish the news the patient wants without him having to risk a trip involving grievous consequences for his overall well-being?” I asked.

“Yes it could, if such news would indeed add to the patient’s well-being. In fact, as a general rule, it is better that individuals in your condition abstain from any shocks or emotions that could feed the excitable state you are experiencing... News from the earth will never comfort any of us who live in the spirit world! In the case at hand, it was obviously the hospital administration’s desire to keep the patient from doing something that will hurt him deeply and unnecessarily. If he had submitted with goodwill to the rules designed to protect him, the reality he is about to encounter would appear at a time when he is sufficiently prepared to deal with it and thus avoid the shocks of greater suffering. His insubordination, however, has put him in a perilous situation, which is why he is being left to his own devices. It will violently effectuate the educational work that his counselors would have achieved gently and tenderly.”

We resumed following the action on the image receptor. What happened next exceeded our expectations so enormously that we all suffered together with poor Jeronimo the dramatic events that involved his family after his death.

\* \* \*

Assistant Romeu proceeded to give orders to the Security Department, to which all of the Colony’s outside services were attached. Olivier de Guzman, its attentive director, contacted the Section of External Relations to furnish two watchful guides of proven competency to accompany Jeronimo to the earth. It would not be acceptable to abandon a still-inexperienced and frail ward of the Legion of the Servants of Mary to the perils of such an excursion.

Two guides were assigned to the task, one of them Ramiro de Guzman – whom we recognized as the head of the caravans that used to visit the Sinister

Valley, and under whose responsibility we had left it – and someone else whose name we did not know, both of them wearing the familiar garment of Hindu initiates.

We were beginning to understand that, in this model institute, the most advanced posts, those entailing the highest responsibility and hazardous tasks, those demanding the greatest amount of energy, will, knowledge and virtue, were occupied by these handsome and striking personages, whose high moral and intellectual qualities we had acknowledged since the very first days.

A suitable expedition was prepared under Guzman's orders, including lancers for protection.

In the meantime, a palpable transformation had come over poor Jeronimo. A self-obsession involving the visit to his family had taken hold of his faculties and made him oblivious to everything else around him, reintegrating him more than ever to his former condition on the earth – a rich Portuguese entrepreneur, a wine trader mindful of social opinions, a slave to convention, a devoted and loving head of a family. He was wearing a well-cut coat and a flashy tie, and was carrying a gold-headed cane, holding in his other hand a bouquet of roses to give to his wife: everything he had demanded from the patient Joel, who had been told to fulfill all his wishes. When our mentors in the infirmary saw our surprise, they explained that only very slowly do coarse and highly materialized spirits get rid of these small frivolities pertaining to earthly routines.

Tightly guarded and traveling in a discreetly enclosed vehicle, Jeronimo actually looked like a prisoner. However, he appeared not to be aware of it. Totally absorbed, he seemed not to even notice Ramiro and his helpers, thinking he was on a trip similar to those he used to take.

The vehicle continued on its way. If it were not for the presence of the guards, reminding one of the spiritual nature of the scene, one might say it was a carriage that had nothing to do with the “semi-material creation” aspect imposed by the educational methods of the Great Beyond, but that it was, in fact, a very heavy and comfortable means of transportation that could very well belong to the earth itself.

We watched as they traversed gloomy roads, gorges covered in dark clouds and mud-covered valleys resembling desolate swamps, landscapes that greatly unnerved us after our attentive assistants explained that such panoramas were the product of the foul mental activity of human beings and

discarnate spirits still bound to the manifestations of inferior thoughts. Meanwhile, the travelers passed by small, miserable villages inhabited by spirits of the lowest orders of the spirit world, malevolent and enraged discarnate hordes of ruffians and criminals, who attacked the carriage, guessing that inside it were individuals happier than they were. The white banner, however, bearing the emblem of the Legion, made them retreat in fear. Many of these future repentant and regenerated individuals – destined to progress and moral reform like all other creatures derived from the Love of a Creator who is All Justice and All Goodness – uncovered their heads, in keeping with the earthly custom, as if paying homage to the revered name evoked by the banner; others, however, fled amid tears and screams, uttering blasphemies and imprecations, stirring our astonishment and compassion... Meanwhile, the vehicle proceeded without stopping, with none of the occupants addressing the hordes, certain that the time had not yet come for their evil-hardened hearts to be rescued in order to willingly consider their own rehabilitation.

Suddenly, in unison, but discreetly, a sob of tender longing rose from our chests, gently vibrating throughout the infirmary:

“Portugal! Our dear homeland! Portugal!”

“Oh, God in heaven!... Lisbon! The beautiful and prominent Tagus!... Oporto! Oporto of such fond memories!”

“Thank you, dear God!... Thank you for the grace of being able to see our native soil again after so many years of absence and tumultuous longing!”

We were all weeping quietly in thankfulness.

Portuguese landscapes, all so dear to our hearts, surrounded us as if, just as we had been told by the institute’s mentors, we were actually part of poor Jeronimo’s entourage!

As the consoling images became clearer due to the excellence of the receptor, the sensation also set in that we were personally walking on Portuguese soil, when in reality we had never even left the hospital!

The contours, far away at first, of Oporto, were drawn wanly in the dreary fog that envelops earth’s atmosphere, like a crayon drawing on a gray canvass. A few minutes later, the caravan touched the streets of the city, as if it had done so in the canton of Security itself, a fact that greatly delighted us.

Portuguese streets, “old friends” from our tumultuous past, paraded before our moist eyes as if we were walking on them ourselves. Highly agitated, as if perceiving the fact that ominous sorrows were whispering to him as he tried unsuccessfully to hide the insanity of the terror of facing the inevitable, Jeronimo stopped in front of a handsome residence, decorated with gardens and balconies. He hurriedly climbed the steps while the assistants charitably waited for him outside.

This had been his house.

The former wine merchant went right in and his first tender thought was of his youngest child, for whom he had the deepest affection:

“Margarida, my dearest! Daddy’s home!... Where are you?” he called for her as he used to do every afternoon when he got home from work after a hard day.

But no one answered his loving calls! Only indifference, disheartening lonesomeness all around, perhaps foretelling a misfortune even harsher than the one that had been afflicting his heart up to that point, the depths of his soul tormented by multiple sorrows desolately echoing his loving but useless paternal pleas, unheeded by the beautiful child. She was no longer on the premises that had been so dear to him!

“Margarida!... Where are you, dear child?... Margarida!... It’s your daddy... I’m home!”

He searched the whole house. But it seemed like the dearest parts of his soul, which he had left behind in that house, had disappeared from under the sun and that he, the sole survivor of an immeasurable catastrophe, could not accept the overwhelming reality of seeing the home that he had loved so much uninhabited, dramatically empty!

He called to his wife and the other children one by one, and finally the servants – but no one answered!

Unfamiliar figures were moving around in the rooms that had belonged to the family, disregarding his cries and interrogations, totally unaware of his presence. They were incarnate individuals, the new inhabitants of his old house! The furniture, the decor, everything was different, throwing him into great confusion. An acute disillusionment abruptly came over him, stripping his soul of its initial enthusiasm, making way for increasingly more troubling

thoughts. Seeing unfamiliar paintings on the walls of one of the rooms, his gaze fell on a nearby calendar. The date:

*November 6, 1903*

A chill of unstoppable terror bewildered him. He made an exceptional effort to retrieve old remembrances; he searched past memories, shaking off the mental dust of a thousand confusing ideas that obscured the clarity of his reasoning. The bafflement of the surprise before the irremediable reality, which he had avoided up to that point through the ill-will of naïve sophisms, stunned his ability to think clearly – he had not even thought about the passing of time! The truth was that he had lost track of time in the whirlwind of the misfortunes he plunged into after his ill-fated act as a deserter of earthly life! The deranged state had been so acute since the tragic moment in which he had committed suicide, the illness so grave after the bullet had pierced his brain, that in the course of the ensuing agony he had lost track of the days, entering the Great Unknown without ever considering if the days were nights or the nights were days... The abyss where he had been a prisoner for so long only displayed night before his eyes! To him, to his perception obliterated by despair, Time had not passed at all. It was still that same, ominous day, because he could not remember any other date after that one:

*February 15, 1890*

But the calendar in front of him, indifferently serving its purpose, had just shown Jeronimo that he had been away for thirteen years!

He rushed back out onto the street, stricken and terrified at the shock of his past meeting the present reality, his mind immersed in the turmoil of insuperable sorrow. He wanted to ask the neighbors where his family was, since everything indicated that it had moved. But the lancers standing at the door crossed their weapons to form an unsurpassable barrier, thus preventing his thoughtless escape and obliging him to return to the vehicle that had taken him there. Protesting vehemently against his confinement, the poor wretch attracted the attention of curious vagrant spirits still bound to the ways of the earth. Amid mockery, jokes and loud laughter, they tormented him with incriminations and accusations as they explained what had happened to his family, and neither Ramiro Guzman nor his assistants interfered to spare Jeronimo the pain of what they had to say. The visit was taking place under

Jeronimo's own responsibility and their orders had been only to ensure his return to the Colony in a few hours.

“So, you want to know the whereabouts of your much-loved family, you miserable prince of fine wines?” shouted the wicked spirits. “Well, we are happy to inform you that they were evicted several years ago!... Your creditors took the house and the few valuables you had hidden away for your family at the last minute! You can find your son Albino in the Lisbon penitentiary! Your ‘little’ Margarida is on Ribeira Wharf, selling fish, goods and cheap love to anyone who will open their wallet to her. She is being exploited by her own mother, your wife Zulmira, whom you accustomed to a luxury above your means, and whose pride never let her get used to dignified work and humble living!... Your daughters Marieta and Arinda?... Well, the former is married and the mother of sickly children, living in abject poverty, enduring hunger, and beaten by a brutal and drunken husband... The latter is a maid in a cheap hotel, cleaning floors, pans and the boots of filthy travelers!... You are astonished by this?... You tremble in horror?... Why?... What did you think would happen?... Isn't this the inheritance you left them with your suicide, you miserable wretch?!”

This was followed by merciless invectives, insults and attempts to get into the vehicle in order to grab him, although they were impeded by the lancers.

In spite of it all, however, the rebellious ward of the Legion of the Servants of Mary demanded that he be taken to his son, that beloved son, who had been all his hopes in life, the son that had been left behind at the delicate age of ten when he, his own father, had decided to leave him to the perils of fatherlessness by killing himself!

Sobbing convulsively, he became aware that he was entering the sinister walls of a prison, but could not tell if he was in Oporto or Lisbon.

It was true! There was Albino in a gloomy cell, condemned for the crimes of blackmail and theft, sentenced to five years followed by hard labor in Africa as a recidivist of serious offenses! In spite of the marked differences caused by thirteen years of absence, Jeronimo immediately recognized his son, now squalid, pale, mistreated by the rigors of imprisonment, brutalized by suffering and misery, the pathetic proofs of a man gone astray in crime!

The former wine merchant stared at the despondent figure seated on a stone bench in the half-light of the cell, his hands covering his face. Tears of

despair rolled from his son's deadened, downcast eyes, letting the suicide grasp the extent of the young man's suffering. An array of dark thoughts were passing through Albino's mind, and because of the magnetic connection that existed between the two of them, the ward of the Mary of Nazareth Hospital was able to ascertain the excruciating experiences that had dragged the unfortunate young man down into such a deplorable social circumstance so early in life! As if the presence of Jeronimo's troubled soul had infused Albino's sensitivity with a telepathic connection, he started to remember, and consequently, without being aware of it, to satisfy his father's desire to find out what had happened. Apparently ashamed of the wrongs he had committed, he recalled the father that had been dead for thirteen years, turning memories over in his mind while tears scalded his face. Jeronimo listened to him as if he were talking in a loud clear voice:

“Forgive me, Lord, God our Father! Grant me your mercy in this terrible stage of my life! It was not really my desire to fall into this terrible abyss to which I have been condemned forever! I so much wanted to be good, O Lord! But I lacked the help of generous hands and favorable circumstances that would have expanded my honest perspectives! I was completely abandoned after my father's death, a defenseless and inexperienced child! I didn't have the means to get educated in order to acquire skills for serious and dignified work! I was starving, and starvation hurts the body while it poisons the soul with rebelliousness! I was cold in inhospitable poorhouses, and the cold that freezes the body also freezes the heart! I suffered the dark anguish of misery without hope and respite, the loneliness of an orphan deeply hurting from remembering the past, disillusioned at the very beginning of a life filled with multiple sorrows! I didn't get the chance to be around honest and respectable people that could have helped me achieve a dignified future; I trustingly sought out our old friends, but they rejected me with distrust, concluding that I belonged to a family tainted by shame, because, in addition to everything else, my mother dishonored herself the moment she found herself alone without support! I became a man at the mercy of the worst circumstances and elements of society! I had to survive! I was hurt by my wounded pride, the uncontrolled ambition to free myself from the abominable poverty that had struck me without relief after my poor father's suicide! I was exposed to perverse temptations, which, to my naivety and weakness, seemed like saving solutions!... I succumbed to their seduction because I didn't have the guiding support of a true friend to point me towards the right path!... Oh, God! How sad it is to find oneself fatherless and abandoned in childhood in a world



filled with evil! My poor, beloved father, why did you kill yourself, why?... Didn't you love your children, who fell into disgrace with your death?... Why did you kill yourself?... Did you have no pity on us?... I remember you so well... I loved you so much!... Yes, I did cry a lot those first few years, longing for you; you were so good to your children!... Why did you prefer to die, leaving us in poverty and abandonment, instead of fighting for us?... Why didn't you endure your troubles, seeing that your absence would disgrace the poor children who had only you in this world?... If you had lived and taken care of our education, today I would certainly be a good citizen, honest and respected, while in reality I'm nothing but a criminal ruined by irreparable dishonor!"

These somber and bitter thoughts reverberated in the conscience of the father-suicide like daggers, rending his heart apart! He saw himself as the sole guilty party in the insoluble disasters that had stricken his son. This intensified into torturing feelings as the remembrances, emerging from Albino's recollections like remnants of dolorous occurrences, appeared before him – a derelict of duty!... Never on this earth would a man receive an accusation before a court of law that was as telling as the one the unfortunate suicide launched against himself, validating the misfortune described by his son's memories, the darkness of the penitentiary surrounding with gloomy adornments the profound and irremediable dramas played out at that hour!

Disoriented, Jeronimo rushed to the young man with the uncontrollable desire to make amends for such profound grief by offering his presence, his perennial paternal care, his indissoluble love, and his protecting and loving arms. The guilty father wanted to explain himself and beg forgiveness; to give his son advice that would comfort him, restoring his disposition from that ruinous prostration! But it was in vain. Albino just continued to weep, unable to see or hear him, completely unaware of the presence of the father he was still weeping over!

Recognizing that he was powerless to help his imprisoned son, poor Jeronimo himself began to weep and to emit negative vibrations. And because his presence released discouragement and disseminated noxious waves of tormenting thoughts that could be harmful to the prisoner's fragile state of mind – perhaps as far as instilling in him the dismay that leads to suicide – Ramiro de Guzman and his assistant interfered and stopped him, hiding Albino from his sight.

“Let’s return to our place of peace, my friend, where you will find rest and a gentle solution for your pungent suffering,” stated the head of the expedition amicably. “Please, do not refuse! Turn to the love of the One who, while nailed to the cross, offered to humankind, as well as to spirits, the guidelines of acceptance in misfortune and resignation in suffering!... You are tired... you need to calm yourself in order to think, because in your precarious state, you will not be of use to anyone anywhere!”

However, it seemed that Jeronimo had not yet suffered enough to heed the warnings of his spirit guides.

“Excuse me, sir, but I cannot!” shouted Jeronimo stubbornly. “I will not go before seeing my daughter, my little Margarida! I have to see her too! I need to silence the throng of scoundrels that are defaming her!... My youngest one roaming Ribeira Wharf?!... Selling fish?... That’s the last straw!... Impossible!... Impossible that so much disgrace would come to my heart!... No!... It cannot be true!... I trust Zulmira! She’s her mother! She would care for her in my absence! I want to see her, I do!... God, dear God!... I need to see my daughter! I must see her!”

But the reality was that new and even more pungent disappointments were about to rend his wounded heart and overwhelm him with irreversible grief!

In the distance the contours of Ribeira Wharf were starting to appear before the foreign pilgrim’s anxious eyes: people hustling and bustling in their wearisome trades; everywhere, women for hire, female fishmongers and peddlers of trinkets, with very little education and doubtful honesty.

Jeronimo started to walk the docks, closely followed by the lancers and the patient assistant, who at this point had become his shadow. Crushing presentiments warned him of the truth of what the “slanderers” had affirmed. But, trying to lie to himself in order to deny the abominable reality, he felt compelled to examine the faces of the female peddlers, coming and going, nervous and afflicted, terrified at the idea of seeing among those skinny, insolent creatures the longed-for features of his beloved youngest child!

He stopped abruptly in a bewildered state of alarm: he had just recognized Zulmira gesticulating in a heated discussion with a young, frail, blond woman who was defending herself against the unjust and fiery accusations hurled against her. Jeronimo rushed to their side, impelled by a

desperate impulse, only to stop short, struck by a supreme and no less torturing blow at recognizing the tearful young woman as his little Margarida.

So, she was indeed a fishmonger! At her side were the almost empty baskets. She was wearing the typical dress and dirty clogs of her class. Zulmira, on the other hand, was dressed almost like a lady, although it did not keep her from behaving like a peddler.

The shameful discussion was about the daily take. Zulmira was accusing her daughter of stealing her part of the sales and keeping them for herself. Ashamed and humiliated, the young woman denied it amid tears, affirming that not all of her clients had paid their debts that day. In the heat of the argument, Zulmira, ever more excitable, slapped her daughter. No one around them seemed surprised. No one tried to stop the violence or calm the tempers.

Overcome with indignation, the wine merchant placed himself between mother and daughter to put a stop to the deplorable scene. He scolded his wife, talked lovingly to his daughter, wiped the tears that rolled down her face, and asked her to go home. But of course, the women could neither see nor hear him, and remained totally unaware of his intentions. This upset him greatly and he finally saw the uselessness of his attempts.

Margarida picked up her baskets, suspended them on her shoulders, and walked away. Infuriated, Zulmira, who had become despotic on account of adversities she could not accept or understand – and which had turned her into an ignoble shrew – followed her, erupting in vile curses and insults.

Their walk was short. They lived in a gloomy hovel in the vicinity of the wharf. Upon arriving, the cruel mother started to violently beat the other woman, demanding the money from the fish sale, while Margarida helplessly begged for mercy! Finally, the wretch – to whom the troubled spirit of her husband had brought a bouquet of roses from the spirit world – abruptly left, leaving behind waves of hatred and blistering thoughts, hurling into the air insults and blasphemies in a language that now was habitual but shocking to Jeronimo, who had never heard it before.

Margarida was finally alone. Next to her, the invisible figure of her loving and suffering father gave way to excruciating tears as he realized he was unable to help the beloved child of his heart, his adorable little Margarida, whom he still remembered as being so blond and so pretty in her innocence of the first seven years of life!... But just as had happened with her brother Albino, the poor thing hid her tear-covered face in her hands, and

sitting in a corner she painfully recalled the horrible days of her so-short and already so-tragic life!

Margarida opened the floodgates of her thoughts, and waves of bitter memories came flooding in, letting her father know the immense burden of misfortune that had assailed her since the nefarious day when he became a culprit before Divine Providence, fleeing his duty to live in order to protect her so that she could grow up to become an honest woman, useful to society and to God. He could hear her as if she were talking aloud. As the misfortunes of the poor girl consolidated in front of him, his disillusionment, excruciating astonishment and inconsolable sorrow pierced his heart like hundreds of murderous daggers! He fell to his knees at the feet of his wretched child, fingers interlocked in a pleading gesture, sobbing erupting from his soul and traumatic shaking seizing his astral body, as if strange convulsions had suddenly taken hold of him.

It was in this humiliating condition of guilt that the ward of the Servants of Mary received the severest punishment that the ominous and brutal act of suicide could inflict on his conscience!

This is the bitter summary of Margarida Silveira's tragic story, so common in today's society. Every day, unconscionable fathers desert their sacred responsibilities as heads of their family, and vain and thoughtless mothers, lacking the sublime valor that an accomplished duty confers on its heroes, wander from their path due to the brutal jolts of uncontrolled passions, unrestrained by the perversion of customs.

Rendered fatherless at seven years of age, the pretty blond Margarida, fragile and delicate like a blossoming lily, grew up in poverty amid rebelliousness and incomprehension with a mother who, accustomed to unbridled and insidious pride, as well as to ill-boding vanities, never resigned herself to the financial and social decadence that had overcome her after her husband's tragic demise. Zulmira prostituted herself, trying in vain to recover her former position through this blameworthy and reprehensible means. Along the way, she dragged her inexperienced child into the muck that had contaminated her. Defenseless and ignorant of the vile surroundings and habits that menaced her, the girl succumbed very quickly to the webs of evil, although she lacked the inclination for the tragic circumstances she came upon every day. Decadence and dishonor arrived early. The exhausting toil at the market on Ribeira Wharf, with its customary hurly-burly, offered a little money so that mother and daughter would not have to succumb to the

dreadful torment of hunger! Zulmira acted as the hiring agent, selling various goods in deals that were not always exactly honest, usually employing in their execution the strength and attractive youth of the daughter she had enslaved, while keeping the profits for herself. The poor fish peddler's modest character could not adjust to the bitterness of such deplorable subservience; thus, she suffered immensely because she could see no way out of the miserable existence that destiny had reserved for her. Uneducated, inexperienced and timid, she was unable to act in her own defense, and this kept her in the dark situation created by her own mother! Like Albino, she too thought about her father, feeling his presence in the recesses of her oppressed heart, saying to herself under her breath:

“How much I need you, dear father!... I still remember you!... My misfortune has never let me forget you – you, who were so good and devoted to your children! How much evil I would have been spared if you hadn't deserted your duty to look after your children till the end!... Wherever you are, receive my tears; forgive the shame that I have unwillingly cast upon your name, and take pity on my disgraceful troubles. Help me to untangle myself from this thorny life that smothers me without a hint of liberating hope to encourage me!”

This was too much for the prisoner from the Spirit World! He had no strength left to continue to take in the bitterness arising from the sacred bosom of his own family due to the condemnable act he had committed against himself! Hearing the lamentations of the disgraced daughter he had loved so much, unbearable grief struck him in the deepest recesses of his paternal heart, infernal remorse reverberating violently and waking up in his spirit self an inconsolable pain, the pain of the most sincere compassion he could ever feel! In profound despair, confronted with the impossibility of immediately helping his poor daughter, of talking to her, or at least of infusing her soul with the consolation of his presence or advice, Jeronimo reached the limit of his folly and succumbed to the madness of his inconformity.

At an imperceptible signal from Ramiro de Guzman, the lancers came forward. They surrounded Jeronimo, shielding him against the peril of possible escape, and hurriedly took him away. Sympathetic to Margarida's misfortune, Ramiro, who had also been a father of a beloved daughter that was perhaps even more unfortunate, tenderly approached the young woman. He placed his protecting hands on her forehead and transmitted gentle,

comforting and encouraging magnetic energies. Margarida lay down on her bed and went into a deep sleep under the paternal blessings of Mary's servant... while the suicide, besieged by the "weeping and gnashing of teeth" begged to be allowed to help his shamefully dishonored daughter in any way possible! However, firmly controlling him so that he could reason with him for a moment, the patient guide replied:

"Enough of your folly, brother Jeronimo! You have reached the limit of the disobedience and stubbornness that our patience can tolerate! You do not want to face the fact that you cannot do anything on behalf of your children as long as you yourself have not acquired the indispensable qualities still lacking in you... Can't you see that your children, struggling under the weight of terrible deprivation, would fatally succumb to suicide just like you if you remained around them, influencing their defenseless sensibilities with your nefarious vibrations? That you are still not duly enlightened in your present state, a state in which you apparently prefer to remain?... Let's head back, Jeronimo! Let's return to the hospital... Or do you still want to see Marieta and Arminda?!"

As if struck by renewing forces, the wretch enjoyed an instant of respite from his madness to ponder for a few moments. He shook off the desperate hallucinations that blinded his reason and answered resolutely:

"No! Oh no, my dear friend! That's enough! I can't go on! My poor children! I threw you into such an abyss, I your father, who loved you so much! Forgive me, brother Teocrito! Now I understand... Forgive me, brother Teocrito."

From our infirmary, we watched their return with the same precautions...

From that day on, Jeronimo was no longer part of our group.

---

## Elucidation

The second event, besides the one just described, and which proved to be a decisive step in our destinies, began with an honorable invitation we received from the hospital's leadership to participate in an academic gathering involving psychical studies and experimentation. Jeronimo, we recall, had refused the invitation. Moreover, in the early evening of the day he had visited his family, he was overcome with terrible grief and requested a priest. As a Roman Catholic, his sentiments compelled him to seek such advice and comfort in order to restore his faith in the Divine Power and to calm his heart, broken as never before. The magnanimous head of the hospital had granted his request because he knew that the time had come for the wine merchant's spirit to take the next step on its path of progress. Thus, due to the religious principles to which he was inflexibly attached, it would be in his best interests to let the belief system that inspired him with the most respect and trust be the one that would prepare him for adaptation to the spirit life and its transformations.

Within the Legion of the Servants of Mary, and even in other areas of the Colony, there were eminent spirits who had worn the cassock in past lives, honoring it with ennobling deeds inspired by the pure fountains of the Divine Master's sacred examples. Of all those who collaborated in the Institute's educational endeavor, the one who stood out the most was Father Miguel de Santarem, a servant of Mary and a humble and respected disciple of the teachings consecrated on Calvary.

He was the director of Isolation, an institution connected with the Mary of Nazareth Hospital. Isolation employed strict educational methods and maintained unbendable discipline. It lodged only recalcitrant individuals, those damaged by excessive earthly prejudices, or hardened in insidious bigotry or in burning bitterness of heart. He was a man of infinite patience, a

respectable example of humility, gentleness and stability, and he possessed lofty sentiments of love for the unfortunate and moral delinquents. He was also moved by paternal compassion for all the spirits of suicides; thus, he was the appropriate adviser, the best mentor for the patients in Isolation. Moreover, in addition to being a priest, he was also a psychologist, scientist and profound philosopher. In a previous existence he had studied the Secret Doctrines in India, but after that he had had other terrestrial migrations in which he had demonstrated outstanding abilities in the Christian ministry. His last one had been in Portugal, where he had received the name that he continued to use in the afterlife, as well as his position as a sincere and honest priest.

Brother Teocrito was certain of this devoted worker's ability to deal with such a difficult problem and delivered the remorseful Jeronimo into his care. Thus, that same evening, when the twilight accentuated the snow-covered gardens of the hospital buildings, Jeronimo de Araujo Silveira was transferred to Isolation to be cared for by a priest, as he had requested. From that day on, we would have no more contact with our poor companion in crime until about a year later, when we would have the happiness of seeing him again. In later chapters we will write some more about this esteemed companion of our rehabilitation effort.

On the day after our internment in the magnanimous astral institute, we began daily visits to clinical-psychical chambers to receive magnetic treatments. In just a few days, we were feeling better and thinking more clearly. We gradually felt invigorated as if we were ingesting reviving tonics via that form of therapy. Each morning our affable nurses took us for our treatments. Groups of ten of us would enter an antechamber lined with small upholstered benches, where we would wait for a brief period of time. There were numerous such rooms, all located along an extensive gallery lined with stately columns. The rooms were all furnished in a Hindu style conducive to silence and meditation.

From there we would enter the treatment chambers.

Infused with bluish phosphorescence – still imperceptible to our spiritual capacity – these rooms were not large. Small Eastern-style seats, with a texture similar to white fleece and arranged in a semi-circle, implied that we were to sit down. Six young Hindu assistants, focused on their charitable duty, stood ready to receive the patients.



The procedures were suggestive and surrounded in mystery, and were highly intriguing at first. We had not known any Hindus psychics in Portugal, nor were we familiar with studies or experiences of a transcendental nature. But now we found ourselves under the watch-care of a phalanx of Eastern initiates, whose actual existence had never warranted but a passing interest because we had deemed it too mystical and legendary. However, our current surroundings were impregnated with a religious unction that acted powerfully on our faculties, assuaging them under the stimulus of religious fervor. They instilled such profound and pleasant feelings in our spirits that, dazzled by the novelty of it all, we thought we were dreaming. The first few times we entered those rooms saturated with unknown virtues, we were overcome by an uncontrollable drowsiness that induced a state sort of like semi-unconsciousness.

The assistants would show us where to sit in the semi-circle of cushioned chairs. Then, five of these spiritual physicians would stand behind us with a symmetrical, uniform space between each of them, with one posted at each end of the semi-circle. To close the circle, the sixth would stand in front of us with arms crossed at the waist, brow attentive and concentrated, as if emitting dominative mental energies for a charitable survey and inspection of the furnace inside our tormented souls.

Around us we could hear the harmonious whisperings of prayers, but we could not tell if they were praying to invoke the lofty powers of the Heavenly Physician for our solace, or if they were admonishing and counseling us. What the evidence obviously suggested, however, was that they were scrutinizing our thoughts with their mental powers, examining our character and moral personae in order to determine the best corrective measure – like surgeons investigating the viscera of their patients to locate the problem and operate on it. This certainty infused us with a plethora of emotions despite our peculiar state: shame for having tried to evade the Superior Laws of Creation by breaking them with the brutal act we had committed; remorse for having forgotten God Omnipotent; sorrow for having devoted our best energies to the pleasures of matter, preferring the imperatives of the world but never focusing on the urgent requisitions of the soul or devoting any time to our inner illumination. These were all bitter daggers that pierced the depths of our being during the sublime examination. We were filled with anguish and regret – the prelude to our real and fruitful repentance. Our entire past, even the smallest deeds, emerged from the dark depths and came to life in our very presence! Our suicide-shortened lives paraded before our terrified and astonished eyes,

and we could not stop the torrent of scenes from coming back to life for examination! We longed to escape the shame of uncovering so much infamy, which we thought had been hidden even from ourselves. It was indeed dramatic, overwhelmingly painful to unravel volumes filled with so much evil and turpitude before such noble and revered witnesses! But we felt we were being held in our seats by wills that were in control of our very Being! After a few minutes, the procedure ended and our torpor was lifted. The sinister dark clouds of our past disappeared from our sight, caught by the raging depths of the subconscious, thus mitigating our cruel memories. At this point, the concentrated brow of the assistant in front of us turned serene as a transparent rainbow. Tender compassion seemed to flow from him as he approached each of us to lay his translucent hands on our heads as the other five copied his gestures and expressions. The compassionate, beneficent fluids – divine therapy – helped us to gradually rectify our feelings of hunger and thirst; to set aside the maddening sensation of intense cold that the suicide feels as the result of the corpse’s coldness being transmitted to the perispirit; to attenuate unspeakable tendencies and appetites such as sex, drinking and smoking, whose repercussions and effects produced shocking disturbances in our spiritual senses, hindering our adaptation as well as imposing singular humiliations that pointed to how low we really were in the respectable society of the spirits that surrounded us.

One of the efforts suggested to us was that of training our minds to get rid of our dramatic and frightful tics. These were habitual motions arising from the need to mitigate the physical suffering caused by the type of our death.

As explained earlier, some of us were trying to stop the bleeding; others that had hanged themselves jerked their heads from time to time in an illusory effort to loosen the cords or tatters around their necks; those that had drowned themselves thrashed their arms against the currents that had pulled them into the deep; as horrific as the ghouls of fiction, the “shredded” ones bent down at macabre intervals in the illusion of picking up their scattered bloody body parts lying on the ground after having been torn to pieces under the wheels of the train under which they had thrown themselves in the belief that they could thus avoid forever the sacred commitment of living! These motions – we repeat – had begun the moment the suicide was committed, when the preservation instinct triggered the inherent impulse in these people’s mind to try to save themselves. But by now they had degenerated into a nervous mental habit, deriving from the vibrations innate to the vital principle,

vibrations that reverberated in the mind and spread to the physical-spiritual body. It was urgent that Charity – always spreading its protecting wings over those who suffer, to correct, mitigate, and soften their woes and pains – shower its benevolence on these many wretches lost in the quagmire of their dreadful hallucinations. As the assistants put their hands on our heads to envelop them in magnetic waves appropriate for their charitable purpose, they whispered magnanimous suggestions that resonated within the labyrinths of our “self” in strong and precise echoes, like bugles awakening us to a dawn of hope:

“Remember that you are no longer living on the earth!... When you leave this chamber, you will think only of your condition as an immortal soul, no longer affected by the disturbances of the physical-material envelope!... You are spirits! And as spirits you shall proceed on your ascending march in the spirit realms!”

\* \* \*

An invitation to another meeting presided over by Teocrito left us very happy, touched by such demonstrations of love and consideration.

But a shiver of dread pierced my soul when I recognized a number of disheveled and horrific figures from the Sinister Valley among the large audience, although I had to confess to myself that, just like me and my companions from the infirmary, they were now somewhat calmer. It should be noted that the members of our particular group could now be qualified as “repentant,” and thus amenable to the guidance of the hospital’s noble directors. Here and there, some still did not fit in, creating a more serious problem to solve. What was certain, however, was that most were still strongly “animalized,” whether the consequence of their own debased character or the result of the violence of the shock caused by the brutality of their suicide. Standing out in that group of suicides were the “shredded” ones, the drowned ones, the jumpers, etc. Dazed as if they had been stunned, they had an awful time reaching a sufficient level of reasoning to understand the impositions of spirit life. They occupied the Mental Ward for numerous reasons, among them the necessity to keep them from our sight because their presence sickened us, stirring unharmonious feelings that were harmful to the serenity we needed for our recovery.

Nonetheless, they too had been brought to the meeting. As soon as we entered the large auditorium accompanied by our devoted care-givers Joel and

Roberto, we saw them among the many other patients who, like us, had been asked to attend.

I observed my old companions from the valley of darkness and could see that, just as we had been doing for some days now, they were all making an effort to correct their horrible tics, because even though habit still compelled them to repeat them, they would catch themselves mid-way and stop the mental impulse that caused them, heedful of the suggestions of the loving assistants. Then they would laugh nervously at themselves in a moving acknowledgement of their habit, realizing that they should no longer feel the physical effects of the macabre act. They would smile at one another, as if mutually congratulating themselves for the relief received by being told that they *no longer had to have such feelings...* It was as if laughter enabled them to shake off those tormenting vibrations. They laughed to rid themselves of the habit of succumbing to the malefic weeping that brought back such terrible thoughts... The violent, convulsive sobbing of the Sinister Valley was strictly prohibited at the hospital... If we were to yield to the desperate afflictive weeping we had grown used to in that sinister place, it would open the floodgates to an onrush of grief, which the sacred charity of Mary was trying to mitigate through the dedication of her servants.

As I looked around at my companions, I too ended up laughing, acknowledging the fact that I was like everyone else in that weird group...

At a sign from Roberto, we all sat down.

Nothing in the place really grabbed our attention. However, if our sight had not been deficient in grasping the sublime manifestations of charity that abundantly surrounded us, we would have noticed that delicate fluidic vapors, like refreshing and gentle dew, were scattered throughout, impregnating the premises with sweet vibrations.

At an angle of the stage in front of us we could see an apparatus similar to those in the infirmaries, although it presented some particularities. Two young initiates began checking it while brother Teocrito took his place on the stage between two others. He introduced them as instructors that would assist us, and we were to show them our utmost respect. We were delighted to recognize them as the two young Hindu assistants that had welcomed us when we first arrived at the institution: Romeu and Alceste.

A religious silence spread harmonious meditative waves throughout the vast auditorium, where approximately two hundred spirits caught in the most

upsetting webs of sorrow were gathered, dragging with them the grievous load of their weaknesses and the innumerable regrets that darkened their lives.

On our gloomy canton descended the sad nuances of twilight, which so many times brought soft tears to our hearts due to the prevailing melancholy all around.

Six melodic strokes of an unseen clock gently echoed in the vastness of the room to announce the start of the meeting. An enveloping and moving harmonious hymn of prayer came to our ears through invisible ethereal waves from a distant, indiscernible place, while on the screen next to brother Teocrito appeared a suggestive painting of the apparition of Gabriel to the Virgin of Nazareth, announcing the coming of the Redeemer to the planet's ungrateful shores.

It was the loving moment of the Angelus...

The director stood up and addressed a brief and moving greeting to Mary, introducing the audience to such an invocation for the first time. A gentle solace stirred our hearts. Tears started to flow and sweet emotions rose from their inner tombs, awakened by the memories of homes, of distant childhoods, of mothers, whom none of us had loved as we should have, of course, but who had taught us the sublime words of our first prayers at our bedside!...

How so very far away all of that was! It had been almost completely erased under the vortex of passions and their resulting sorrows!... But the memories came back to life suddenly, like ghosts that seemed to impose themselves in the form of our mothers' kisses on our disheartened brows.

A deep longing grew within our minds, predisposing us to the tenderness of that grand moment being offered to us as a blessed new opportunity...

It would take too long to describe all the details of the wonderful and constructive sequence of teachings and experiences we received on that memorable evening, integrating the delicate treatment to be administered – moral therapy – with decisive action regarding the reeducation we so urgently needed. We will only state that during this first lesson we were submitted to such refined procedures in our inner beings that any doubts as to our present condition as spirits was skillfully and charitably removed from our minds for good, letting the light of the truth impose itself without constraint. We became categorically convinced of the fact that we were spirits separated from our earthly envelopes, which till then had been a motive for acerbic

confusion and incomprehensible bewilderment! The process took place candidly, with the patients themselves serving as living examples for the irrefutable lesson! This is how the erudite instructors carried out their sacred responsibility:

Belarmino de Queiroz e Souza, who, as we know, was highly educated and an adherent of the philosophical doctrines of Auguste Comte, was asked, among others who were given the same privilege later, to go up on the stage where the wonderful educational experience would take place. Brother Teocrito participated in these delicate procedures as the honorary president and overseer.

The former professor was placed in front of the luminous apparatus we had noticed earlier and was fitted with a diadem connected by thin wires that looked like imponderable sparks of light. Once Alceste completed the connection, Romeu asked Belarmino to go back to years past, arranging his thoughts in a sequence of memories starting with the exact moment when the tragic decision had taken over his faculties. To aid in this endeavor, Romeu revitalized Belarmino's mind with generous emanations of his own energies.

Passive and docile, Belarmino obeyed an authority he had no strength to oppose. He went back in time and remembered the tuberculosis that had struck him, the struggles he had had with himself against the idea of suicide, the inconsolable depression, the veritable agony that had taken over his faculties, the fight between his will to live and the fear of the cruel disease that was ravaging his physical body with constant suffering. He remembered the urgency of suicide. In his sick way of thinking, it would put a kinder end to the disease that was going to drag him down amid atrocious suffering. As he got closer to the final moment, however, the Comtean philosopher tried to avoid it by resisting the command to remember it. Cold sweat covered his broad forehead and his terror grew in intensity as desperation set in more deeply at each new pull of his pain-filled memories...

Even more astonishing, however, was the fact that the scenes evoked by the patient were reproduced on the phosphorescent screen to which he was connected, an extraordinary process that enabled both him and the rest of the audience to see the unfolding of the anguishing drama that had preceded his desperate act, in addition to the emotional and regrettable details of the deplorable moment! This was followed by the consequent tormenting conditions beyond the grave, the abominable drama that had greeted him, and the confused sensations that had kept him deranged for so long.

While one of the assistants helped him tap into these memories, another commented on them, explaining what happens to a suicide before and after the act is committed, like a professor emeritus instructing his students on an indispensable subject. He did this by showing the sequence following the intelligent being's disengagement from its material cocoon violated by the disastrous act committed against it. Thus, we followed the astonishing, inglorious odyssey experienced by a spirit expelled from physical existence by its own hand, thrashing around like a madman after having violated the Divine Law, caught in the tentacles of the monstrous, unavoidable string of events created by the breaking of harmonious, immutable natural laws that were eternal and full of wisdom!

These extraordinary scenes dashed the materialistic beliefs of the Comptean philosopher to pieces, beliefs that had already been thoroughly shaken. Under this detailed examination he was able to witness for himself the separation of his astral body from the envelope of clay, his astral body clearly surviving the suicide and the material body's decomposition.

By means of this gentle yet effective method, the great majority of the audience was able to understand the reason for their sufferings, the tormenting physical sensations they had been enduring, and the multiple disturbances that prevented the serenity or oblivion they erroneously expected to find beyond the grave.

Of all the observations, one is of particular interest because it was so strange. While in the valley, all of us displayed sparkling filaments dangling from our astral bodies, as if a broken electric cord still connected to its power source were giving off sparks from its frayed end. This phenomenon was finally made clear to us when our instructors explained that the full extent of our bitter wretchedness resided in it. When death is natural, this cord is detached gently from its affinities with the physical body – a process that is charitably performed by the workers of the Lord's vineyard responsible for sacred assistance to the dying. In the case of suicide, however, the cord is violently snapped. Worse yet, it is broken in an untimely manner when the vital reserves – infused with the energies for a lifetime that still might have been very long otherwise – kept the cord very strong for maintaining the conditions necessary for life to continue.

They also explained that in order to get rid of the profound imbalance these consequences produced in our fluidic bodies (we are not talking about the mental precariousness, which is perhaps even more excruciating), it was

imperative for us to animate another physical body, because until then we would continue to be in disharmony with the laws that rule the Universe, and a various assortment of troubles would keep us from any other accomplishments truly in accordance with progress.

As he relived these damaging afflictions, Belarmino succumbed to tears and spasmodic convulsions. Meanwhile, as the members of the audience watched that heartrending demonstration, they empathized with him as they recalled events that each one of them had gone through.

The instructor continued:

“So you can see, my dear friends, that just because this fellow longed to escape physical existence through the deceitful abyss of suicide, he was unable to avoid any of the anguishing situations that were bothering him, after all; on the contrary, he piled up more, perhaps harsher and more pungent misfortunes on his load of troubles, troubles that would certainly have been tolerable if a solid moral education, based on the accomplishment of duty, had inspired his daily actions. Although this moral education is capable of deterring tragedies such as those we are lamenting at this moment, it has not yet been acquired by humankind because it does not want to acquire it. But even so, humankind is certainly surrounded by abundant instructions and teachings capable of leading it to the redemptive dawn of the Good and of Duty!

“Careless earthly travelers, however, have continued to waste the beneficial opportunities offered by Divine Providence for their moral and spiritual advancement. Instead, they have preferred the insidious darkness of the passions that nourish the vices and folly that drive them to take the irremediable plunge into the abyss.

“Amid the tenderness and comfort provided by a prosperous and happy household, as well as amid the whirlwind of worldly attractions, excruciating trials and the shock of the daily vicissitudes of their environment, it never occurs to people to use every effort for their inner illumination, or for the moral, mental and spiritual reeducation required of their spirits for the future they are called to win by means of the natural order of the Laws of Creation. They do not even seem to grasp the fact that they have a soul endowed with divine seeds for acquiring excellent moral virtues and lasting spiritual qualities, seeds whose development it is their duty to foster and advance through their glorious effort of ascending towards God, towards life



immortal! They are unaware of the fact that it is the cultivating of these gifts that leads to their acquisition of worthier ideals and the fulfillment of their cherished dreams. Furthermore, by denying the divine being that palpitates within them – their Immortal Spirit, descendant of the Almighty – they willingly give themselves over to suffering and they slip onto the ominous detour of animality and crime, which, in turn, will perhaps drag them unavoidably into reparation, renewal, and dolorous experiences in the trials of reincarnation. Their journey of ascent would have been much swifter if they had wisely pondered these matters, seeking to investigate their own origin and the future that is theirs to win!

“It was this fatal ignorance that drove you to your current situation of despair, my dear brothers, a situation that our fraternal interest in the matter, inspired by the examples of the Divine Lamb, shall try to remedy! When all is said and done, however, time and your own efforts to go in the direction opposite to the one you have taken so far will be the indispensable elements for your recovery.

“You destroyed the material body assigned to your reincarnated spirit, the body you stubbornly believed to be the only and absolute seat of life, but you neither vanished as you had wished nor did you rid yourselves of the troubles that caused your despair! You live! You continue to live! You will live forever! You will live throughout the eons a life that is immortal, that will never, ever be extinguished, that will never cease to project upon your conscience the irresistible impulse to go ever forward!

“This is so because you are a light of inestimable value, created by the Eternal Father, who pours out His Immortality on all Creation – which has emanated from Him – granting you the blessings of progress down through the ages until you reach the plenitude of glory in final union with Him!

“With the extraordinary events concerning each of you impressed on your minds, what you see in yourselves at this solemn and unforgettable moment will mark a decisive phase in the trajectory that you will undoubtedly take into the future. From now on, you will desire to find out more about yourselves... because, truth is, you know nothing at all about Being, Life, Suffering and Destiny, in spite of the diplomas you proudly displayed on the earth, along with the distinctions and honors that so extensively adorned your foolish pride as men divorced from the divine ideal!”

Belarmino felt revitalized by the magnetic energies provided by the learned assistants and returned to his seat while another patient ascended the stage for examination. Belarmino's face used to look stern and worn out, but it now reflected the light of hope! As he sat next to us, he inconspicuously pressed our hands and said:

“Yes, my dear friends! *I am* immortal! I was just able to confirm, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the concrete existence of my immaterial ‘self,’ the spiritual being I used to deny! I know nothing, absolutely nothing! I need to recommence my studies!... But this, all by itself, is a great happiness for me: I am immortal! I am immortal, indeed!”

At the same type of gathering in the days that followed, we were all led to examine in painful detail the wrongs we committed throughout the existence we had destroyed, and we took a good look at the web of moral, mental, educational, social and material prejudices that had dragged us into our present deplorable state. Patient instructors helped us go back in our memories to our infancy, and from there we examined how we had proceeded in life. During the process, we shed copious tears, disappointed to realize that we ourselves had been the authors of the disillusionment that had plunged us into the abyss of suicide. How badly we had acted in carrying out the daily endeavors society imposed on us! How primitively we had conducted ourselves at all times, in spite of the varnish of civilization we so proudly wore!

So many in our unfortunate group displayed the nefarious result of the meager moral education acquired in homes lacking true Christian illumination! Adolescents barely out of childhood had fallen defenseless at their first clash with the vexations common to earthly life. Since they were completely devoid of ideals and good sense, or respect for themselves, family and God, they preferred the brashness of suicide! The misery they found after suicide was a terrible indictment against the irresponsibility of parents or those responsible for them before God, the awful proof of their neglect to give them a solid moral education! We were told that by fostering the pernicious inclinations of their children rather than trying to curtail them, these negligent parents opened the way to the desperate imbalance conducive to suicide. Consequently, they would be held accountable to the Sovereign Laws in the future!

After these complex examinations, we went to other gatherings to learn how we should have acted in order to avoid suicide, and what would have

been our daily conduct if we had not walked away from Duty, faith in ourselves, and the paternal love of God! In many cases the solution to the problems that had opened the doors to the abhorrent abyss had been a mere two steps away: assistance from Divine Providence would have arrived in just a few days or months. All they would have had to do was be courageous for that brief amount of time – a glorious testimony to the will, patience and moral bravery necessary for spiritual progress! With disappointing surprise, we came to the conclusion that the triumph of happiness would have been easy if we had looked to Divine Love for inspiration to guide us in the life that we so disgracefully destroyed!

These lessons were provided twice a week and were of great benefit to all of us. Also, our noble mentors added profitable explanatory talks to them. We experienced promising improvement in our overall condition, while gentle hopes murmured edifying consolations to our sorrow-filled hearts. The instructors' presence was a motive of great satisfaction for our souls as they recovered from their bitter despair. Their words during the lessons were like refreshing dew poured on the fire of our afflictions; their explanations and advice, their tender and charitable treatment gave us many other reasons to be hopeful and trusting. We only saw them at those auspicious gatherings, however, and in their presence we were so intimidated that, in spite of their kindness, we did not have the courage to utter a single word without being addressed first.

In a little more than two months, we were capable of receiving fuller instructions, which we would then ponder in the quiet of our rooms.

From our analysis came the ever clearer certainty of the gravity of our situation. The fact that we had been momentarily relieved of our pungent sufferings did not indicate a lessening of our culpability. On the contrary, the ability to think clearly amplified the extent of our crime, something that greatly disillusioned and saddened us. Based on the instructions and assistance charitably ministered to us as a means to encourage the inner reform we so urgently needed, we have included the following schematic outline from our unpretentious annotations from beyond the grave:

1. Human beings have a three-fold nature: human, astral and spiritual, that is, matter, fluid, and essence. This composite can be translated into more popular and concrete terms as physical body, fluidic body or perispirit, and soul or spirit. From this last one emanate Life, Intelligence, Sentiment, etc. It is the spark where the divine essence resides and which points to the human

being's celestial heredity! Of these three bodies, the first is temporary and is subject only to the necessities of the inalienable circumstances that surround it. Its fate is total destruction due to its putrescible nature originating from its primitive matter – it is the physical body. The second is immortal and tends to evolve, develop and perfect itself by means of incessant effort and struggle throughout the millennia – it is the fluidic body. The third is the spirit, eternal like the Origin it comes from, an immortal light that tends to shine ever more brightly until, to the glory of its Creator, it can portray in a relative manner the Supreme Brilliance that gave it Life – it is the divine essence, image and likeness (which it will be someday) of God Almighty!

2. While living on the earth, this intelligent being, which is to evolve throughout Eternity, is called a Human Being! Thus, human beings are spirits incarcerated in a physical body, that is, they are *incarnate*.

3. A spirit returns many times to take a new physical body; that is, a spirit is *reborn many times* in order to live in earthly societies as a human being, just like a person has to change his or her clothes many times...

4. Suicides are morally delinquent spirits that failed to honor the commitments they made before the wise, just and immutable Laws established by the Creator. *They will be obliged to repeat their earthly experience in a new body, since they destroyed the one that the Law conferred on them as an instrument to aid in the conquest of their own self-perfection* – a sacred deposit that they should have cared for and respected rather than destroy it. They had no right to avoid the great commitments of planetary life, commitments they accepted before birth and in the presence of their own conscience and the Divine Fatherhood that gave them Life and the means to live it.

5. The spirits of suicides will return to new earthly bodies *in highly afflictive, suffering conditions*, aggravated by the consequences of the great imbalance that the desperate gesture caused in their astral body – the perispirit.

6. The return of suicides to physical bodies is the law, the unavoidable law! Their return is an irremediable expiation, to which they must submit willingly or not, because, for their own good, there is no other recourse but *the repetition of the plan that they deserted without having completed it*.

7. By succumbing to suicide, human beings reject and destroy the sacred opportunity provided by the divine law for acquiring worthy and honorable

virtues for their conscience, because suffering, when heroically endured and borne by the sovereign will to triumph, is like a magic sponge that expunges from the guilty conscience the darkness from an often criminal past in former existences. But if they reveal the inferiority of their character, and instead of redemptive heroism they try to avoid their toils by taking their own life, they will only delay the fulfillment of their dearest longings. The reality is that they can never actually kill themselves because the fount of their Life resides in their spirit, and the spirit is indestructible and eternal like the Sacred Light from which it descended!

8. Suicides rarely remain in the Spirit World for long. Depending on the harmful consequences derived from the act, they either reincarnate right away or they are able to delay that irreversible necessity when mitigating circumstances allow for their admission to courses of edifying instruction to facilitate their future rehabilitation.

9. Suicides are like stowaways in the Spirit World. The laws that regulate the harmony of the invisible world are upset by their presence in its realms before their right and legitimate assigned time. Suicides are tolerated and assisted, and are treated appropriately because of the excellence of the laws that flow from the loving bosom of our Almighty Father, laws established so that all sinners may be given as many opportunities as they need to correct and rehabilitate themselves!

10. When reborn in a new physical body, suicides will relive their previous life's plan of toil and struggle, which they erroneously thought they could escape by using the shortcut of suicide. Once again they will experience similar or completely identical responsibilities and hardships they avoided the first time, and they will invariably experience the temptation to commit the same type of suicide. Since they willingly got themselves into this difficult circumstance, they will carry the bitter consequences of their wrongful past into the expiatory reincarnation! Nevertheless, they will be able to resist such a temptation if, in the Spirit World, they were duly enlightened and prepared to resist it. But if they do fail a second time – which is improbable – their responsibility will be multiplied even more, and since the spirit is immortal, they will have to endure a new series of painful and rehabilitating struggles!

11. The endless state of inconsolable anguish, anxious restlessness, and constant melancholy and unhappiness experienced by reincarnated suicides, in addition to the abnormal conditions reproduced in their soul, mind and life, are beyond human comprehension and can only be grasped by the offenders.

They will be allowed to return to normalcy only after the causes that provoked the suicide are resolved, after expiatory lives in which their moral qualities are severely tested, lives involving uninterrupted tears, noble endeavors, and dolorous self-sacrifices... Such an undertaking usually demands the perseverance of a century of struggles – of two or more centuries, even, depending on the level of their demerit and their willingness to face the just and inalienable fight!

These deductions definitely did not leave any room for illusions regarding the future ahead. Very early on we understood that, in the thorny reality we found ourselves in, there was only one recourse, one pathway to soften the future we could not yet envision: submit ourselves to the imperatives of the laws we had infringed and closely observe the advice and orientation furnished by our loving mentors, letting them guide and educate us according to their lofty criteria, like submissive lambs longing for the supreme consolation of the sheepfold...

---

## Communion with the Higher Realms

*At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and have revealed them to babes."  
Mt. 11:25*

*"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."  
Mt. 18:20*

Despite the highly effective methods used in the Hospital, and even more so in Isolation and the Mental Ward, there were patients that were still unable to come to grips with their situation. They remained dazed, semi-unconscious and immersed in a deplorable state of mental lethargy. They were incapable of doing anything more for their progress. It was imperative to awaken them. It was imperative to give them a jolt by having them confront the animalized vibrations they were accustomed to, enabling them to understand. This was something that only human words and interaction could do! What else was could be done if they could not understand the harmonious words of their spirit mentors, if they could not see them with the precision needed to accept their charitable recommendations, even though these mentors materialized themselves as much as possible to make the process more effective?

Furthermore, the august Guardian of the Institute also yearned to see these patients healed, because that was the desire of her sublime heart as a Mother!

Therefore, the devoted servants of the majestic Legion watched over by Mary of Nazareth did not hesitate to use every resource possible to fulfill her compassionate wish.

Our instructors – Romeu and Alceste – conveyed to the eminent director of the Hospital that the complexity of some of the patients' mental problems

rendered them unsolvable in the Spirit World. Consequently, there was a pressing need to go down to the earth in search of students in the area of the psychic sciences to help solve them. Informed of the details conveyed in meetings in which these two devoted mentors participated, brother Teocrito appointed a group to leave immediately for the earth to investigate the possibility of an effective co-effort. He also elicited assistance from Security because that department was in charge of the interaction between our Colony and the earthly realms.

Always ready to help, Olivier de Guzman put the necessary, competent personnel at the disposal of his former colleague. He also asked the Department of External Relations for information regarding authentic (defined by the Christian emblem of true fraternity) psychical study and experimental groups in Portugal, the Portuguese colonies, Spain, Brazil and other Latin American countries, together with the spiritual résumés of their mediums.

Brazil was the preferred venue, however. It offered a variety of knowledgeable organizations, where the religious aspect and Christian morality consolidated the ideal of Love and Fraternity so much admired by the Legion's servants. These organizations also possessed a large number of gifted mediums capable of performing the difficult task, and whose names had been listed in Security's directory for the Land of the Holy Cross.

That same night, a small caravan departed from Security and headed for Brazil, led by our esteemed Ramiro de Guzman. Because they were lucid, completely dematerialized spirits, there was no need for special vehicles. They would use the faculty of volitation<sup>17</sup> for the trip; it was quicker and in accordance with their spiritual condition. In addition to the dedicated Alceste and Romeu, two surgeons in charge of the patients at issue went along. Like both of the Canalejas doctors in our infirmary, they specialized in the science of the physical-astral organization and were authorized to examine the abilities of the mediums whose names and references had been obtained from External Relations. The final choice of which groups to visit would depend on their examination.

Before their departure, however, the Institute's leadership (located in the Temple) sent a telepathic message to the spirit guides in charge of the mediums' groups, as well as to the mediums' own guides and mentors, asking for their permission and assistance in the endeavor.



The mediums' cooperation had to be voluntary. Absolutely nothing would be imposed on or demanded of them. On the contrary, the Institute's emissaries would ask, in the name of the Legion of the Servants of Mary, for the favor of their collaboration. It was a rule of the schools of initiation, to which the members responsible for the Mary of Nazareth Correctional Institute belonged, not to impose anything on anyone; they were merely to ask for their help with a particular charitable endeavor.

Once the agreement had been reached telepathically, it was established that the spirit mentors would suggest to their mediums that they go to bed earlier than usual; that they would help them fall into a gentle magnetic sleep, allowing them a more ample radius of action and lucidity for best understanding the activities that would take place that night. Once disengaged from their sleeping physical bodies, the mediums would be taken to their Spiritist centers, the places that had been chosen for the exchanges.

When everything was ready, the missionary caravan left the Institute. It was composed of eight members: four specialized workers from the Hospital and four workers from Security responsible for guiding them safely to the centers.

It was exactly 11:00 p.m. when the group reached the picturesque latitudes of Brazil and hastened on towards the interior of the country.

Soft light emitted by the last phases of the full moon gently poured a melancholy hue over the planet of trials and expiations. Rich in balsamic essences, the vibrant Brazilian flora infused the atmosphere with rare fragrances in honor of the noble visitors, as if knowing what their favorite scents were...

The team consulted their map for directions, and as indicated by the Department of External Relations, they chose a few cities in the interior of the immense nation for having serious psychical study groups. They separated into four groups of two individuals each and quickly reached the indicated spots. It had been established that they would visit four cities at a time in search of mediums, and that once the agreements were confirmed, they would all meet with the mediums' guides and mentors in a locale in the Spirit World for final arrangements.

Thus, that very night at various Spiritist centers in the interior of Brazil, where the quietness and simplicity of the customs had not significantly contaminated the social ambient, a charitable activity of the astral world took

place in very humble locales devoid of opulence and vanity, but where the sacred light of Fraternity stayed lit for the immortal worship of love for God and neighbor.

The emissaries explained their visit. They asked the mediums, whose spirits had been brought there while their bodies remained deep asleep, for their charitable help in enlightening despondent suicides who were having a hard time grasping the imperatives of spirit life with nothing but astral assistance. The visitors explained their deplorable state at length, and *the mediums were asked to contribute large amounts of their own energies for the relief of the wretches that would be knocking on their door.* Such a charitable task of drying the suicides' desperate tears would prove taxing. It was even possible that while in contact with them the mediums themselves would be afflicted with indefinable anguish, discomfort, insomnia, loss of appetite and even weight loss. However, the leadership of the Mary of Nazareth Hospital assured the mediums that their organic, mental or magnetic energies would be refurbished immediately after their commitment was over, and that from that day onward the Legion of the Servants of Mary would not leave them without their fraternal and grateful watch-care. They were asking cooperation with such a risky endeavor because they recognized the fact *that mediums educated in the light of Christian morality are the initiates of modern times. As such, they should know that their positions as mediums at their Spiritist centers necessarily entail two essential and sacred principles of Christian Initiation, transmitted by the eminent Master who heroically exemplified them: Love and Self-denial!*

The visitors went on to explain that the mediums were free to accept or decline the invitation. The task was voluntary, to be carried out without any constraints of any kind, based solely on trust and a sincere desire to do the Good.

Thus, the first meetings of this kind took place in twelve different locations, with invitations extended to twenty mediums of both sexes. However, of the women, only four of very humble origin, emitting rays of light from their astral bodies at heart level, offered their unconditional and selfless assistance to the emissaries of the Light. Of the men, only two acquiesced. They lacked abundant sentiments of self-denial, but were nonetheless faithful to their commitments, like employees who fulfill their obligations because that is their job. The rest were honest and sincere in their love for Jesus, but they lacked the courage for such a formal commitment.

The patients' precarious state and their suffering beyond the grave infused them with such dread that they could not bring themselves to be of direct help; even so, they did offer to lend their support through beneficent, sincere prayers. Consequently, although these fourteen were relieved of any direct commitment, the visitors were quite satisfied. It should be noted that Brazil was the preferred choice because it offered highly capable, honest, sincere and completely selfless mediums!

Crucial examinations of the mediums' astral and physical bodies followed.

A detailed inspection of their physical body ensued back in their beds. Their brain vigor, heart condition, circulatory harmony, the general state of their viscera and nervous system, and even their gastric, renal and intestinal functions were carefully assessed. Since there were still twenty-four hours left to finish the preparations, any deficiencies could be repaired in time by means of fluidic and magnetic procedures.

Next, their physical-astral body – their perispirit – was assessed. The spirits of the six selected mediums were taken to one of the emergency aid posts supervised by the Colony – a sort of Auxiliary Department, where, among others, tasks relating to this type of endeavor were frequently carried out. There, they were given detailed instructions as to the services they would be rendering. Their perispirits were examined and invigorated with the appropriate fluidic applications; the volume and degree of their vibrations were evaluated and their excesses or deficiencies were corrected so that they could resist every mental disturbance and overcome all noxious, sickly and desperate emanations from the wretched suicides engulfed in the madness of their superlative suffering! In fact, mediumistic contact with the suicides was established at that time because harmonious magnetic currents began to link them together, thereby establishing a sympathetic attraction, that is, the combining of fluids indispensable for carrying out phenomena of such a delicate and sublime nature.

Once the preparations had been finalized, the mediums were returned to their homes and freed from their deep sleep so that they could wake up whenever they pleased. Meanwhile, the tireless emissaries of fraternal love returned to their posts in the Invisible. There, they would continue a series of preparations for the endeavors of the following night, when successive meetings would take place in four different cities in the interior of Brazil. Such preparations came as no surprise, since all of the initiates of the institute

were doctors of medicine who also had ample knowledge of the particularities of the physical-astral body.

When the caravan returned, an uncommon activity mobilized certain Security and Hospital departments. The next morning, we were told that we would leave for the earth at nightfall for further instructional visits, something that stirred our hearts due to the possibility of perhaps visiting our friends and family! Groups of workers and technicians from Security departed at dawn with the equipment that would be needed for the important work to be undertaken in the first hours of the night. The directors of our Colony, as well as instructors and their assistants, were very strict about the methods to be employed, were meticulous regarding the discipline required for the interaction between the astral and physical worlds, and were faithful to the programs implemented by the Eastern sanctuaries where, when incarnated on the earth long ago, they learned the magnificent sciences of Psychism. For this reason, a contingent of lancers went down to the earth, to each of the places where the Spiritist Sessions would take place. After a painstaking inspection of the inside, they posted themselves outside to start their patrols in the early hours of the dawn. Thus, each humble Spiritist Center chosen for the first phase of the endeavor was encircled by a barrier of Hindu lancers as the Legion's banner was hoisted above the main entrance, a banner invisible to human eyes but true and real, nonetheless. Devoted workers, under the direction of technicians and directors from External Relations, also began preparing the room that had been reserved for carrying out the mediumistic work, making it as identical as possible to the rooms used at the Institute for instructing patients. Furthermore, the Center's discarnate supervisor was asked the courtesy of telling the incarnate director via mediumistic means that *under no circumstances was he or she to allow any lay or inattentive participants to take part in that night's highly meaningful and delicate endeavors. After all, nothing less than a phalanx of spirit suicides would be brought there, and endeavors of such magnitude had to be secret and admit only workers that were honest and sincere in their Christian principles.*

During the preparation, magnetic fluids were profusely scattered throughout the session room for two purposes: first, to serve as the material necessary for creating visual images during the instructions to the patients; and second, to be used as a soothing tonic to combat the disquieting and disharmonized noxious vibrations of the suffering spirits as well as those of any participating incarnates who inattentively stopped praying and watching,

thus dragging the emanations of their troubled minds into the sacred communion with the spirit world.

After everything was ready, the transport of the patients involved in the delicate procedure started at dusk. That morning, however, after the talk that always followed the magnetic applications used for treating us, we were instructed about the significance of the upcoming meeting:

“During the trip, it would be best if you did not speak; instead, use the time to balance your mental forces by directing them towards impulses of benevolence. Try to remember the instructions you have received over the last two months as if you were going to be tested on them. This exercise should help you stay focused and will thus aid in your protection. We are going to be passing through some dangerous areas of the Invisible, populated by hordes from the Lower Astral, so those in charge of guarding us during the excursion will have a great responsibility. While the workers of the Legion of Mary could easily repel any attack, the highest degree of silence and concentration possible will enable the vehicles carrying us to go faster, thus thwarting any assaults on our caravan.

“No one is to leave the caravan under any circumstance, not even for the purpose of visiting homeland or family. Such indiscipline could lead to many tears and sorrows because you are weak, inexperienced, and not very knowledgeable of the spirit world, where seductions, temptations, hypocrisy, deceit and evil proliferate even more than on the earth! When the time is right, you will be able to visit your loved ones without any problems that could bring more anguish.

“During the session at the Spiritist Center, you are to behave as if you were in the Supreme Tabernacle itself. The meeting will be conducted in the name of the Almighty, and His Son will be present through the merciful radiations of his Fraternal Love, in fulfillment of the promises he has made to all sincere disciples of his Sublime Doctrine who meet in his name for communion with Heaven.

“It is the duty of honest and serious Christians to silence their passions and impure desires, shielding themselves with their willingness to control them and re-educating themselves daily. When entering the venerable Sanctuary, where the sacred interaction between the dead and the living will take place in order to mutually learn from each other, incarnates and discarnates should display the most dignified attitudes, filling their minds

with thoughts that match the nobility of this highly meaningful event. Forget your worries and lesser concerns, and elevate your charitable sentiments with the intent of benefitting others. Remember that your phalanx is composed of entities that are even more unfortunate than you, of brothers that have not yet experienced any relief because of the extent of their nervous and mental upheavals. The duty of fraternity commands you to aid them in spite of your frailty, to contribute with firm, benevolent thoughts on their behalf. This will surround them with new vigor and will soften the fire of their oppressive anguish while granting you the merit of true cooperation.”

The instructions went even further, stating that on the earth not all workers admitted into the sacred tabernacle of the interaction between the two worlds can maintain the appropriate mental and moral hygiene that is necessary for good communications with the Invisible; that, at present, frivolity and abuse in the practice of interaction with the dead has been rampant among incarnates – a deplorable fact, indeed, because anyone who acts frivolously regarding such a grave and delicate matter takes on a serious debt that will weigh heavily on his or her conscience in the future. For this reason, enlightening sessions, in which the unveiling of great spiritual phenomena are possible, are very rare because incarnates are not worthy of the lofty mandate they believe they are capable of fulfilling. They have forgotten that, in order for the heavenly mysteries to illumine their minds, unveiling the sublimity of their nature, the moral and mental self-discipline of the experimenters is indispensable at all times, that is, the individual preliminary preparation that leads to perceivable inner change – or at least the strong desire to reform oneself, together with a strong will to accomplish the true purpose of the Good!... But even so and in spite of everything, the duty of Fraternity demands that angelic spirits keep an eye on Centers where such infractions take place, charitably waiting for the best opportunity to advise careless workers, instructing them as best as possible, awakening their consciences to their grave responsibility, and warning them that they will be held accountable when they shun the tunic of virtues, as mentioned in the parable of the Heavenly Counselor as the obligatory garment for the table of the divine banquet with the astral and sidereal societies!<sup>18</sup>... And finally, that in doing so, these angelic spirits are doing nothing more than observing the principles of fraternity established by the Nazarene Master himself, who did not disdain leaving the Higher Realms for the tormenting mire of human evil in order to show sinners the pathway of Duty and the practice of regenerating virtues!

We left for the earth at dusk, guarded by a heavy contingent of lancers, groups of assistants, and physical and technical workers from the Security Department. No sector of the Colony, not even that of the Temple, ever visited the earth or other neighboring localities without the valuable help of those selfless and intrepid workers, for they were the ones who were truly responsible for the arduous tasks that took place there. We had been duly instructed and thus behaved as we had been told. Our companions in worse conditions, those for whom all these preparations had been made, were transported in suitable vehicles that resembled mobile prisons, securely locked and guarded by the Hindu contingent, a fact that made us unable to see them. The piercing cries of the patients they carried, however, the crying-out and convulsive weeping that we knew too well, pierced our ears, touching us deeply and awakening our compassion. We anxiously sought help for our consequent discomfort in the prudent recommendations of our esteemed instructors Romeu and Alceste. As we directed our mental energy in compassionate vibrations on their behalf, we ourselves were benefitted.

At the end of the trip, our eyes, accustomed to the usual gloom of the Hospital, were dazzled. It was remarkable how well we could discern the images before us. We had never seen a place as magnificently illuminated as that humble Center was by light sent down from the Higher Realms, enveloping it in an embrace of sublime vibrations! The banner with the radiant cross waved overhead – the emblem of the Servants of Mary – with its initials in bluish scintillations. Lancers guarded the small place, which had been transformed into a starry mansion surrounded by a luminous cord at approximately two meters. To someone knowledgeable, this precaution by the illustrious workers of the Mary of Nazareth Hospital would not seem out of place. Installed to prevent the interference of sundry mental emanations, it aided as much as possible to deflect noxious external intrusions of any kind!

We went in and our wonder only increased...

The activity from the side of the spirit world was intense, while on the side of the incarnate workers it seemed minimal.

As we stepped into the room, we saw only an elderly man totally absorbed in reading a book on transcendental philosophy. Deeply engrossed in the thoughts he was assimilating from the book's learned pages, we could see luminous sparks of light radiating from his brow – a fact that gave him high standing in the Invisible. Everything seemed to indicate that he would be in charge of that night's task, and understanding the responsibility on his

shoulders, he was preparing himself properly by establishing harmonious currents between himself and his esteemed spirit friends. He was the Center's incarnate director.

The scene was impressive and majestic.

The room's walls seemed to have disappeared, as if they had been magically moved in order to make the premises bigger. In their place we saw what looked like tiers of bleachers, making it look like an amphitheater for academics. Our guides led us to the bleachers and seats reserved for us, while our miserable companions, those whose grave conditions were the purpose of these preparations, were patiently brought in by their medical assistants and nurses and seated in the first row of bleachers, in an area appropriate to their circumstances.

The incarnate participants, that is, the mediums and the homogeneous collaborators of good will, were already in the room and were in their places. As far as most of them could tell, there was nothing else in the plain room except the white unadorned walls, the table covered with a simple tablecloth, some books, a few clean sheets of paper within the mediums' reach, and a few pencils. Those gifted with clairvoyance, however, perceived something very unusual and outside the usual routine. They discreetly informed the other participants that *important visitors from the Beyond were honoring their Center that night*, and then gave them some of the details, such as the presence of the lancers, the medical personnel with their white garments and insignias, and the busy nurses. In reality, however, no one really believed them. In the first decade of this century<sup>19</sup>, even the staunchest Spiritists had a hard time accepting the fact that even in the spirit world it was necessary to use contingents of guards such as lancers and assistants such as nurses and doctors practicing their magnanimous science on behalf of discarnate patients...

For us, however, if the degrading indigence caused by our spiritual inferiority had not impeded the complete vision that would be natural if our condition had been different, we would have beheld the scene in all its majestic reality, instead of being able to see only faintly what our guides and mentors contemplated in all its glorious splendor and significance.

The table was in the center of the room and the incarnate collaborators were seated around it: the director, the mediums and other workers who would establish a sympathetic current. The table had seemed unremarkable



when we entered the room but it was now luminous. Receiving a cascade of resplendent light from the Higher Realms, it had been transformed into a sacred altar, where the communion of Fraternity between incarnates and discarnates would take place under the divine auspices of the Lamb of God, whose venerable name was invoked for the meeting.

In addition to this first magnetic current produced by the harmonious vibrations of the incarnates, there was a second one composed of lovely, translucent entities, whose features we could barely discern due to the light they emitted. Their enchanting silhouettes were fringed by pure, crystalline rays. These were the Center's spirit guides, the mediums' guardians, and the participants' assistants and family members, entities who for many millennia, perhaps, had selflessly devoted themselves to their wards' redemption!

Beyond this second current, occupying a larger space in the room, and arranged in a circle like the first two, was the over-current furnished by the Legion's servants. It was composed of the specialized personnel appointed by the Security and subordinated to External Relations. These were all supervised by our friend Ramiro de Guzman.

At the head of the table was the place of honor occupied by the Center's director. It required from its occupant an elevated disposition toward the Good, and for the Hindu methods used at the Institute, it would be the key to the task ahead. Behind the director stood the Center's spirit director, along with Ramiro de Guzman. A little further behind, stood Romeu and Alceste – the direct instructors of the tormented phalanx – whose skills would come into play once the incarnate director started his speech for that night's meeting.

Romeu and Alceste would be in charge of: gathering the vibrations of the words and thoughts emitted by the incarnate director during the event; combining them with the quintessential elements at their disposal, mingled with the magnetic waves emitted by the incarnate participants; structuring and transforming them into images and scenes, giving them life and action, materializing them to the point where the discarnate suicides were capable of understanding everything more easily. For this task they had the support of Security and External Relations, along with loving and indispensable assistance from the scientific departments of the hospital, headed by Teocrito.

As for our doctors and nurses, they were at their posts, either next to the mediums or the patients, faithful to the sublime ministry that Medicine had

conferred on them in the Astral, where it is even more sublime than on the earth, since in the Great Beyond, they dedicate themselves to such worthy endeavors solely under the august inspiration of Love and Fraternity.

Further out, serene at their posts, the lancers – those intrepid and silent collaborators – seemed to be concentrating their power not in their lances, which in their hands did not suggest any violence, but in their minds, rigorously molded in the forge of austere work, stern discipline, self-denial and lessons learned through the pain of sacrifice!

With everyone at their post, it was time to start the work according to the methods of initiation. As the one responsible for the caravan, Count Guzman was asked to start the roll call. The assistants designated by the Mary of Nazareth Institute for the tasks of the night were all present and accounted for. Upon request, the Center's spirit director did the same, announcing that all of his subordinates were also present for the fulfillment of the sacred commitment. As for the incarnates, however, not all of them were present at the agreed-upon time – three were absent from the fulfillment of their duty...

The procedures were finally begun in the name of the Almighty. Protection was asked of the Master of Nazareth. Visibly inspired by the vigorous thoughts of the illumined spirits, the Center's director proffered a fervent and moving prayer that predisposed our hearts to deep and tender reflections. As he prayed, the bluish-white rays emanating from the Higher Realms poured over the table more and more vigorously, like sparks of sublime blessings flowing from the charitable eyes of Mary, directing her workers in the compassionate mission of assistance to the unfortunate fallen spirits.

Let us beseech the mentors and guardians at the session to grant us the blessing of remote viewing – one of the most precious attributes of their acquired progress, but something we still do not have – and let us reverently follow that bluish cascade, ornamenting the humble gathering of the disciples of the great initiate Allan Kardec, to see if we can discover its origin...

Happily, our request has been granted, under one condition: that we take the reader along with us on our search... As we look through our magic binoculars, we see that, under the pure light pouring over the modest Center, the physical dimensions disappear and it is transfigured into the object of generous radiations coming from the leadership of our astral Institute. Reflected in those gentle scintillations, we see an exact copy of what at this

very moment is happening within the secret chamber of the Temple-Sanctuary, where the spirits responsible for the whole Colony are gathered together before the Legion's Highest Directorship. Thus, those austere masters are also present at our meeting down here on the earth – we can see them. They, too, are seated at an august, spotless white table – the table of communion with the Most High – the sacred altar that, each and every day, witnesses the manifestation of their high ideals, their profound investigations as Christianized scientists regarding the Divine Creation and the grave problems that affect the human race, as well as their fervent vibrations of love and respect for their neighbor and the Almighty Father! Their group is composed of twelve handsome and noble men, whose age at first sight is not clear. But a closer look reveals it to be the age that is dearest to their heart or memories! From their grave, wise minds, as well as from their generous hearts, silvery flashes of light radiate outward as a testimony of their adherence to the virtuous principles that guide them!

We see no one else there, however. They are alone, insulated in the sanctified premises by the vibrations of the prayers that arise from their Faith-filled souls! Not even the closest disciples, those who work daily for the progress and well-being of the Colony, are privy to that secrecy. The meeting is restricted, for they are the only ones present! They need the solidest homogeneity possible! *It is imperative to maintain the overall harmony of the assembly that has dared meet in the name of the Supreme Creator of the Universe and under the eyes of his Son, whose presence was ardently invoked at the beginning of the session.* They are responsible to Mary for what takes place at the humble center of the disciples of Allan Kardec, and over whose roof the emblem of her Legion has been hoisted! And even more seriously, before her August Son – our Master and Redeemer, to whom all legions render obedience as the Highest Director of all, upon whom the Creator conferred power to deliver the earth and its humanities – Mary is responsible both for the initiates and for what takes place there, which is why it is absolutely necessary to preserve harmony to obtain the objectives!

For the Beloved Master to be glorified once more; for his sublime name not to be invoked for frivolous endeavors; for sacrilege not to be committed by reducing the invocation of the Immaculate Lamb of God to a simple, banal formula; for him to be present during the procedures; for his presence in spirit and in truth to be real in the sanctuary of the followers of Kardec – these are the reasons why the Institute's initiates have met secretly to uplift their firm and focused thoughts in sublime draughts. Through their superlative mental

resources, they expand their own souls in a plea that all – indeed all! – present at the charitable session may merit the presence of the Great Comforter, thus establishing invincible, virtuous, pure currents for that night, currents that are the mark of union between the presence of the Divine Master and the serious, well-directed Spiritist meeting!

This is why other servants, no matter how honest, sincere and dedicated they may be, cannot participate in that secret assembly taking place in the spirit world. They have not yet acquired the perfectly homogeneous vibrations needed for this sacred mandate. In the vast Colony of the Mary of Nazareth Institute, only these twelve master initiates display perfectly identical moral qualities, levels of virtue and knowledge, and state of spiritualization for communion in the sublime *agape*!

Even so, they are humble and modest. They know that of themselves they have little to offer the needy and suffering. They consider their wealth of acquired knowledge to be minute, in spite of the long pathway of experiences already trod, the string of pilgrimages down the avenues of sacrifice and tears! Consequently, they are aware of the fact that they are still far from perfection! Yet, they continue their efforts to advance with ever firmer steps towards the grand ideal they hope for – their final unity with Jesus – while they unambiguously demonstrate that neither personal passions nor impure desires trouble their wills, austere forged in Love, Justice and Duty!

Hence they pray and supplicate in harmony, but do not consider themselves worthy enough to be called masters or leaders of others! They only know that they must serve, that they are nothing but servants of a great conglomerate where the law is love for one's neighbor, dedication to benevolent causes, justice, selflessness, toil, and progress for the victory of the Good! For them the real leader, the Master, is Jesus of Nazareth, and as such they honor and respectfully invoke him whenever the circumstances call for it! As servants, as disciples and subordinates, they long to practice worthy deeds in order to acquire merit to grow in the estimation of the Beloved Lord!

They fervently believe that the Magnanimous Instructor, from whom they have implored assistance and protection, has heeded the invocations rising from the deepest recesses of their souls; that he has descended, merciful and gentle as ever, not only to the site where they are meeting in secrecy, but also to the humble place where the banquet of Fraternity is taking place; where humble men and women have gathered, painfully treading their pathways of trial in order to learn redemptive lessons. The proof of their

belief resides in the torrent of sidereal light that has sanctified their plea! The certainty of Jesus' presence at meetings aggrandized by the virtues and moral-intellectual dispositions of the incarnate and discarnate overseers comes from the affirmation of that sublime, unforgettable, never-ending and compassionate voice conveying the immortal promise:

*“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst.”*

As happens at true meetings of Christian-Spiritist initiation – the lofty principles that impose moral and mental self-reform as an inalienable foundation for the adept – on that memorable night an evangelical theme was chosen to be read and commented on for the benefit of all the members of my sinister phalanx. As we have seen, the lesson was actually furnished by Jesus himself, regarded there as the Magnificent Master, the President of Honor, whose teachings would be the basis for everything that would follow.

The reading of the Gospel was followed by a splendid and inspiring commentary by the incarnate director. Jesus' enlightening parables, his magnanimous and charitable deeds, his unforgettable promises once more moved the hearts of the students of the School of Allan Kardec seated around the table. The divine invitation to redemption resonated *for the first time* within each one of us, for until that moment we had never heard an exposition like that one. As far as the incarnate assembly could tell, the moment merely entailed the director, filled with radiant inspiration, reading and commenting on the evangelical topic with torrents of vivid, scintillating intuitions cascading down from the Higher Realms, bringing renewed life to the extensive list of the Divine Model's examples and His flawless morality. But for the spirits gathered there, especially the poor wretches that had been brought there to be enlightened, the lesson represented more, so much more! For them, the characters and scenes came alive with each word spoken by the director! It was a lesson – a strange and unusual therapy – administered to us as heavenly medicine to assuage our misery! Words – vibrations of the creative thought – reverberated in sound waves that portrayed the director's mental images and spread throughout the room that had been saturated with appropriate fluidic-magnetic substances and animalized fluids from the incarnate mediums and assistants. These images were manipulated and made concrete, visible, thanks to the natural effects produced by the mental forces of the Initiates gathered at the Temple and those of all the other cooperators. Charged with the delicate task of capturing the image-bearing waves, as well

as coordinating and stabilizing the sequences, the Security technicians' activity intensified. Thus, activated in the marvelous mental laboratory, and molded and manipulated by eminent specialists dedicated to the good of others, the words materialized and became a reality, a living scene of what was being read and expounded!

From where we sat, surrounded by lancers like sinful prisoners – which we really were – we had the rare and rewarding surprise of witnessing, through the glowing beam that shone down from the Higher Realms, illuminating the table and the whole room, the unfolding of the narratives. If there was a reference to the incomparable Master of Nazareth, the reproduction of his image appeared, *just as we had imagined him since childhood!* If his Deeds, his Life of sublime edifications and his unforgettable Gestures as the Unconditional Protector of sufferers were recounted, we saw him exactly as the evangelical text described him: compassionate and gentle, distributing the fragrances of Love and the divine virtues, of which he was the Sublime Example, to the poor and suffering, to the blind and paralytics, to the possessed, the deranged, the lepers, the unlearned and children, to the elderly and those of good will, to sinners and adulterers, to Publicans and Samaritans, to the doctors of the law, to the desperate and afflicted, to the sick in body and spirit, to the repentant, as well as to the adherents of his Doctrine of Light and to his own Apostles!... The incarnate director could not actually see the majestic scenes that rose from his readings and commentaries, but he could feel the harmonious and tender vibrations that produced them, moving him deeply. He continued to read and comment on the enchanting and unforgettable assertions that had dried so many tears down through the centuries, had touched so many thirsting hearts, had brought serenity to so many, and had turned anguished doubts into solid and unbreakable conviction:

- “Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”
- “Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

- “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.
- “**God does not desire the death of the sinner**, but that he be converted and live.”
- “For **the Son** of Man **came to seek** and to save those who are lost.”
- “Of all the **sheep** my Father has given **me**, I have **lost none**.”
- “But if you want to enter the kingdom of God, come, take up your cross and follow me...”<sup>20</sup>
- “I am the great doctor of souls and I have come to bring you the medicine that shall heal you. The frail, the suffering and the infirm are my blessed children and I have come to save them. Therefore, come to me, you who suffer and who are overburdened, and you will be soothed and consoled.”
- “I have come to teach and console the disinherited poor. I have come to tell them to raise their resignation to the level of their trials; to weep, for sorrow was sacred in the Garden of Olives; but also to hope, for consoling angels will come to wipe away their tears.”
- “Your souls are not forgotten. I, the Divine Gardener, cultivate them in the silence of your thoughts.”
- “God consoles the humble and gives strength to the afflicted who ask for it. God’s power covers the earth, and everywhere, beside a tear he places a consoling balm.”
- “Nothing is lost in the kingdom of our Father, and your sweat and miseries form a treasure that will make you wealthy in the higher realms, where light replaces darkness, and where the most unclothed among you will perhaps be the most resplendent.”<sup>21</sup>

As Jesus’ divine deeds were being evoked by the incarnate director, a sequence of extraordinary scenes followed, and in each one of them we could see the Gentle Comforter radiating his irresistible invitation to us, suffering and hopeless reprobates!

A religious silence fell over the assembly. Stirred by unknown emotions, a new confidence dawned in the depths of our troubled and sad spirits, a promising prelude to the faith that would propel us in our efforts of salvation. Completely still, captivated by the powerfully appealing lesson, we gazed at the suggestive scenes created on the spot for our enlightenment and easily identified the Nazarene compassionately assisting the unfortunate. Meanwhile, further infused with the sweet fluidic waves of the charitable thoughts emitted by the angelic beings that assisted us, the incarnate director's delivery continued to instruct us with an intonation that reverberated in the depths of our troubled souls, forever imprinting them with the image of the Heavenly Physician who would heal us! For the first time in many years, we felt that Hope had spread its mantle of light over our spirits darkened by discouragement and merciless disbelief!

All of a sudden, an anguished cry of supreme desperation cut the majestic religious silence blessing the premises.

It was one of our wretched companions, one of those we used to call the "shredded ones" during our imprisonment in the Sinister Valley, because their astral bodies retained the tragic image of the destruction of their physical bodies under the wheels of trains. His grave state of incomprehension and suffering needed human help in order to be mitigated. Hoping to find relief from his ferocious, maddening pain, he fell to his knees, and weeping so desperately that it tore at everyone's hearts, he implored as other wretches in the past had done in the presence of the Gentle Rabbi of Galilee:

"Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior! Have mercy on me! I believe, O Lord, and I need your mercy! I cannot go on! I've gone mad with suffering! Help me, Jesus of Nazareth, help me, too, I beg of you!"

At a signal from Alceste and Romeu, the nurses rushed to assist him and led him over to one of the mediums, a young woman with delicate features who had committed to the lofty endeavor the night before, when all the mediums were being assessed by the assistants from the spirit world. The two discarnate physicians responsible for the troubled spirit helped establish his connection with the medium while also extending their utmost assistance to her to prevent any possible mishap.

The ensuing scene went from the most dismal situation to the most sublime outcome imaginable!



As he took possession of the physical instrument that had been charitably lent to him for the precious Christian purpose of bringing him relief, the miserable suicide was able to feel the fullness of the tragedy that he had been reliving for so long in the darkness of unconceivable torment!... He now had other material organs at his disposal that enabled the fiery and tempestuous vibrations reverberating brutally within his being to find a concrete, materialized outlet that could reproduce in his tortured astral body the detailed consequences of what had happened! Piercing screams, macabre seizures, diabolical terror – the entire horrific mental state he had been submerged in since his suicide – were transmitted to the medium, who, to the extent permissible by the strength of her sublime mediumship, conveyed to the incarnate assembly the astonishing calamity the tomb had been hiding for so long!

Completely deranged and *seeing on the table the fragments of what his physical body had become after being thrown under the wheels of a train by his own will, an act that had violated his conscience and produced an unconceivable mental state that made him see everywhere the evil that was residing in him*, he used the medium to express his dreadful pain. Dramatically immersed in one of the most abominable hallucinations the Great Beyond could ever register, he stooped over the table *and started to frantically gather the fragments of his physical body strewn along the tracks in an attempt to recompose it!*

Stricken by the fires of the unconceivable torture experienced by reprobates, further corroborating the assertion of the Gospel that they “... *shall be cast out into outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,*” **this wretched stray sheep, who had disdained the admonishments of the prudent and wise Shepherd of Galilee, frantically began to assemble the sheets of paper, books and pencils that were lying on the table for the psychographers.**<sup>22</sup> *Imagining them to be his own scattered innards, broken bones, bloody flesh, heart and brain – his entire body reduced to repugnant little piles* – he pointed at them, sobbing convulsively, for the meeting’s incarnate director, imploring his intervention before Jesus of Nazareth, whom he seemed to know so well, to alleviate his maddening situation of feeling rent to pieces and at the same time feeling so alive! Nervous, agitated and overexcited, the horrific prisoner of suicide’s evil tentacles laughed and wept at the same time. He begged and moaned, writhed and wailed as he explained in suffocating, burning tears, the

incommensurable torment he had created for himself with his suicide, the inconsolable remorse of having preferred to live and die in disbelief instead of prudent resignation in the face of suffering and adversity. He now recognized, too late, that *all the hardships of earthly life are nothing more than temporary problems, banal difficulties, when compared to the monstrous suffering caused by suicide, whose nature and intensity no human being, not even a discarnate spirit, can fathom if they have not gone through it themselves!*

The incarnate director was profoundly moved. Tenderly inspired by the invisible mentors, he spoke to him compassionately. He pointed out the sacred light of the Gospel of the Divine Master as the supreme and only recourse able to succor him. Furthermore, he assured him under his word of honor that he was certain that the Divine Physician's assistance would bring immediate relief to his singular afflictions. He followed these words with a simple, kindhearted prayer after inviting all the participants to lift up their thoughts to the infinite love of Jesus, imploring immediate mercy for this unfortunate spirit in need of serenity to expunge from his mind the macabre vision of the act that had wounded his soul and his life!

All who took an interest in the wretched suicide followed the prayer profoundly touched: the incarnates at the table as well as the discarnates participating in the wonderful session, that is, the instructors, guardians, mentors of the Center, the lancers, and even us, the moral delinquents that had already acquired a more serene condition. Moreover, our Colony's directors were following the incident from the secrecy of the Temple, as were Teocrito and his assistants from the hospital by using the powerful apparatuses already described, or by remote viewing, which they could activate without difficulty. And thus, gently harmonized and charged by the homogeneous thoughts of so many hearts fraternally united under the banner of the most beautiful and selfless charity, the pure and sacred prayer became a strong current of resplendent light that reached its Sacred Target within a few minutes and returned blessed by the embrace of His divine mercy! Every thought unified with other thoughts in a compassionate plea, every charitable expression that goes from the heart to the Almighty Father on behalf of an unfortunate suicide in need of human assistance to adapt to the afterlife, is a voice speaking of hope, a bit of consolation that relieves and brings a little serenity to the atrocious tempests that batter the suicide's spirit imprisoned in suffering!

An extraordinary silence fell over the premises after the prayer, a silence similar to the one in times past during the practice of the mysteries in the

sanctuaries of the ancient temples of Eastern initiation. Everybody remained in deep meditation, with only the medium weeping and writhing as she continued to channel the bewilderment of the communicating suicide.

Little by little, without another word being uttered, with only the joined mental forces of the discarnates and incarnates in play, the Divine Intervention proceeded – something we cannot help but describe, given our appreciation for its transcendental nature.

The mental vibrations of the incarnate assistants, particularly those of the medium – whose moral, mental, physical-material and physical-astral health were in suitable conditions, *as determined beforehand by the promoters of the spiritual event* – reacted against those of the communicating spirit. His disturbed, sickly, and completely unbalanced vibrations violently assaulted the wholesome combined mental vibrations of the session's participants. It was as if the churning waves of an immense torrent had abruptly gushed into the midst of a beautiful, distinguished, emerald green ocean reflecting the splendors of the sunny sky. A ferocious battle thus ensued for the accomplishment of the sublime psychical operation. Salutary influences – magnetic fluids mixed with the proper spiritual essences furnished by the medium and the assisting mentors – had to impose themselves and dominate those emitted by the suffering spirit, incapable of generating anything that was not of an extremely base nature. Little by little, the powerful current produced the hoped-for results, gently dominating the nefarious vibrations of the suicide after passing through the medium. *By materializing it and adapting it to the patient, the medium rendered this current assimilable by the suicide, whose astral envelope still felt the animalized impressions of the physical body* that was decaying beneath the gravestone! It was as if compresses of anesthesia had been applied to the penitent's fluidic organization, numbing the burning of its many excitations in order to put it in a condition to endure the therapy that the delicate case required. It was like a divine sedative that compassionately dabbed pure essences on the wounds of his soul *through the human filter represented by the mediumistic magnetism*, without which the poor wretch would not have been able to assimilate any desired benefit at all on the part of the assistants. It was like a blood transfusion for a dying person, who had come back to life after being on the edge of the grave, an abundant outpouring of precious substances that the medium received from On High or from the surrounding mentors and transmitted to the patient immediately thereafter.

Slowly, the medium became calmer because the unfortunate “shredded one” also became more serene. He no longer saw the mental images of his dreadful act. The diabolical vision of the fragments of his own body, which he had tried in vain to collect, had disappeared.

A soothing sensation of relief penetrated the fibers of his long-anguished perispirit... The majestic silence continued, propitious to the gentle, maternal support of Mary and the ineffable mercy of her Immaculate Son. Throughout the premises the gentle gospel message, like a sidereal song of hope, could still be heard: “*Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...*” while the suicide wept from the depths of his heart, foreseeing the possibility of improving his situation. His tears were no longer accompanied by the violent convulsions of the beginning of his communication, but only by his gratitude for the intervention...

Next, Romeu and Alceste activated the director’s powers of intuition and he became surrounded by a brilliant luminosity. The technicians approached the medium, through whom the suicide was communicating, as the director explained to him in detail what had happened and why it happened. As he spoke, his vivid elucidations were materialized by the technicians through the creation of demonstrative pictures. At this point, we saw a repetition of what we had seen during the meetings led by Teocrito at the hospital: the patient’s life unfolded like a movie drawn from his own memories, displaying before his eyes his last existence from birth to the grave that he himself had dug! He saw what he had done and witnessed the sudden convulsions of the agony he had plunged into upon throwing himself under the wheels of the train. Bewildered and terrified, he saw the fragments into which his brutal act had reduced his physical body, so full of vigor and vitality for the continuance of his existence... This time, however, he went through this process detached from the fragments, as if he had awakened from a horrific nightmare!... Covered in tears, he watched as compassionate hands collected his bloody remains from the tracks and how they were buried on sacred ground... He saw the comforting figure of a cross keeping watch at his grave. At last he fully understood what he had had such difficulty and repulsion in accepting: that he was immortal and would continue to live forever and ever in spite of his suicide! That his infernal decision to try to evade the divine laws had done nothing more than overburden his existence, as well as his conscience, with even more weighty and grave debts! And that while his physical body was indeed rotting away in the putrid clay of the grave, his spirit – the true being because it descended from the Light Eternal of the Supreme Creator – despite

all the obstacles and difficulties, would continue to proceed, indestructible, into the future, eternal and alive like the Immortal Essence that had given him life!

God Almighty! What other religious practice could surpass this simple gathering, devoid of adornment and social ramifications, but where the troubled soul of a suicide, disbelieving the mercy of its Creator and lost in despair due to suffering and the inclemency of remorse, is converted to the light of Faith by the irresistible tenderness of the Gospel of the Gentle Nazarene?... What ceremony, what ritual, what earthly pomp and circumstance could begin to compare to the magnificence of the secret sanctuary of a Center for spiritual study and work, and where the Son of God's missionaries of Love and Charity busy themselves, immersed in pure and immaculate vibrations to offer modern initiates, gathered together in similar mental currents, offering a precious example of a new practice of Fraternity?... In what human sector could people find a greater honor to adorn their soul than the honor of being raised to the meritorious category of collaborator of the Heavenly Realms, while the emissaries of the Light unveil the mysteries of the tomb to them, offering them sacred instructions of a redeeming Morality, of a Divine Science, with the benevolent purpose of re-educating them for final entrance into the sheepfold of the Divine Shepherd?...

O People! Brothers and sisters, who, like me, have descended from the same Glorious Point of Light! O Immortal souls, meant for sublime destinies in the magnanimous bosom of Eternity! Hasten the march of your evolution towards the Higher Realms via the pathways of knowledge, re-educating your character under the light of the Gospel of the Christ of God! Cultivate your faculties in the august silence of noble and sincere meditation. Forget depressing vanities. Leave behind frivolous pleasures that do you no good, but only excite your senses to the detriment of the blissful expansions of the divine being that palpitates within you. Guard your heart from the deadly selfishness that keeps you inferior in the spirit world's societies... For all of these are nothing more than terrible obstacles that render your ascension towards the Light difficult!... Open your heart to the acquisition of active virtues, and let it expand for communion with Heaven... And then the difficulties of the your earthly Calvary will be alleviated... Everything will seem gentler and more just to your understanding, enlightened by the sublime comprehension of the Truth, because you will have given shelter to the forces of the Good arising from the Supreme Love of God!... And later, when you

become accustomed to renouncement; when you are capable of building the reservoir of strength necessary for being a true initiate of the Redemptive Sciences; when you have kept your heart from the ephemeral illusions of the world where you experience the wisdom of Life; and when your immortal soul feels gripped by the sacred ideal of Divine Love – may your mediumistic gifts blossom like a precious and pure heavenly flower for ostensible communication with the Invisible World, handing out petals of fraternal charity to unfortunates, who, unlike you, were unable to become aware soon enough of the imperishable forces furnished to the soul by the Everlasting Knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus!

---

17 A spirit's ability to travel through space. Such an ability is inherent to its moral advancement; i.e. its degree of detachment from matter (Spiritist Glossary, [www.osgefic.org](http://www.osgefic.org)). –Tr

18 Mt. 22:1-14.

19 The beginning of the 20th century. – Tr.

20 From the New Testament. (Medium's note)

21 From *The Gospel according to Spiritism*, by Allan Kardec. (Communication by Spirit of Truth) (Medium's note)

22 Writing mediums. – Tr.

## Our friends – the disciples of Allan Kardec

We did not return to our home in the Spirit World during the intervals between the sessions that followed, but remained in the vicinity of the earth itself. Traveling back and forth every day would be too difficult for a group as large and cumbersome as ours. Thus, we lived among incarnates for about two months, the time needed for continuing the mediumistic gatherings as well as numerous meetings involving initiatory preparation, but where only moral and philosophical principles and concepts were studied without practicing the mysteries.

Our condition as suicides precluded us from remaining on any premises inhabited or visited by incarnate souls. Our auras were corrupted by inferior radiations and might lead to perturbation and bouts of distress for any incarnates we might approach; or we might be exposed to their influences, which could prove harmful to the delicate treatment we were undergoing.

It must be remembered that we were spirits undergoing a reeducation process, and were thus subject to very strict rules of conduct that prevented us from living freely among incarnates; otherwise, we might influence earthly society in a harmful way, something that would certainly be the case if we persisted in our rebelliousness and obstinate wrongdoing.

In keeping with these stringent measures, we were taken to picturesque spots on the outskirts of the towns we were associated with, places where the presence of incarnates would be unlikely: pleasant woods; meadows covered with fruit trees; fertile, green hills where cattle grazed on the grass. Tents were erected and a charming camp site, invisible to human eyes but perfectly real to us, and which the sweet bucolic poetry painted with attractive

tonalities, was set up beneath the eternally blue firmament of the Brazilian skies, where the sun shone in all the incomparable glory of its life-giving rays.

At night, after the heartwarming evangelical messages at the Christian Spiritist meetings, a mild longing sweetened our sorrows as exiles from home and family. As we gazed up at the celestial firmament sprinkled with beautiful scintillating stars, we would meditate amid the unalterable silence of the hills or the peacefulness of the orchards, recalling lessons on the existence of the Supreme Being as our Father and Creator. Our thoughts would expand in deep ponderings as we contemplated, tenderly like young lovers, sidereal space filled with the incalculable glory bestowed on it by the Supreme Architect: over here, immense glittering stars, powerful suns, centers of energy, light, heat and life; over there, worlds of inconceivable, enthralling beauty and immensity, whose splendor reached us, the reprobates of the invisible world, like a tender fraternal signal, affirming that they too sheltered other humanities, our sibling souls marching towards their redemption just like us, inclined towards the Good and the Light. Like us, they originated from the same divine paternal breath that we now felt palpitating within our being, in spite of the extreme moral penury in which we still struggled! And everywhere we could see the glorious expression of the thought of the Almighty speaking of his power, his love, his wisdom!

Under the gentle whisper of the canopies that adorned those hills, and the sweet vibrations that refreshed the night illumined by the twinkling of the stars traveling the immensity of space, our friends, the disciples of Allan Kardec – the mediums, counselors and evangelizers, whose altruism and good will contributed so generously to the relief of our wounds – would often visit our encampment at night after their physical bodies lay in a deep sleep. Since they had free access to our site, they would come and speak tenderly and compassionately with us to further clarify the excellence of the doctrine they embraced, revealing themselves to be reverent believers in the paternity of God, the immortality of the soul and the evolution of beings towards their All Powerful Creator!

They were great enthusiasts of Faith, who stimulated our love for God, our hope in his paternal goodness, our trust in the future He had reserved for humankind, and our courage to triumph as the unconditional foundation for serenity in our great effort to evolve! All of them claimed to be unambiguous, undeserving proof of the excellence of the philosophical teachings ministered by the doctrine they followed, teachings whose bases were set upon the



magnificent morality of the Divine Model and the Science of the Invisible, transforming them into steadfast strongholds of Faith that were capable of resisting any adversity with a serene disposition, a balanced mind and a smile, reflecting the heaven they harbored inside, thanks to their lofty knowledge of Life and the destiny of humankind! They would eloquently expound the arduous adversities with which many of them struggled. As we listened to them, we were astonished, and our admiration only grew, elevating them even further in our minds. For instance, one particular elderly man, the head of a large household, was very poor and had to toil without rest for his family's welfare. Another, misunderstood at home and alienated by his own family, was not given the sacred right of thinking and believing as he wished. One particular woman, carrying the heavy cross of an unhappy marriage, was subjected to the imperative of cruel humiliation and daily sorrows. Another, who had seen her only son die in his youth, was then deprived of support in her widowhood and old age! And on the eve of her longed-for wedding, a young woman received as a reward for her tender dedication the abandonment of the one who had awakened the first raptures of her heart! All these circumstances clearly showed that adherence to Christian Spiritism did not exclude the need for great reparations and dolorous trials!

Serenity and patient acceptance, however, had obviously eased such blows to their hearts! Confidently, they had turned to the loving bosom of Jesus and remained faithful to the tender invitation he continuously offered! They had opened their hearts and minds to sweet heavenly influences, reaching out for the assistance of their mentors... and now they were marching self-assuredly towards the future, certain of their final triumph! They felt no sorrow, but instead it was with visible good humor that they said that some of them would often carry out their duties at the Spiritist Center without having eaten because they had nothing to eat, but that, in spite of it, they did not feel unfortunate, since they knew that the Supreme Father, who clothes the lilies of the valleys and provides for the birds of the air<sup>23</sup>, would also provide a remedy for their situation as soon as possible. Supported by Faith and the courage that derives from it, they felt strong enough to hold out against their momentary want, and triumph in the end!

Strong mutual affections and indestructible affinities were the result of those almost daily visits, especially on our part, the discarnates, who owed them our sincerest gratitude for their interest in us.<sup>24</sup>

We had permission to follow them during their beneficent endeavors. Deeply interesting, these endeavors served as magnificent lessons. We could not understand – rooted as we were in insane selfishness – how anyone could dedicate him or herself to others with such lofty demonstrations of selflessness and fraternal love. I cannot shy away from dedicating a few lines to describing the work they performed in their astral bodies during the hours meant for sleep and physical-material rest.

Mediums and other incarnate Christian initiates engaged by the Mary of Nazareth Institute merited its trust and remained under its watch-care until the end of the commitments they had assumed with its directors. Quite often, however, this connection was extended for an indeterminate period, and in that case the incarnate worker would become part of the Colony's working group, which meant that he or she became, in reality, a collaborator of the magnanimous Legion of the Servants of Mary. Since these collaborators were truly dedicated to the apostolic ministry under the auspices of the great doctrine codified by Allan Kardec – the head of the school of their initiation – they did not limit their goodwill to the weekly closed sessions at their own Spiritist Centers. On the contrary, they expanded the radius of their efforts and deeds for the exaltation of the Cause they served.

At night, those connected with assisting us would cover great distances in their astral bodies as they accompanied their spirit mentors and guides on noble endeavors. In our cluster of discarnates, groups of ten or fewer were allowed to go with them for the purpose of further instruction. As long as their guardians and assistants were in charge of the endeavor, and as long as mentors of the Legion made up part of the group, we could accompany them on their worthy pilgrimages on behalf of the cause espoused by the Magnanimous Master.

During the two months of our stay on the earth, I was sometimes able to participate along with others from my group, including Belarmino and our affable friends from Canalejas, as well as Ramiro de Guzman.

Supervised by their spirit instructors, these workers would visit hospitals in the still of the night, approaching beds where poor, hopeless and sad patients moaned and groaned, and compassionately administering relief and new vigor to them through revitalizing magnetic applications, of which they were bountiful trustees. They would take advantage of the patients' sleepiness, and inspired by their benevolent mentors' suggestions and counsels, they would lovingly speak to them to reanimate them with the

dawning of the Faith and Hope that illumined their own spirits as faithful believers, and to inspire them with the courage and will to triumph. We would also visit private homes with them. We noticed that their objective was always that of learning and serving, whether it involved a palace, a hovel, or even a house of prostitution – because everywhere, there were hearts to be consoled, weakened spirits to be uplifted and offered guidance! At other times they would ask for our help as they consoled incarnates going through tough times, and whose tendency towards discouragement and despair could prove fatal. In such cases, these sufferers, together with those for whom they worried, would be taken to Spiritist Centers while their physical bodies slept. There, they would be assisted by receiving wise counsel and evangelical teachings that would enrich their souls, turning them into strong and vigorous workers incapable of seeing themselves defeated, discouraged or desperate!... At such times, we would tell them about our own dolorous experiences, acquiescing to speak about the sinister adventure that discouragement had reserved for us by dragging us into the abyss of suicide! Belarmino would often get the opportunity to make use of his captivating delivery as a prolific and brilliant lecturer. More than once he was able to rescue from a fatal fall a desperate person inclined towards the darkness of the region we had left behind. We found this sort of experience to be very meaningful and enlightening since it provided us with enticing examples, resulting in a consoling renewal that gave us much hope!

After two months, however, since there was nothing else for us to gain on the material plane, we were ordered back to our Colony in the spirit world.

It was with profound emotion that we embraced those simple and loving friends on their last visit to our bucolic encampment, friends whose placid hearts had communicated such vigor to our hesitant and apprehensive souls. Although their physical bodies were asleep when they came to visit us, we saw them as regular men and women, and were not bothered by the difference in their astral bodies.

We expressed our eternal gratitude to them, showed them our unbreakable affection, and promised frequent visits once the circumstances allowed, as well as the reciprocation of the courtesies and proofs of consideration with which they had honored us. On their part, they promised to continue their interest in the circumstances that kept us prisoner, whether by praying to the Divine Mercy on our behalf or by transmitting their

expressions of friendship through telepathic messages, a promise that made us immensely happy.

In fact, back at our snowy infirmary we would often see their friendly faces on the screen of our televisions. They were always surrounded by the pure vibrations of the prayers and generous thoughts they directed to God for the improvement of our situation.

If, while spending two long months on the earth as guests of the serene Brazilian skies, our guardians had not authorized any visits to beloved sites in our own homeland – the memories of which would bring tears to the deepest fibers of our souls – they had at least let us become acquainted with those sweet and humble, dedicated and gentle friends, the disciples of the noble master of Initiation, Allan Kardec, to whom, from then on, we started to render a most respectful admiration! And thus, with tender and sincere enchantment, we reasoned that a doctrine like that one, capable of molding hearts and illuminating them with the pure manifestations of the Good that we had witnessed in our new friends, could not be far from the heavenly truths!

\* \* \*

Two long, toilsome years passed, during which we wept much under the weight of our burning remorse as we thought daily of the wrong we had committed against ourselves, Nature, and the wise Laws of the Eternal One, leaving us in the grievous situation deriving from our suicide! A few times, we returned to other mediumistic sessions held at the Spiritist Centers we had visited before, to see our friends and talk to them through mediumistic communication.

Around that time, I became acquainted with an affable mediumistic instrument, a medium gifted with outstanding faculties who would frequently come to visit me and the others, either by means of thought and beneficent vibrations on our behalf or by means of fervent prayers. He was a compatriot<sup>25</sup> of mine, a fact that I must confess powerfully touched and appealed to me! Inquisitive, courageous and intrepid to the point of being imprudent, an avid enthusiast of the sciences of the Invisible, towards which he felt inclined with fervent enchantment, he would travel in his astral body as far as the stone walls of our Colony during his nightly sleep or deep mediumistic trances, trying to reach us in order to communicate with us, something that really worried the instructors and the directors of the Colony. They would not allow him entrance, since such a direct contact with a group

of reprobates such as ours would be quite dangerous to him; but they did offer him protection and assistance for his return, taking into account his sincere intentions and the fact that he would have to cross dangerous places in the Spirit World. Since he was a medium, this amiable and intrepid friend certainly had his guardians and mentors. However, he also possessed free will, a will to act in any fashion he desired, although it had been recommended to him to follow the appropriate discipline for the exercise of mediumistic faculties, a recommendation which every initiate needs to observe with the utmost rigor! Nonetheless, he continued his imprudent excursions into the Invisible, daring to enter gloomy places without waiting for an invitation or an opportunity granted by his protectors, leaning on the ardent Faith that inspired in him the desire for the Good. Consequently, on one of our visits to our Brazilian friends, our dedicated mentors provided us with an amiable interview with this loving compatriot. We showed up unexpectedly and were easily seen by him. Since he seemed truly delighted by our visit, I was commanded to say something via mediumistic means as a recompense for his dedication! I had always been emotional, indecisive and troubled as I psychographed communications to my former friends in Lisbon and Oporto after so many years of absence! However, this time we visited only the medium, and then immediately returned to the rest of our phalanx.

In spite of all of these new experiences, the routine of those early days proceeded without change: we remained hospitalized and were submitted to meticulous treatment and complex exercises for the correction of our mental vices, as well as instruction and practice in our efforts of self-reeducation. By then, we were fully acquainted with the ironclad logic of Reincarnation – that phantom that terrifies all morally delinquent spirits, especially suicides, something they resist accepting while inwardly convinced that it is an imperative truth. They try to deny it because they dread it. With each passing day and each passing minute, however, during the consoling stage when these delinquent spirits are assisted by their dedicated mentors, they are drawn to reincarnation like iron shavings irresistibly drawn to a powerful magnet. It is something they try not to think about, although they know it to be inevitable in their destinies, just as death is inevitable in all human destinies! We had not yet examined it personally as we rummaged through the revealing archives of our subconscious to observe our being in the plenitude of its moral inferiority. As suicides, our overexcited vibrations tormented our minds with extremely dolorous repercussions and impressions, thus delaying our acceptance of reincarnation, something normal or more evolved spirits readily did.

By that time, the bonds of friendship with the hospital's personnel had become quite strong, particularly each group's bonds with its direct guides: its physicians, nurses, guardians, instructors and psychics.

As a matter of fact, the assistant that followed us most closely was the young Spanish physician Roberto de Canalejas, whose lofty intellectual and moral qualities we observed every day. He and his father, Carlos de Canalejas – in his last existence a low-ranking Spanish nobleman and an apostolic soul with an angelic heart – as well as Joel Steel, merited the most effusive demonstrations of friendship and respect from our ward in general and our infirmary in particular. Roberto, however, was not a very highly evolved spirit, in spite of the large wealth of moral qualities harshly acquired during his planetary lifetimes. He was a spirit treading the arduous path of progress, having returned to the spirit world less than a century ago after a very bitter reparatory reincarnation in which the pain of a brutal marital betrayal had broken his heart and had shattered the happiness he thought he possessed. Roberto had experienced the destruction of his home by the infidelity of a wife he loved with all the devotion possible for a husband's heart. He had seen the death of his beloved daughter, the first child of that seemingly auspicious and lasting marriage, when she was just seven years old, a victim of the loneliness caused by her mother's absence, and aggravated by the tuberculosis she had caught from him, who in turn had caught it as a result of his devoted research on patients that had the terrible disease. As a doctor, he had dedicated himself to humanitarian studies concerning this even-now insoluble problem!<sup>26</sup> He had suffered dire humiliations and a thousand difficult situations because of his rocky marriage. Fate had made him fall irremediably in love with Leila, the daughter of Count de Guzman, our esteemed friend from the Security Department! Ardently loved in return by the frivolous fifteen-year old, he had married her, in spite of the reluctance of her father Ramiro, whose psychological appraisal of his daughter did not foresee a happy ending to the event. Roberto was, in reality, only an obscure adopted son of a generous nobleman who had given him a name and social position, but whose fortune had been disseminated in meritorious deeds of assistance to abandoned children.

In the latter half of the 17th century, Roberto had reincarnated in central Europe and had committed suicide in 1680. For that painful reason, now in the spirit world in the 20th century, he continued to suffer the consequences of his unfortunate act. His conjugal drama, played out in Spain in the first half

of the 19th century, had been nothing more than a repetition of the experience he tried to evade at the end of the 17th! This noble friend, whose grave and pensive demeanor was so appealing to us, appeared in the afterlife exactly as he had looked in his last existence in Spain: medium height, a thick, dark, short beard with a pointy end at the chin, and a well-groomed mustache, as was common for the aristocrats of the time; voluminous and abundant black hair, very pale skin, big black contemplative eyes resembling those of an Andalusian gypsy, and long hands, similar to those of a trained pianist or characteristic of the terrible illness that had befallen him in his last physical existence. He himself had revealed this dolorous summary of his life on evenings when he accompanied us on our walks on the lanes of the hospital's park. He did it for altruistic instructional purposes, to encourage us to confront the hard future in store for us. Suicides have to correct the weaknesses they succumbed to, and by offering decisive proofs of strength and making redemptive decisions, heal themselves of the despair that ties them down.

Whether because he had known and loved Portugal, where he had lived the last months of his life, and where his last resting place could be found covered by Portuguese soil; or whether because, in addition to being a physician he was also an artist of great talent in music and the belles-lettres, the truth was that our group was composed of Portuguese intellectuals who were proud of their homeland, and thus a warm friendship ensued, and an undying fraternal affection was born.

Belarmino de Queiroz e Sousa, the polyglot philosopher, who by now only rarely remembered to wear his monocle, strongly embraced this new friendship, thinking he had found an equal in Roberto. The physician had disclosed that he had had the misfortune of professing materialist principles while incarnate, denying the idea of a Supreme Being and rejecting the light of Christian sentiments for the exclusive domain of science, a fact which rendered him helpless during the continuous troubles of his life and later aggravated his mental state when adversity dealt him a supreme blow in his home life. Both of them discussed palpitating materialist topics at length in the light of the Spiritist science, with Roberto responding with perfect logic to the enthusiastic arguments of Belarmino, who had barely begun his spiritual reeducation. Roberto, on the other hand, had the advantage of much deeper knowledge, not only in Philosophy but in Science and Morality... It was charming to see them fraternally discussing the most profound and beautiful subjects: the polyglot wishing to relearn, building new ideas on top of the

ruins of former beliefs, and the young doctor lighting a torch to guide him on the pathway of his future, based on positive facts! Many a time we would smile surreptitiously at observing Belarmino's inaptitude – he had considered himself a genius on the earth, after all – in the presence of a simple hospital assistant in a Colony of suicides, a humble worker who did not even enjoy the highest standing in the Spirit World!

One day when Roberto stayed a little longer during one of his visits to our quarters to inform us that we would be discharged in a few days, I said to him, somewhat embarrassed by my direct approach:

“My good doctor! The brief descriptions of your life, which you have had the magnanimity of sharing with me, have struck and moved me deeply, making me think. I used to be an author, and I tried to portray a certain moral character in my humble writings. I left a voluminous body of work behind, if not in quality – since I now realize that my intellectual wealth was quite small – at least in quantity!... I must say, however, that I rarely invented my stories! They were the offspring of the union between my observations and the sentimental touches that I often used to adorn the harshness of reality, and thus more quickly captivate editors and readers, on whom my almost always empty wallet depended... something that is not a recommended quality for a writer!

“I've been truly impressed by your personal story. Could you furnish some more details about it so that I can go back to earth someday, and through a medium narrate something interesting to incarnates, something interspersed with the luminous teachings that I'm beginning to grasp?... Maybe I could transmit to my former readers the radiant reality I have encountered here, and narrate it with real aspects of the so-human and so-instructive inner lives of the spirits I have gotten to know here, spirits who used to be men and women who loved, struggled and died like everybody else... I'm asking this because I've heard our mentors say that it is praiseworthy for a spirit desirous of progress to transcend the barriers of the grave in order to convey to incarnates his or her impressions of the spirit world and the moral reality encountered by all newcomers from the earth.”

I had grown accustomed to seeing him calm and serene, but as he pondered this, a dark melancholy overshadowed his face, which made me immediately regret my request. After a few minutes, however, he answered, as if resurrecting from the past what I had so timidly reminded him of:



“Yes, it is praiseworthy for a spirit to do that, precisely because it is one of the hardest things for anyone to do! It is easier to enter a den of obsessors in the barbaric realms of the earth in order to deprive them of their freedom; it is easier to enter a lair of sorcerers, with their arsenal of trickery for use against discarnates and incarnates, in order to annul their criminal attempts; it is easier to convince someone hardened in evil to agree to an expiatory reincarnation than it is to overcome the thick bramble of a medium’s mind in order to transmit to it sparks of the light that dazzles us here!

“To begin with, I must tell you that there just aren’t many mediums willing to accept such a risky undertaking!... When we do find one or two that are gifted with the necessary aptitudes, then besides finding out that they are completely uneducated as far as Christian morality is concerned – an indispensable element for the purpose idealized by the great instructors that inspire this type of endeavor – we discover that they are so deeply entrenched in self-indulgence, so fully indisposed to the discipline we demand of them for their own good, so filled with doubt yet so vain because they imagine themselves to be enlightened, predestined and indispensable for communications from the Invisible, that they completely dampen our enthusiasm, as if their minds had thrown a bucket of cold water on us! That is why we prefer simple, humble and unpretentious souls. But since they offer but a small amount of intellectual aptitude, they demand perseverance, dedication and exhausting work from us if we want to reveal anything to incarnates via their faculties!

“If my life, my good friend, or rather, my lives, the earthly migrations on which I experienced the struggles of progress, were conveyed to your readers, it would certainly offer them lessons they couldn’t refuse! The life of any human being, or of any spirit, is always fertile with elucidating strings of events, a gripping, instructive novel, because it portrays the struggle of humanity against itself on a long journey in search of the golden portal of redemption! You will be able to make your observations right here, because in the narrow confines of the hospital, there are worthy educational topics to transmit to humankind through mediumship. Even so, I must warn you that you will run up against the most discouraging difficulties. *That is what happens with suicides, because they have put themselves in an abnormal situation that affects even the most insignificant fiber of their psychological organization, as well as their very destiny!* However, your worthy intentions, your perseverance, your love of work, and your desire for the Good and the

Beautiful can perform miracles, and I am sure that your future masters and instructors will guide your efforts.

“As for the details, I will be happy to provide them! I can see that you are sincerely motivated, and the spirit, once rid of its earthly prejudices, loses the self-consciousness humans still have of revealing to friends the misfortune and particularities that make them suffer. In my case, however, I am still not detached enough to relive the dreadful drama that continues to haunt me! To measure a past whose cinders are still smoldering from the inner fire of an unrequited love that fills all my steps in the spirit world with unstoppable longing and pain; to extract from the shadows of the subconscious the idolized image of the one who hurt me, and whom I could never disrespect in order to give myself the supreme consolation of forgetting; to see her arise from the folds of my memories as she was in the past – beautiful, seductive and bound to my destiny by matrimony; to relive the happy hours of our conjugal bliss, which I thought would last forever, but was only a sham, a fiction arising from my sincerity, from the faith that inspired me, and from my immense good will – all of that would be like suffering once more the unbearable affliction of realizing her to be an adulteress, when my whole being longs to see her redeemed from the infamy that plunged her into the repugnant abyss of adultery, the most vile situation that can taint a female spirit! I cannot, Camilo, I simply cannot! I still love Leila and I feel that I will love her forever because I have for many centuries... ever since the time the harmonious voice of Paul of Tarsus echoed, triumphant and pure, announcing the Good Tidings under the lush canopies of the forests of ancient Iberia!... And I will not rest until I have her again at my side, expunged from her affront against me, herself, God’s law, our children, and her condition as wife and mother, and redeemed by the excruciating expiations she has submitted herself to due to her remorse!”

He paused for a moment, during which he showed the immense love in his heart, and continued in a more humble tone that made me doubly admire the excellent character I had observed now for three years:

“If I could, Camilo, I would put a stop to my poor Leila’s expiatory sufferings. I would call her to live at my side, and, as I tried to do in the past, erase the stains of her crime with the kiss of forgiveness that I gladly gave her a long time ago! However, she herself does not want to accept anything from me before clearing her debts in the struggles of a reincarnation paved with the tears of arduous suffering. That is the only way she will be able to consider

herself worthy of my love and God's forgiveness! Her conscience, darkened by her wrongdoings, has been the unbending arbiter that has judged and condemned her. Her soul, stricken by remorse, is so mortified and feels so much self-loathing that nothing, absolutely nothing will mitigate the afflictions that torture her except irremediable pain endured in the sacrifice of earthly expiation! I would love to go to her, to soften my longing by speaking to her while she's asleep or awake, to console her, to use the assurances of my everlasting friendship to encourage her to struggle for victory! However, I can't even get near her. If she perceives my presence, she gets frightened and tries to flee, ashamed by the blemish with which her conscience accuses her! As for myself, I can see or follow her from here whenever I want to, but I have to be careful so that she doesn't detect it and become confused."

"Well, I am more convinced than ever, dear doctor, of how much my readers would love for me to write about the moving episodes that I have read between the lines of your account."

"Then I shall ask Leila's father to give to my esteemed Portuguese writer more details later regarding the story that has attracted him so much... Who knows?... Work is seen as the primordial element of progress, and the noble and generous intention that inspires the sincere worker will always receive divine approval for its realization... Ramiro de Guzman can do that. He is a strong spirit, experienced in the struggles of misfortune, someone who knows how to control his emotions, someone who possesses the highest degree of mental discipline. He will be able and willing because he has agreed to fight for the moral reeducation of all female youth on the earth, in memory of his poor beloved daughter, who caused him so much grief, in spite of the fine education he strove to give her. I'll talk to him about it."

I saw that he was ready to leave, but faithful to the impertinence of the curiosity of a novelist, who can sniff out emotions and sentiments anywhere to enhance his story, I went on:

"Forgive me; your spouse... the beautiful Leila... where is she now?"

He stood up, gravely concentrating his thoughts, as if telepathically communicating with his supervisors, and then approached one of those amazing image receptors. He carefully attuned its frequency to the earth and waited, saying almost to himself:

"It must be nighttime in the western southern hemisphere... It won't be indiscreet to try and find her."

And find her he did! Little by little, the figure of a child appeared in the dark room of an extremely poor family. It seemed to be a very humble Brazilian home, but was not totally destitute. A girl, around five years of age, whose somber and sad features indicated the cruel tempests that tormented her spirit, was playing with her modest toys. She seemed to be mentally preoccupied with past memories that were mixed in with those of her present life, since she was speaking to the dolls as if they were figures whose images were drawn in crayon on the contours of her mental vibrations. Roberto gazed at her sadly, and turning to me as I was attentively taking it all in, dazzled by the majestic drama unfolding before my eyes, he said:

“There she is! Reincarnated in Brazil... where she will follow her dolorous Calvary of expiations... She is living far from the environment she used to love so much!... She is bereft of those that used to love her so deeply, and whose hearts she trampled on with the cruelest ingratitude! Leila has disappeared forever into the vortex of the past!... Her name is different now: they call her Mary... the venerable name of our noble Guardian... On earth she is a beautiful child, innocent and pure like the angels in heaven! But before her own conscience and the Sacred Law, she is an offender that will have to serve out her sentence. She is an unfaithful adulteress, a blasphemer and a suicide – yes, Leila, too, was a suicide – who forsook parents, husband, children, Family, Honor and Duty because of the nefarious lure of the lower passions.”

Two tears welled up in his velvety, handsome Andalusian eyes, as he continued emotionally:

“Oh, Camilo! Praised be God! Hosannas to his paternal Goodness, for it hides from incarnates the sinister cortege of their past wrongs!... What would happen to human society if every person were able to remember his or her past lives?... If everyone knew about everyone else’s past?!”

Suddenly, an indefinable scream, a mixture of terror, emotion or shame, which came close to madness, pierced the silence of the humble Brazilian abode, reverberating in the serenity of our infirmary: the child had just sensed Roberto! She had seen him as if reflected in telepathic waves, her remorse conveying to her the fact that he had been the victim of her great folly. Covered in tears, she sought refuge in her mother’s arms, but no one in the house knew the reason for the sudden outburst...

Teocrito’s assistant immediately turned off the device.

“It’s always the same,” he said sadly. “She has no courage to face me... Still, she thinks about me and wants to come back to me.”

He bid me farewell and left, deeply lost in thought. I never broached the subject again, but on that very afternoon I began preparing my notes for these humble pages...

Who knows what the mercy of the Almighty might have in store for me?... Maybe it would be completely possible for me to write as I used to... Mightn’t I have some friends on the earth capable of hearing and understanding me?

Yes, indeed! I had gotten much better, thanks to the treatment utilized by the Mary of Nazareth Hospital... The radiant Hope that strengthened my spirit abundantly affirmed it!

---

23 Mt. 6:19-21, and 6:25-34.

24 Indeed, in the course of my mediumistic activities, I had the opportunity to establish solid friendships with inhabitants of the invisible realm. In a certain phase of my existence, when dolorous and decisive trials were imposed on me by the Law of Cause and Effect, a small phalanx of sufferers I had once helped – including some suicides and two obsessors who had become my friends via sessions to assist them -- made themselves visible during a visit to me to offer their services to soften my situation. However, since there was nothing to be done because the circumstances were irremediable, they mixed their tears with mine, visiting me frequently and thus bringing much relief with their displays of benevolent affection. (Medium’s note)

25 Fernando de Lacerda, Portuguese medium. On October 28, 1906, the spirit author, under his real name Camilo Castelo Branco, communicated a message through Mr. Lacerda’s mediumship to his friend and writer Antonio Jose da Silva Pinto (April 14, 1848 - November 4, 1911) urging him not to commit suicide. Silva Pinto was despondent because of a large debt. A little later help came unexpectedly and Silva Pinto did not kill himself. (See entire letter in *Do País da Luz*, by Fernando de Lacerda, Vol. I, p. 66, 7th Ed., FEB). – Tr.

26 Written in the early 1900s. – Tr.

## II

---

# The departments

---

## The Watchtower

*What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, doesn't he leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is the will of my Father who is in heaven that not one of these little ones should perish.*

*Jesus Christ - The New Testament <sup>27</sup>*

Brother Teocrito sent us a messenger, honoring us with an invitation to attend an assembly in the Hospital's auditorium.

When we arrived, we realized that only a few patients had been honored with the invitation, because the only invitees were the members of our group who would be discharged from the treatments they had been receiving.

The Hospital Sector's esteemed director arrived at the scheduled time, accompanied by Romeu and Alceste. He would preside over the meeting flanked by these two assistants, while the clinical personnel that had assisted us during our confinement sat in an assigned area.

With his usual dignified demeanor, expressed in his politeness and kindness, the illustrious initiate addressed the assembly in these terms:

“Dear brothers<sup>28</sup> and friends, may God in Highest Heaven, the Creator of all things, witness this meeting, for which we implore his blessings as Father and Lord!

“A sincere joy expands our souls today in hosannas of gratitude to the Magnanimous Master because of the triumph that we have witnessed: your conversion and submission to the Divine Paternity, and therefore your acceptance of the spirit as having originated from the divine spark emitted by the will of the Almighty and destined for glorious evolution throughout Eternity! Nevertheless, you are still weak, vacillating, and small. But that fact

will not keep an infinite pathway of redemptive struggles from being unveiled before you throughout future millennia, inviting you to persevere in your labor of Progress to achieve final redemption in the loving bosom of the Christ of God.

“Convinced that a merciful, just and loving Father watches devotedly over his offspring and stands ready to extend his protective hand to lift them up to the eternal bliss of his Kingdom, who among you does not feel encouraged and optimistic about the compensatory struggle, sure of the final victory?... Who would not employ his goodwill in order to advance one more step each day on his long and difficult – but not impossible – ascension, whose apex is communion with the Beloved Master and glorious unity in his Love?

“We have gathered here to inform you that the treatment you have been allowed to receive in this hospital ends today. Your organic physical-astral condition has improved to the point where there is nothing else our hospitality can do for you. However, you are not yet fully healed; in fact, you are still quite sick... And you will continue to be sick for a long time if you do not possess a strong and disciplined goodwill for your complete recovery! We are aware of the indefinable maladies, the heavy sorrows and the afflictive states that are clamoring for help within you; thus, we want to explain why we are releasing you from the hospital when you feel you still need so much care! The reason, my dear brothers, is that you are about to enter a new phase of treatment, one that is of a moral and mental nature exclusively. The truth is that you would not need a hospital, or surgeons or nurses for your recovery on the spirit plane if you were individuals with upstanding moral qualities, or if you possessed a mental development supported by virtues of the heart and the accomplishment of duty. If that had been the case, your will, combined with the lofty vibrations to which you should have harmonized your own, would have lifted the veil of spiritual knowledge to which your minds would have been attuned, thanks to their spontaneous affinities... And you would have entered naturally and openly into the Spirit World as if you were entering your own home – because the Invisible is everyone’s real homeland! Unfortunately, you know very well that your life on the earth and your deeds there were not patterned after the conduct necessary for a spirit’s blissful admission to the astral world. You neglected the nobility of principles and high standards of your goals. You failed to educate your character when facing the feverish base passions that poison the mind. You enslaved your heart to evil prejudices, you belittled your soul with the insidious impulses of



pride, and you capped your string of follies with your unspeakable attack against the Law of the One who is the Only Lord of all Creation, and therefore the only One who has the Sovereign Power to end the Life of his creatures!

“In such a harmful state and yoked to calamitous prejudices, you would not have been able to assimilate anything in the Spirit World unless it had been conveyed to you in materialized form, because that is what your mind was accustomed to. We had to put up with your ignorance and mental weakness for the benefit of your progress. We had just a small amount of time in which to apply charity that was sufficiently devoted to highly effective measures! Infinitely merciful, the Supreme Providence has granted its executors the freedom to serve the Good by using gentle, preferably prudent and persuasive, methods. That is why, in the midst of the calamity into which you had dove headlong, you were given the treatment that would best fit your mental state, the one that would be quickest and most effective for the aid you were so urgently in need of! Truth is, you yourselves would have been able to fight off the evil that afflicted you if you been in the proper mental state!

“Thanks to Wise Providence, we are gathered here today for these simple instructions, which you can now fully understand!

“We have done everything we could for you, that is, we have skillfully and patiently raised your vibrational state to the level at which you can pursue a new plan on your pathway as morally delinquent spirits, who, due to your condition, have much to accomplish. Since your spiritual state has improved, you must work for your own rehabilitation. Your stay in this Sector has been a preparatory stage for admission to planes where you will have to demonstrate all the valor and goodwill you can muster!

“A new reincarnation is inevitable in your case. You will have to repeat the lifetime you aborted with your suicide, when you sidestepped fulfilling the sacred duty of enduring the lessons that Suffering was trying to teach you for your own benefit, progress and future happiness! However, you are free to choose to reincarnate now, or later, when, better equipped with the moral resources that you can acquire here with us, you feel more capable of fulfilling your most pressing expiatory commitments in only one lifetime – something that will be highly meritorious and beneficial to your spirit!

“You must understand that this means that if you reincarnate immediately you will only pay a small portion of your debt, but if you wait a

while to reincarnate, you will be able to pay it all, because you will be in a better condition to endure the struggles that such a huge endeavor would entail.

“Therefore, it would definitely be better if you would postpone your commitment to repair your wrongdoing. Meanwhile, if you are truly interested in studying the Science of the Spirit World, you can take one of our courses on initiation. We can assure you that it will greatly enhance your ability to emerge victorious, and it will help soften the sorrows and obstacles that you know will be inherent to the dolorous effort of redemption. What we would offer you with such studies is the Science of Life itself. It would be done under the auspices of the Great Educator Jesus of Nazareth, whose teachings humanity insists on rejecting, unaware that by refusing to follow them they are tossing into the far-off future their very happiness, the endless glory of their destiny!

“Of course, you could learn this Science on the earth itself because there are many solid and sure means capable of illuminating hearts and minds, impelling them along the pathway of Truth. Eminent figures have always shone throughout the long history of Humankind. They have been marked by the true credentials of virtue and wisdom that conferred on them the authority of instructors capable of guiding human beings toward their magnificent destinies as children of the Supreme Divinity. Coming down from the Highest Spiritual Spheres to reincarnate among their brothers and sisters, they have endured the sacrifice of living in a body of flesh in order to serve the sovereign designs of the Creator. Through their Love towards less-evolved beings, they have sought to educate and elevate them, offering for this sublime endeavor the best effort and goodwill from their souls as missionaries and teachers! Jesus of Nazareth was the most eminent one of these venerable figures that have illuminated the darkness of the earth, and it is under his guidance that all the others have done what they did. Going back to the very origins of the planet, when the Beloved Master received the earth and all its humanities from the hands of the Almighty, no other entity on this earth but Jesus has had the ability to lift them up from the initial chaos, educating and glorifying them in the radiations of Light Everlasting!

“You have been reincarnating on the earth for millennia, but till now you have never even thought about making use of these treasures granted by the infinite goodness of Heaven... You have passed them up with indifference, without even examining their value. And this makes us fear that if you were

to leave here without the knowledge that you would have to acquire on the earth instead, you would remain stuck in the same turmoil of the vicious circle you have been in for so long... You are still weak, you do not know how to resist your own pride, and you are in need of strength to resume your journey...

“Of the large number of you that arrived here three years ago, many are still in no condition whatsoever to attempt anything at this time. Bound to memories of absorbing passions, hardened in disbelief and discouragement, and completely morally and mentally incapable of the endeavors of normal progress, they will require still more of the charity and sacred love of Mary, who, as the Model Mother, feels so much compassion for the unfortunate. Others will have to reincarnate immediately, however, in order to correct the serious disturbances that remain in their astral body as a result of the violence inflicted by the shock of willful death. These disturbances cloud their entire reasoning, and unless they reincarnate in order to correct them, they will not be able to attempt anything, not even the repetition of the drama that led them to commit the deplorable act, a drama that, no doubt about it, will have to be repeated again because it was meant either as an atonement for crimes committed in past lives, or as the consequence of current wrongdoings for which they became responsible before the Great Law. They tried to escape that Law by means of suicide, and they will have to atone for it as well because their own conscience, disharmonized and demeaned, demands it! These cases are the ones where the type of suicide is so violent that it exceeds the possibility of relief by means of the psychical therapy you have received, the kinds of treatments you know well enough by now to make it unnecessary to detail them further. For them, another long and beneficial existence in the flesh will be the right therapy, and it will correct their vibrational disorder by diminishing its burning and intensity. After that maddening parenthesis, their spirit will regain the lucidity favorable for a new stage, in which it will have to be concerned about lifetimes meant for rehabilitation, something it will be in a condition to do with a good chance of victory!

“As you can see, my dear friends, for one century, two centuries... maybe even more... the suicide will continue to experience the frightening consequences of his act of irreverence towards the law of the Great Creator of All Things!”

We listened attentively, curious and horrified before the perspective of the future, a future we had no desire for. We were in dread of the gravity of

our wrong, a dread that was for our soul equal to or worse than being condemned to the gallows. We were filled with sorrow because we would have to leave that charitable shelter, where, if we ultimately did not find the solution we were looking for – since we were not yet deserving of it – we had at least acquired the best thing that a morally delinquent spirit could ever hope for, and which would serve as a beacon on the road of its Calvary of expiations: selfless friends and kindly guardians faithful to the lofty Christian principles of Love and Fraternity!

Teocrito continued, pleased with our mental attitude of seeking honest and sincere counsel:

“As you have longed for so ardently, the time to visit the earth has arrived! We will furnish you with guards and secure means of transportation. You are still inexperienced and you are still connected to the Legion because we are not yet finished helping with your rehabilitation! Once you are on the earth, please remember to be prudent – watching and praying – as advised by our Divine Model; in other words, keep your thoughts focused on the inspirations of Duty, Morality and the Good. Do not wander off again into the desires, seductions, vanities and idleness so common in the lower spheres of the planet.

“We are warning you that it will be detrimental if you want to stay on the earth, forgetting your friends in this Colony and the Christian and fraternal shelter you enjoy here. Strive not to lose the desire to return with the dedicated friends that will be going with you. If you return to this home – the only one that is right for you for the time being – and submit yourselves with goodwill to the maternal supervision of our Noble Guardian, you will be admitted to another Sector of this Institute, one that is better equipped than Security and the Hospital Sector. You will not be admitted there to enjoy happiness and bliss – you do not deserve them because you have not yet earned them – but to habilitate yourselves for the struggles of the progress required of you!

“But before you leave, you are invited for an instructional visit to the primary Sectors of our Institute. You stand much to gain with explanations provided by Security as well as the various hospital departments, that is, Isolation, the Mental Ward, and even the Department of Reincarnation and its highly interesting areas, which will be of very personal interest to you... You mustn't return to your earthly Homeland without the knowledge that our departments will impart to you: with it, you will be abler to resist the

memories of old temptations... On the other hand, do not hold to any illusions of what lies ahead of you on your trip: remember Jeronimo!... It has been many years since you left your remains in the clay of the grave!... Most of you have been forgotten by those you harmed with your suicide, if not completely, at least enough for them to have become disinterested in the fate of the ingrate that did not hesitate to break their hearts so cruelly. Enveloped in the effervescence of material life, people forget very easily... So do not expect to find joy on your journey! As a matter of fact, the earth has never awarded trophies to those who, knowing that they are the offspring of a divine spark, seek to proceed on their pathway towards God enraptured by a glimpse of heavenly bliss in the future... But we are not worried about with such concerns. What happened to Jeronimo will not happen to you.

You are much better prepared for the possible disillusionment and unexpected surprises of which you are still unknowing at this point!

“For now, go and rest... and may the Divine Master inspire you...”

\* \* \*

The next morning we changed residences.

Joel took us to a ward annexed to the Hospital, a sort of boarding house where those discharged from the institution lived. It was surrounded by climbing roses and flanked by slender cypresses, calling to mind the classical landscapes of ancient India, so cherished and celebrated by the Master Initiates with whom we were connected. They called it the Indian Ward or the House of Roses. The fog, however, also colored that placid refuge with melancholy, enveloping it in its eternal white covering.

An indefinable sense of well-being visited our souls on that enchanting morning. The normally serious and pensive Belarmino was smiling and talkative. Joao d’Azevedo said that he was very hopeful and willing to do only what Brother Teocrito had recommended, but that he would like to discuss it a bit further with the kind director in private. As for myself, I felt quite happy and even allowed myself to fantasize about future literary projects. I was convinced that on my next visit to the earth I would enjoy astounding success from beyond the grave, returning to my customary literary endeavors via the first medium I could find at my disposal. In those days we were very far from guessing the amount of arduous struggle the journey of reparation would still require of us... The comfort, the loving way we were treated by those selfless workers of the Good as they untied the tragic cloak

that covered our spirits with pain, made us think that, actually, suicide might not have been so bad after all...

Mario Sobral was the only one who did not have any illusions. Upon seeing our joy in our first hours in the Indian Ward, he commented:

“May God enable you to stay like that, my friends!... But my conscience won’t allow me the same joy!... It accuses me without respite and it hasn’t granted my disgraced heart a moment’s peace! Our friends’ silence regarding the crime I committed terrifies me more than if they accused me daily with threats of reprisals!... It’s not possible that what I did to my wife, my children, poor Eulina and my parents will go unnoticed by the Law, whose principles are starting to become clear in my mind... On top of being a criminal towards myself by having committed suicide, I am also a criminal for having committed a crime against others... You want to know something, Camilo? For quite some time now it has felt like my hands are going numb... air-like... disappearing... as if they have been chopped off... In confusion, I sometimes search for them because I can’t feel them... and then suddenly, while I’m asking myself what could be causing this strange feeling, I’m bewildered by an excruciating sight: I see Eulina lying smitten on the sofa, convulsing from my terrible blows to her face... Then, I see her being strangled to death by my murderous hands... which are there, severed from my wrists!... Oh, dear God! What could such an anomaly mean?... What other mental confusion is still in the making to punish me?... Please, Camilo, please tell me what you think.”

“Your grief must be making you see things, my dear friend... Remorse is pummeling your conscience... Truth is, you have never stopped loving that poor woman... Why don’t you ask Brother Teocrito about it?”

“I already have, Camilo... I already have.”

“Well, what did he say?”

“He said that I should trust Divine Providence. Divine Providence never forsakes anyone who asks it for help. He said that I should resign myself to the consequences of the situation I myself have created, and that I should strengthen my soul in Faith to correct it... He recommended that I pray without ceasing; that I use every effort to establish a sympathetic magnetic current as I implore Mary to assist me, to enlighten and console me, preparing myself within for the future... There is no other recourse at my disposal for now.”

“Then do it!... If he suggested that, it’s because that is what you need.”

“I have been doing it; I have been!” he exclaimed, tense and distressed. “But the more I do it, the more certain I am that that vision is a foretaste of the future: when I reincarnate – as Alceste and Romeu say I will – to expiate my double crime, I will be born deformed, without my hands... They are somewhere else, occupied with committing a crime... They were dishonored by me when I strangled that poor defenseless woman... I no longer have them, Camilo!... I can’t feel them... I can’t see them... they were buried with Eulina’s body... And in order to get them back, honored and redeemed from the criminal stain, I will have to suffer the pain of an earthly existence without them in order to learn by sacrifice and its consequent, unimaginable torment from the shame of humiliating impairment, that our hands are a sacred patrimony of our physical bodies, warning us that we should only use them for the Good and Justice, and never for crime!... Eulina was doubly defenseless: first, she was a woman, and therefore fragile. She was rejected by her family and society because she was a prostitute! But... before being any of that, so unhappy and miserable, she was, above all else, a creature of God, the child of the Supreme Being, All Powerful and Just... as I am, as you are, Camilo, my friend, and as all Humanity is! That Father loves all his children equally, and he is now asking me about the life I took, that supreme gift that only he can and should dispose of because only he can grant it in the first place! No one should have taken from Eulina the right of being a child of the Supreme Creator!... Eulina, poor thing... She had no other rights in that world of abjection. She didn’t even have the right to life, because *I did not want her to go on living*... And that’s why I killed her!... I murdered Eulina!... And now, in the deepest folds of my remorse-impregnated spirit, I hear the austere voice of my conscience, like the voice of God himself reverberating in my immortal being: ‘Cain, Cain!... What have you done to your brother?!’... Oh, Camilo, Camilo, my friend!... When I strangled Eulina, I forgot that she too was a child of God! That she too had sacred rights, rights granted by our Merciful Father to all of us! And now...”

Tears ran down his face in an uninterrupted stream choking his voice, and a cloud of emotion covered the serene air of the House of Roses with sorrow. In truth, the joy that had visited our hearts that morning only derived from the fact that we had brought happiness to Teocrito for our progress during those three years of internment...

\* \* \*

Carlos and Roberto de Canalejas offered to accompany us on the instructional visit suggested by the experienced director of the Hospital Sector. We decided to start with the Watchtower. Like an invincible fortress in the middle of a barbaric region of the Spirit World, the Watchtower defended a surveillance outpost against various types of noxious assaults. Inferior mental emanations coming from the outside were one of the worst and most feared invasions fought there.

We had a great distance to cover. A small, speedy vehicle picked us up, because we had not yet even imagined the possibility of moving by means of thought, using volitation. At a certain point of our trip and already a good distance from the Indian Ward, we heard Roberto replying to a remark by Mario Sobral:

“Discouragement is a bad counselor, my friend!... It would behoove you to meditate serenely on Brother Teocrito’s advice. On the surface it may seem trivial and simple, but it entails profound wisdom and is a golden key that you can use to unlock the gates that you think exist on your path towards rehabilitation! In the end, what does a life of thirty or sixty years of suffering really matter – a life in which the physical body may be deformed – when we can use it to recover our spiritual honor and the peace that our conscience lacks? When we can use it as a redemptive circumstance to align us with the Law we broke?... There’s no reason for you to be afraid of expiation, Mario. All of us have erred and thus need it to release our conscience, and therefore our destiny, from the grave debts that keep us alienated from the harmonies of the Divine Laws, creating abnormalities all around us. You have the whole Future ahead of you for your moral renewal! If you would go to the trouble of pondering the future seriously and prudently, it will show your reasoning that you will be able to expunge the humiliating stain of your wrongdoings from your soul by replacing them with sanctifying responsibilities! So, if you have to reenter the earthly experience with a deformed body in order to use the difficulties it will impose to learn to use every part of your physical flesh only in a worthy manner, do not hesitate. Endure the suffering! You are convinced of your wrongdoings, and so you can obviously see that it is right to accept responsibility for the acts you committed to your detriment. Your spiritual honor and moral dignity demand it of you! And if you can enlighten your being with the resplendence of trust in God, of hope in his paternal goodness, nourishing it with courage and resignation; if you are sure of his Love, which does not condemn his children but helps them lift themselves from the abyss into which they let themselves fall; and that he will never abandon you to the



thorns on the redemptive pathway, you might even be able to smile at your misfortune and find perfect beauty as you tread your Calvary!”

The doctor’s impassioned counsel seemed to reanimate our miserable companion. He became silent and was quite serene for the rest of the day.

The outline of the Sector that would be housing us came into view on the horizon. Pensive, I said to myself, not knowing I would be listened to:

“Where, around here, might poor Jeronimo be?”

“Your friend Jeronimo de Araujo Silveira is being held in Isolation,” replied Carlos de Canalejas, “because he disobeyed hospital regulations.”

“Why is it called Isolation?” Mario asked fearfully.

“Because that’s where they keep the ones whose behavior goes against the Hospital’s regulations; insubordinates who abused their freedom but were not actual rebels... Isolation is like a prison... But the Colony’s directors refrain from using that degrading word; in fact, it does not convey the true nature of its purpose, as you will see for yourselves.”

“So Jeronimo is being detained?”

“Yes, he is!... But for his own good, as well as the good of his loved ones.”

Mario tensed up and asked further:

“But Dr. Canalejas, why is a good husband and devoted father like Jeronimo being detained, while I, a two, three or ten times worse criminal, am still among good friends?”

“Because you are a truly repentant spirit, Mario, and you have accepted the advice of those responsible for you before Mary. You want to be duly led according to redemptive guidelines, and you are willing to undergo cruel suffering in order to erase your guilty past... Jeronimo, on the other hand, has fallen into inconformity and incomprehension. He has unyieldingly held on to all the memories of the past. He laments it yet lives for it, and he doesn’t have the strength to let it go. He refuses to consider anything that might mitigate his situation, which would improve a lot if he would lean on the wisdom of resignation!... As a matter of fact, weren’t you yourself a prisoner for many years in the sinister darkness of the Valley. Weren’t you submerged in desperation, feeling the ferocious weight of your guilty conscience?... And aren’t you still a moral captive of yourself because your inconsolable and

sorrowful thoughts keep your heart and mind from fully enjoying all and any happiness?”

“I was surprised to find out that when we die we can be thrown into a dungeon, among other unexpected and astonishing things,” I murmured, upset because of the seemingly absurd novelty of it all.

Carlos, however, kindly and gently won over my reasoning the same way he had won over my heart with this sensible and logical explanation:

“In the first place, Camilo, you are the one who calls it a ‘dungeon.’ I only referred to it as ‘Isolation,’ because the word ‘dungeon’ would be improper for its purpose. Second, all of you must agree that the existence of prisons here in the spirit world should not come as a surprise. You used to be educated men, erudite thinkers, profound dialecticians... and such ignorance of the fact is all the more remarkable precisely because you are so well educated!

“Since having discovered the general conduct of low order discarnate spirits, I have often wondered what earthly Humanity would be like if there were no restraints at all put on certain spirit world societies. Even with such restraints, hordes of sinister criminals from the invisible plane constantly assault imprudent human beings that give them access, thus letting them contribute to their own downfalls and the disorder among nations!

“On the earth there are those who are fully aware of the reality you have discovered here and which seems to displease you so much. Jesus referred to this many times and even touched on the possibility of binding the delinquent hand and foot. Religions continue to proclaim this somber teaching; and even though they do so imperfectly, they still grasp the reality of it! In its turn, the Third Revelation<sup>29</sup> has been presenting lengthy reports on the Invisible World for many years now, disclosing to any open mind impressive details that even ancient peoples accepted and understood as truths worthy of respect! If you’re surprised that your friend is being detained in Isolation, it is because you have never concerned yourself with really serious questions. You would rather direct your rare intellectual gifts towards the cliffs of unproductive frivolities, proper of the human societies that take pleasure in mental idleness and the inertia of intellectual complacency.”

I felt ashamed and did not say any more. I remembered that I had learned quite a bit by reading and studying the subject while on the earth, but I had not paid much attention to it. Because I was blinded by the vanity of deeming

myself to be a wise and logical scholar, I had usually regarded religious philosophies as distrustful resources of the collective interest that had created them. I held a reverential deference only for the Holy Gospels, which I considered to be excellent codes of Morality and Fraternity delivered by a Superior Man who ought to be regarded as the standard model for Humanity, but who was too mystical to be emulated by beings constantly struggling with crushing problems. I felt so strongly about this that, in my poor mind, tainted by presumptuous ignorance, and which could see only darkness beyond its own narrow, pride-clouded point of view, I thought that he had failed in the practice of the golden norms he had expounded. He failed because he was defeated on an opprobrious cross while Humankind continued its slide towards a sequence of bottomless pits.

Dr. Canalejas, however, continued to hold our attention:

“Besides, why wouldn't there be prisons and confinement on this side of life, when there are many more moral delinquents here than on the earth?... People commit major wrongs that may not be punishable because they are outside the realm of human jurisprudence, but they cannot escape the incorruptible statutes of Justice beyond the grave! Moreover, on the earth, how many crimes go unpunished even though there are penalties for them in the human legal system? Do you think that human beings can escape Justice forever?!... Do you think that death makes blessed beings of those who have outdone themselves in the practice of earthly follies?!... You would be kidding yourselves! Those who have lived criminal lives in shocking disregard for their spiritual future, daily challenging the divine laws with disharmonious acts against themselves, their neighbors and society in general, enter the spirit world as the criminals they are. They will be punished by the logical and irremediable consequences of the causes they themselves have created! That is why you see here and in other regions where low order spirits proliferate – and even in the physical realm, since the earth offers to Divine Jurisdiction vast fields for punishing criminals – a mountain of sufferings and countless arduous struggles for quenching the fires of maddening remorse from guilty consciences... And since only rebellious and despotic criminal spirits arrive in the lower zones of the Invisible, spirits who think they are still in the physical world and thus try to continue to act in a way that harms others and themselves, there is the need for confinement. The same applies to those who break human laws in earth's societies; after all, earth's organizations are imperfect copies of the model institutions of the Spirit World!”

By now, the vehicle was nearing our destiny. We were all silent as we meditated on what we had just heard. So simple, so real was that astral world, that its reality, its astonishing simplicity, contributed to our confusion of looking at ourselves as human beings when, in fact, we were spirits!

\* \* \*

The Watchtower appeared to be inlaid in the gray folds of the fog, recalling the European fortresses of old. Majestic and impressive, it infused reverence, if not fear, in wanderers of the spirit world unaware of its purpose.

Accompanied by our guides, we entered freely. Cowered by the memories of our troubles, painful feelings caused vibrations of anguish to rise to the surface of our being. That heavy and somber environment spoke to our souls about the terrible things we had experienced in the Sinister Valley.

As we said earlier, the Watchtower was connected with the Security Department. Even though its administration was autonomous, it still had to work in harmony with the latter, in a perfect cohesion of ideas and fraternal solidarity. If the various departments of the Colony could be measured in terms of sheer responsibility, the Watchtower would be the most responsible of all because it was located in a dangerous region of the lower astral zones and was surrounded by noxious and perturbing elements. Its job was to combat and divert, and thus repel, any attack by assaulting spirits, and to direct to other areas any wretched spirits persecuted by obsessors, and who desired to find shelter in the Colony at any cost – which was impossible because the Colony was a specialized outpost for housing only suicides.

The Watchtower's on-site director was a former Portuguese Catholic priest who had also been an initiate in the Temples of the Sciences of India in a former existence. He had under his command various other workers, who, although not initiates, were very helpful in the exhaustive work in the lower zones. They had willingly chosen it as a way to expiate abuses they had committed against the interests of the Gospel of the Crucified One. They had been invested with lofty authority as shepherds of souls, but had desecrated the Gospel with lies, hypocrisy, and false and deceitful interpretations! The director's functions were only internal, however, and limited to overall management; the actual job of defense was the responsibility of Department headquarters.

We were received by welcoming assistants who took us immediately to the director. We were introduced by our good friends, the doctors Canalejas,

who in turn presented a letter of introduction from Teocrito, asking permission for the visit because it would be so beneficial to the groups that were beginning their instruction.

The director welcomed us warmly in the name of the Master of masters and in the name of the Guardian of the Legion. He also offered his good wishes for our complete recovery and consequent progress. Enchanted, we could see that there was no superficiality or social affectation on the part of those who received us. On the contrary, simplicity and true solidarity were expressed in indefinable vibrations that truly captivated us!

Once our guides and the director, Father Anselmo de Santa Maria, finalized the schedule for our visit, no one wasted any time in idle conversation. The venerable director immediately began offering important explanations as we headed for the upper floors.

We will not end this chapter without including the information we garnered during our interesting visit.

As we ascended, Father Anselmo began:

“My dear friends, I will start by explaining that the Watchtower is having to deal with many tasks at the moment due to the fact that our Institute is not yet completely up and running. There is a lack of specialized workers, and all of our departments are overburdened with multiple activities. Here at the Watchtower, we tend to cases that are as varied as they are thorny – as you will see. They are not the specialty we should be focusing on.”

We reached the highest part of the tower. Our inspection would proceed in reverse, that is, from the top floor downwards.

We approached an enormous circular auditorium containing comfortable, cushioned seats. It was immersed in darkness, as if the quintessential matter of which it was built was based on the heaviest substances found in the environment. Large glass doors extended around its whole circumference, allowing a view of what was happening inside each of the rooms. Our kind host invited us to take a closer look at the inside, but we were not allowed to actually go in. We could not hear a thing: the glass was completely sound-proof!

In the first room there were strange apparatuses that looked like powerful telescopes that had been perfected to an ideal state for probing great distances, a type of X-ray capable of probing the depths of Outer Space, as well as the

Invisible and the earth. Others, however, defied our comprehension as newcomers to the spirit world.

In the next room, colossal luminous screens, the size of which made the ones in our infirmary seem like miniatures, implied that here, too, there was a need to display events and scenes occurring at great distances, bringing them to the technicians and authorized observers for study and examination. These devices – whose perfection humankind still cannot conceive of, although it is within reach – enabled the operator to examine any subject in minute detail, even the development of infusoria in the depths of the oceans if necessary, as well as the sequence of a human lifetime, or the activities of a particular spirit in the lower zones of the Invisible, or of one on an arduous excursion pertinent to endeavors of assistance. The regulations regarding the devices were strictly observed, allowing them to be used only when absolutely necessary.

There was yet a third room, the largest of all. It seemed to be an “equipment operations center,” whose workers were eminent figures of Science. This was the site reserved for the magnetic equipment that regulated the use and activity of all the other magnificent equipment of the Colony, including its night lighting. It was a sort of electro-magnetic plant that distributed different fluids for the smooth running of this equipment. Everywhere, we could see uninterrupted activity that looked like exhausting, hard work. We saw several women taking part in the meritorious endeavor. They seemed like winged figures, silently coming and going with a serious and conscientious demeanor. They were dressed in beautiful garments so crispy white that they seemed to sparkle – something that really caught our attention. Not knowing any better, we thought that these garments were uniforms. In reality, they were the product of the high level of the vibrational state of the women’s minds, which they were having to make an effort to decrease because the place was incompatible with their true evolved state!

“This fortress,” continued Anselmo, “to which belong not only the Watchtower but all the other towers seen from here, houses a contingent of specialized lancers and guards that are responsible for guarding and defending it against any possible assault from the outside. Many of its members are disciples of the usual Christian Initiation. They are taking their first steps on the pathway of edifying deeds leading to redemption! Others are suicides, who are here to make amends for former misdeeds. Still others have come from the darkest Godlessness, because, in addition to being suicides, they

were also fearsome obsessors. Their crimes under such circumstances can easily be deduced! All of them, however, are treated by the Colony's leadership with undisguised love and Christian charity, the basis for the endeavors aimed at their reeducation. As for the last of the three, that is, the obsessors, we have special orders from the Higher Realms regarding them. The Venerable Guardian of the Legion wants them to be integrated into the hosts of those truly converted to the Doctrine of her Beloved Son as soon as possible, that is, into the Legion of workers dedicated to the Magnanimous Cause of the Master of masters! Therefore, along with their work – which is also part of their instruction – they all study and learn with their instructors the indispensable concepts of Love, Justice, Duty, and the true Good. They submit to the Morality of the Christ of God and develop reverence for the Almighty until they reincarnate to continue their trials. Many have already been victorious on the first stretches of the road of such trials, in that they have already returned from dreadful expiatory reincarnations. Now, they are here to continue their learning experience in order to learn how to make further progress in the future! I should also mention the contingent of Hindu lancers who willingly and selflessly serve as role models for the newly-repentant. They keep an eye on them and cooperate with us in their rehabilitation, while offering other invaluable services to the Institute. These Hindus are former private disciples of the Colony's initiates, and some of them have advanced considerably on the road to the light of Truth. They are true pillars of order and discipline and they keep the peace among all the others.

“Our vigilance has to be tireless, strict and meticulous due to the zone of disorder where our fortress is located. Being so close to the earth, it receives its multiple perturbing influences. It also receives those from the sinister valley that houses our future guests, those from the lower zones filled with evildoers from earthly societies, and those from the roaming hordes hardened in evil, whose aim is to lure imprudent and inexperienced spirits like yourselves over to their side – all of this, not to mention the invisible, malignant waves of mental fluids and emanations that rise from the earth, adding to those of the lower invisible realms, and which we do battle with from this Watchtower as we would the endemic microbes of any plague.

“We use the equipment you see here to constantly monitor events in the Valley of the Suicides. Thanks to it, we can keep in touch with what goes on there – we can see and hear everything. We could use clairvoyance, remote viewing and other animic gifts that our technicians possess, in order to find

out what we need to know. Here in this Tower, there are workers capable of such a massive and painstaking endeavor: for instance, those diligent sisters over there, who are so focused on their duties. But usually we prefer the apparatuses, so as not to needlessly overburden such invaluable faculties. A heterogeneous place like this one is filled with heavy influences that would demand too much effort and precious energies from them, whereas the equipment can do the same work without any intense demands of a mental nature.

“So, no matter how miserable the hordes in the Valley may be, or the moral delinquents that delight in evil and whose influence can be felt in our realm of activity, they are never forsaken. The Servants of Mary keep watch over them with the aid of this magnificent equipment and rescue them when the time is right; that is, when they are capable of being helped and transported to another place. However... there is one particular obstacle resulting from the act of suicide, and which keeps its tormented prey from being rescued with the promptness that one would expect from the Charity of the workers of Fraternity: they are still not completely disconnected from the bonds that tie them to the physical body; in other words, they are semi-incarnated or semi-discarnated – whichever you prefer!

“The vital powers that Divine Nature has infused into all Creation, and into human beings in particular, act on the suicide with all the energies of their great yet subtle activity, thanks to the semi-material nature of the astral body that humans possess in addition to the material envelope! Thus, in many cases suicides remain tied to the physical body, in spite of its having decayed! The ties to their human characteristics remain very much alive until the vital reserves given to them for completing their commitments for that particular lifetime are consumed, that is, once they have reached the time foreseen by the Divine Law for their discarnation. Suicides remain in this abnormal and deplorable situation, and in spite of our willingness, there is nothing we can do to help them!<sup>30</sup> No one knows this better than you, my brothers! It is the Law, a law that is unbending, incorruptible and irreversible because it is perfect and wise! And it is up to us to understand and respect it, so that we do not make ourselves miserable by violating it!

“Hence the calamity that befalls suicides, making it impossible for us to shorten their afflictions. What happens to them is a natural effect of the cause that they themselves created, because they put themselves in a difficult position that can only be solved by time. But if we can do anything on their



behalf we try to do it, regardless of the sacrifice. Thus, every so often – or better, when appropriate – we organize expeditions involving willing missionaries who descend into their hell in order to bring them back to this institution, where they are housed and duly taught to revere God, whom they failed to acknowledge when they were men and women. We meet daily to pray on their behalf, radiating beneficent sparkles of light around their overexcited minds from our vibrations in an effort to mitigate the burning of their sufferings with gentle thoughts of hope! If they were not so crazed with despair because of their pernicious disbelief in God, they would perceive our invitations to prayer, which we send them every evening at sunset. They would also pick up on our words of encouragement trying to awaken them to trust in the merciful powers of the Almighty Father. We mustn't forget that we are dealing with Christian people who are touched to a certain degree by recalling their distant childhood, when, with their mothers beside the fireplace, they heard the wonderful accounts of the angel Gabriel's Annunciation to the Maiden of Nazareth that she would receive the Savior of Humanity as her son... That is why we make it a point to use every means possible to somehow dry the tears of these miserable disbelievers that plunged headlong into such a horrific abyss!

“Whenever one of those condemned beings has extinguished, or even lessened his or her store of animalized vitality – whether having sincerely repented or not – we notify rescue services in Security, which immediately departs to bring him or her back to the Legion. Consequently, whatever his or her condition – repentant, rebellious, or hardened – he or she is sent by the Security Department to the proper place, as you already know: the Hospital, Isolation or the Mental Ward, or even to these Towers. As I said before, since we are not yet properly structured, our responsibilities keep piling up; thus we maintain auxiliary posts to lodge dreadful criminals, who have lost their freedom for having been on the pathway of evil for so long, that is, the suicide-obsessors.

“Our remote viewing (clairvoyant-magnetic-mechanical) devices convey to us the facts and scenes we need to know. These have been selected from many others thanks to the way the devices are operated by our technicians. It is like a powerful magnet attracting fragments of iron. This is how we locate those to be rescued and plan the course we will take to do so. We immediately submit it to the directors in Security, who then furnish the personnel for the excursion... And consequently, with God's blessings and the acquiescence of his Son, we rescue yet another sheep from the claws of evil.

“Access to those rooms is strictly prohibited to anyone not working there, so I cannot invite you for a closer inspection of the devices. The workers are high order spirits, missionaries of Love, technicians specialized in this particular type of work, who could be operating in spheres filled with light and bliss. Instead, out of Love for the Divine Master, they chose to come down to these somber abysses to serve the sacred cause on behalf of their unfortunate less-evolved brethren. They are veritable guardian angels of the wretched spirits they watch over!

“There is a change of shifts every twelve hours. If they want to, the workers can rest in the gardens of the Temple, which as you know, is the highest plane of our humble Colony. Or they can choose other activities as they please – they can even go back up to their own sphere. There, they recover from the anguish from having to work in the dark environment on behalf of their brothers. They return the next day, faithful to the duty they have willingly embraced... We must stress the fact that, when it comes to the work of assistance and protection for outcasts who commit suicide, there are no laws regarding appointments or impositions – the suicide is outside of the Law! So, these are tasks carried out by volunteers. They result from the sacred sentiments of Charity and Selflessness of those who desire to fulfill them out of love for the immaculate teachings of the Lamb of God, the Divine Model who made Charity the virtue par excellence, since the law that allows for charity confers the practice of all the good possible on behalf of those who suffer!”

“I’m amazed at seeing such highly evolved spirits working in places and at tasks that are so unpleasant,” remarked Belarmino with the bitter impertinence of someone who had lived a comfortable life as an idle capitalist, and to whom hard work and the ongoing toils of duty would be appalling. “Doesn’t the Legion have workers that are less evolved spiritually, and as such more in accord with the nature of the environment and the exhausting work it entails? Surely they would suffer less, since they possess a lower degree of sensitiveness.”

Anselmo laughed goodheartedly and replied:

“One can see, brother Belarmino, that you haven’t grasped the intricacies and depth of spiritual issues, whose complexity is not even suspected on the earth! Our less evolved workers – guards, assistants, nurses, etc. – are definitely a good-willed contingent possessing an undying, correct attitude

toward their job and a desire to progress by means of heroic activities; but they are nowhere near being capable of such a lofty endeavor!

“Only spirits with pure virtues and the knowledge of experience can look into the intricacies of the complex character of offenders such as suicides and tell if they are really predisposed to repentance; or look into their physical-astral body and tell if the influences of the vital principle are no longer too strong for them to be provided with the assistance they need and be taken to a safe place. Only technicians vested with extensive psychical knowledge can delve into the buried memories of those tormented culprits and extract their past existences in order to go back with them, review their history and shape their biography, studying the cause that led them to fail. Once the cause is determined, a plan of reeducation can be drawn up and implemented at the Institute. The reports furnished by the technicians in Security and the Hospital are used to classify Colony patients and direct them to various places for recuperation – maybe even the earth through reincarnation-related services. Only a selfless being, one that has developed a high degree of self-control, can contemplate the lower zones, where degradation and pain reach the culmination of all evil, and not be terrified to madness. Compared with such places, your Valley would seem like a place of pure comfort!

“For instance, there are suicides that cannot enter the Valley via natural means. Being able to go there means that a suicide is already being helped to some degree because he or she is under our watch and care – albeit hidden – and registered in the Colony as a candidate for future hospitalization. On the other hand, there are others who, before reaching the Valley, are imprisoned or lured away by hordes of obsessors who might have been suicides or deceivers themselves, perverse and criminal entities who take delight in doing evil. Lost in their own evil ways, they are the dregs of the spirit world, who continue to live on the earth right alongside incarnates. They corrupt homes and societies that do not offer any resistance through the vigilance of good thoughts and prudent actions, and they wreck the lives of incautious persons who give them access due to their own moral and mental baseness! If imprisoned by such hordes, the suicide is engulfed by torments that would make those endured in the Valley – which are the logical result of the act of suicide – seem like a joke!

“Because they lack any real spiritual potential and live divorced from the light of the Good and Love for their neighbor, these wretches usually inhabit horrible, sinister places on the earth itself, because they have an affinity for its

mental states. Such places may be dark, gloomy forests, abandoned cemeteries, solitary mountain caves, or even somber dwellings in marine rock formations and craters of extinct volcanoes.

“Hypocrites and liars, they induce their victims to believe that such places are of their own making, built by the power of their capabilities, because they envy the regenerative Colonies headed by illuminated spirits. They imprison them and torture them in every way conceivable, from ‘physical’ abuse and obscenities to driving mad their minds already burning from the depth of their personal sufferings. In sum, they inflict them with torments that you cannot even imagine, and if you were to witness them you would not be able to endure it because you are still too weak to insulate yourselves from the heavy thoughts that would befall you and sicken you!

“But none of this has any effect on the specialized workers that have been illumined by their outstanding progress! They are immune to it and can use their mental and vibrational powers to control their dread at what they see. They focus the lens of their magnetic telescopes and their powerful video devices, as well as the solicitude of their lofty thoughts of Christian fraternity, on the most out-of-the-way regions of the earth... And they look for the super-troubled souls of the wretches who have deviated from the logical pathway of their destinies in two ways: first, by the act of suicide itself; second, by the affinity that dragged them down so far as to get involved with the lowest element in the Invisible!

“They sometimes find them after a persevering and exhaustive search. However, even after finding them and informing the Security Department, which in turn informs the Institute’s leadership, we are not always able to rescue them right away. First, we have to have a definite, well-planned course of action. This sometimes entails the help of other phalanxes that are often very inferior to ours in morality and ability but knowledgeable of the rough, dark terrain where we will be operating. *Demarches*, diplomatic envoys, negotiations, promises and even subterfuge, fierce battles in which there are no swords, of course, but only patience, tolerance, interest in the Good, moral strength, and courage, are used by the liberators, and would cause admiration and respect for the heroism of their personal sacrifice! They go down into diabolical places where captive souls are writhing, tormented by persecutors who want to adapt them to their own ways. They mingle with these criminals of the darkness and frequently subject themselves to the dire necessity of passing themselves off as one of them!... These selfless workers of the Good

invariably suffer tremendously on such occasions! They shed tears of anguish but remain faithful to their sacred commitment to the redemptive cause! They do not hesitate at their missionary work, the pledge they have made to the Divine Model who sacrificed himself for humanity, but proceed, energetically and heroically, in the service of the Good on behalf of their less evolved brothers and sisters!

“And finally, after unimaginable struggles, they rescue the sufferers, who will be led to the Valley in due time. After that, they transfer them to Security, which in turn sends them to the appropriate place – usually the Mental Ward because the poor wretches are normally deranged when they leave the clutches of their obsessors... Thus, it is extremely important that they also shepherd the obsessors, the persecutors, who are nothing but the frightful spirits of malefic men and women who lived enmeshed in the darkness of crime, far from God! If, in addition to being obsessors, they are also suicides, our Colony will be able to keep them right here, in an appropriate place in the fortress, since they have no affinity with a locale better than this one. Moreover, they are considered dangerous and undesirable elements in places where the moral improvement of other delinquents already predisposed to the Good is underway! They are kept in strict custody, and are offered, as much as possible, the strength and means for their reeducation and rehabilitation. They have no access to higher, more comforting planes until they have first experienced a new life in the flesh in order to rid themselves of the weight of their more revolting crimes. Since their moral and mental conditions have been excessively damaged by their actions, they have no other choice. Their education is limited to a small understanding about themselves, to notions of the fraternal laws expounded in the Gospel of the Lord, and to regenerative toil on the earth. This is accomplished under the supervision of strict assistants or in our regiment of militiamen, where mentors specializing in such matters steer them toward the practice of ennobling work instead of the many evils they committed in the past. As militiamen, they hunt down other hordes of obsessors they know about and inform us of other malefic dens. Hence, they help our cause, something that will count in their favor in the plan of their future expiations. However, if we are dealing with wicked spirits, but not suicides, we cannot house them. Assistance Services will take them to other outposts in the zones of transition – sort of like police stations of the Invisible – and there they will be steered towards the course of action that is best for them in their sad condition

as lower order spirits, but always one that is in accord with the laws of affinity, justice and fraternity.”

A short silence ensued. We were pensive, astonished by this unexpected exposition, which, in reality, served as a class of the highest learning! Anselmo de Santa Maria gently fixed his gaze on our attentive and concerned expressions, and said, as if he had extended his thought towards pathways scented by the incomparable essence of the Gospel of the Magnanimous Educator:

“Yes, my children!... This is how it has to be. The Nazarene himself affirmed that the good shepherd leaves the obedient sheep in the sheepfold and goes in search of the one that has gone astray, only resting after bringing it back, safe from the dangers that surrounded it!... And for the justice and glory of our efforts in cooperating with him, Jesus also said: *‘Of the sheep that my Father has entrusted to me, not one will be lost...’*”

---

27 Mt. 18:12-14.

28 A reminder that all of the spirit-patients here are male. Female suicides are kept separate. – Tr.

29 Spiritism. – Tr.

30 In the gravest cases, the Divine Mercy usually provides for immediate reincarnation, during which suicides complete the time that was still remaining for the life they abruptly cut short. Though dolorous, and even abnormal, such reincarnations are preferable to the torments of the afterlife, while at the same time saving the patient an enormous loss of time; hence the physically impaired, the hearing and speech impaired, the mentally impaired, etc. It is a matter of vibration, that is, the perispirit did not have the vibrational strength to shape its new corporeal form, in spite of the aid received from technicians in the Spirit World. Thus, they will conclude the time that was remaining for the lifetime they prematurely cut short. They will also correct their vibrational imbalances, and will, of course, feel alleviated. It is a therapeutic measure, nothing more, an extreme measure demanded by the calamity of the situation. As a matter of fact, it is the only one for cases where the lifetime cut short would have been a long one otherwise. You, who are reading these pages! When you come across brothers or sisters suffering such abnormalities, do not shy away from silently praying in their presence: your harmonious vibrations will also be an excellent therapy!

---

## The archives of the soul

*Honor your father and your mother. (The Decalogue)*  
*Ex. 20:12*

The sun was beginning to set. The shadows were growing longer on the leaden horizon of the gloomy region. We went to the next floor down, and in doing so I risked a question:

“Father Anselmo, forgive my wanting to know all the details of a matter that speaks so strongly to my Christian sentiments and my concerns as a learner. But how do the directors of this magnanimous Institution find out that spirits who committed suicide have gone missing and are being held prisoner by hostile hordes?”

“We have promised Jesus that we would be his aids on his mission of redemption by affiliating ourselves with the Legion sponsored by his Venerable Mother,” he replied promptly. “Consequently, there are technicians in this Tower whose job it is to look for the missing by using the infallible devices you saw just a while ago... Each of them has specific regions to scour... Moreover, afflicted by remorse, former obsessors who have been regenerated under our care and made members of the militiamen, willingly come forward to disclose the places they know about in the Invisible or on the earth where the victims of oppressive persecution are gathered, and where the worst atrocities are being committed. Once confirmed, these places are visited and cleansed... Usually, however, such information and orders come from the Higher Realms... from the magnanimous assistance of the Pious Mother of Humanity, the Governess of our Legion... If the suffering entities are not under her direct care as their guardian, the guardian of the legion to which they do belong can ask for her assistance on their behalf, because there is fraternal solidarity among the various groups of the Sidereal Universe, a solidarity that is infinitely more perfect than those among the nations of the

earth... Moreover, no matter how disgraced or forgotten suicides may be, there is always someone who loves them and takes a sincere interest in their destiny by directing fervent pleas to Mary on their behalf, if not directly to the Divine Master or even the Creator! So, if certain suicides have not left someone behind on the earth that takes pity on their immense disgrace by showing loving charity through generous prayers, there is surely someone in the spirit world who will do so: past affections and old friends forgotten due to reincarnation; loved ones who accompanied them in past lives; and their guardian angel, who knows all their steps, as well as their thoughts, and who will assist them with true displays of fraternal love inspired by the love of God! If the plea is directed to Mary, immediate orders are expedited to her messengers and then distributed to the various outposts and institutes of suicide assistance maintained by the Legion. The workers are informed about the present activities surrounding the sufferer, his or her name, nationality, date and place of death, and the type of suicide. Armed with this information, if, for instance, the individual in question is in a region belonging to the radius of our activities, the search will be carried out by Security's workers, as I said before. Wherever the individual is, he or she will be found, no matter what it takes! Usually, if he or she has not been captured by wicked hordes of obsessors that had persecuted him or her even before the suicide, the work will be easy. If, however, the task is arduous and thorny, needing the help of personnel outside the Legion, we have the right to ask for their assistance and we are promptly served. And there are also cases, as explained before, where we even need the help of lower-order spirits; that is, of phalanxes that are below us in morality and enlightenment!

“But if the plea is addressed to another eminent spirit, it will be referred to Mary nonetheless, and the same measures will apply because, as we have been repeating, Mary is the sublime guardian of reprobates that have plunged into the fearful abysses of willful death... All of this does not mean, however, that our Sublime Director has to wait for pleas and requests from whomever in order to initiate her charitable assistance! On the contrary, her help has always been provided for by means of the special outposts of observation and assistance to suicides; by means of the non-specialized outposts located everywhere, in the Invisible and on the earth, and which also shelter suicides on opportune occasions; and by means of the principles of the law of love and fraternity itself, which commands that we do all the good we possibly can, doing to our neighbor what we want done to us, a law that in the enlightened spirit world is lovingly and strictly followed!



“In any event, however, a Prayer, as you have seen, conveyed with love and fervor on behalf of a suicide, is the sacred vehicle that carries invaluable consolations, celestial mercies, to the poor wretch at any time. It is one of the beneficial elements of assistance established by the Law for those who suffer, an element that the law of love and fraternity counts on in order to activate balsamic vibrations necessary for the treatment required by each suicide. Thus, it is a calamitous wrong for human beings to refuse this act of solidarity, interest and beneficence, in the erroneous belief that it would be useless due to the irremediable disgraceful situation of suicides! On the contrary, prayer is an act that has such laudable and invaluable repercussions that those who pray for one of you makes him or herself a voluntary collaborator of the workers of the Legion of Mary, assisting its efforts and sacrifices in its work of relief and reeducation!

“As you can see by this brief description, our work is vast and intense. If the individuals who make attempts against the sacred patrimony of physical existence – granted by the Almighty to the guilty soul as a blessed and ennobling opportunity of rehabilitation – just knew the amount of our suffering and sacrifice on their behalf, it is certain that they would stop at the edge of the abyss and reflect on the grave responsibility they are about to assume, if not out of love and compassion for themselves, at least out of respect and consideration for us, their spirit guides and devoted friends, who endure so many exhausting battles, so many torments and so many tears from our hearts, until we can rescue and take them to the consoling shelters watched over by Hope!”

\* \* \*

The kindly cicerone told us that one of those gloomy areas that surrounded the central tower – simply called “the Tower” – was inhabited by fearsome obsessors, leaders or proselytes of wicked, dark phalanxes, who, besides being suicides, were also responsible for horrible crimes, deemed in the sublime laws of the Eternal Legislator as punishable by extremely grueling, centuries-long reparations. We said that we would like to see them. We believed them to be abnormal entities completely outside the range of our imagination; apocalyptic monsters, perhaps, hellish ghouls that would not even have a human form. The older Dr. Canalejas smiled paternally and asked the instructor emeritus giving us the tour if it would be possible to observe some of them. It might be useful to familiarize ourselves with them in order to exercise caution about them on our next trip to the earth, where hordes of the

same sort roam about. Father Anselmo acquiesced, but with a small restriction:

“The Hospital’s leadership has informed me of measures that would be appropriate for our guests. I can show you a small portion of the locale where we lodge the poor wards responsible for such crimes. It is in a tower on one of our borders. It contains so-called prisons, which are constantly guarded in a way that could never be done on the earth!

“But I can tell you that those obsessors are already well on their way to regeneration. The heavy torpor of their consciences is being stirred by the afflictive impulses of their first regrets. They cower before the specter of the future ahead of them. They are fully aware of what awaits them in the anguish of expiation, the ardor of the many reparations they will have to make sooner or later. Filled with dread before the horrific amount of their guilt, they imagine that as long as they can resist the invitations they receive daily for their regeneration, they will be able to avoid those obligations... However, they will never be able to leave this place and gain their freedom if repentance does not outline a new pathway for their consciences darkened by the blasphemy of sin, even if they have to remain imprisoned for centuries – but that is not likely!

“Oh, my dear friends, you, who are taking your first steps on the redemptive pathways of that Divine Science that uplifts and redeems one’s character, whether you are man, woman or spirit! Oh, you, whose visit to my humble post as a worker of the Lord honors and delights me! Lend your help to me and my assistants in this difficult area of Security! Lend your aid to the leadership of this Institute, which is responsible for the destinies of so many who must progress towards God! Cooperate with the Legion of the Servants of Mary and with the Redemptive Cause espoused by the Divine Master by praying ardently for these wayward sheep that continue to resist the kindly call of their Gentle Shepherd! Let this be the first thing you do as you start down the long pathway of the reparations required of you, a gesture of sublime charity whose immortal, beneficent aroma will ascend to the loving heart of the Christ of God: a Prayer for the conversion of these unfortunate defectors from the Law, who, reckless and deranged, plunged headlong into the most tragic and horrific hell that anyone gifted with reason and freewill could ever wallow in! Pray! And believe me when I say that you have done a beautiful job of commencing the schedule of activities you will have to complete for the confirmation of your progress!

“Those here are assisted by dedicated custodians,” continued Father Anselmo after a pause that none of us dared profane with any indiscretion. “Taking into account their fatal ignorance in choosing the practice of evil – the only mitigating factor they can count on in order to warrant protection and support – the mercy expounded in the Law that rules us demands that we offer them instruction and enlightenment as sure means for their rehabilitation and reentry onto the normal pathways of evolution and progress, the real means for them to combat on their own the darkness with which they have surrounded themselves. Therefore, by retaining them and depriving them of their freedom, which they have abused over and over again, we provide them with counselors and instructors that are knowledgeable regarding the secret of the conversion of the primitive peoples of earth’s undeveloped regions such as Africa, Indochina, the Americas, and far-off, desolate Patagonia...

“Come with me... You can use our remote viewing equipment to see what is happening on the border with the earth.”

He walked towards a large room that seemed to serve as his general oversight office. It contained somber furnishings, tools for study, and a lot of audio-visual equipment for quick communications with the Colony. He had us sit down, while he remained standing like a professor to continue his eloquent exposition:

“This is what constitutes the ‘prisons’ in this gloomy corner of the Mary of Nazareth Institute.”

He approached one of the visual apparatuses and turned it on. We found ourselves miraculously in an extensive gallery whose arches, recalling the monasteries of old, displayed the classic Portuguese style that spoke so dearly to our hearts.

I do not know if the fluidic-magnetic waves characteristic of those apparatuses had the ability to penetrate the fibers of our physical-astral body, thereby mingling with our own radiations; I do not know if, by radiating their unknown properties throughout the room they predisposed our minds to the phenomenon of lucid suggestion; or if it was the powerful result of the mental power of the masters of psychical magnetism that invariably accompanied us when we were taken to examine these types of transmissions; but the fact is that at that moment we had the impression that we were actually walking inside that shadow-filled gallery that transmitted painful sentiments of anguish and fear to our inexperienced spirits.

On both sides of the gallery, “cells,” – small rooms for study and living – appeared to our astonished eyes, as well as a classroom, refectory and dormitory that were comfortable enough so as not to shock the prisoners with the humiliation of insoluble need, predisposing them to mistrust and rebelliousness. These rooms looked like the small rooms at a standard boarding school, with each prisoner receiving his or her own quarters!

I could not contain myself and dared to convey my impressions to Father Anselmo:

“What is all this?!... It looks to me like an educational establishment, not a prison!... It is lined with large windows and beautiful, suggestive balconies that let in wholesome breezes. There are no bars or guards. These lodgings invite reflection, meditation and study because of the unbroken silence that permeates them... What I do see is the generous influence of eminent missionaries and educators who are fit for directing educational institutions, and not jailors forcefully imposing their will!”

“That’s right,” replied the Tower’s supervisor with a smile. “We abide by the essentially educational guidelines of the laws of love and fraternity laid out by the Magnificent Master. In reality, it is not up to us to punish whoever it might be, no matter how criminal he is – not even the Master himself ever did that! Our job is to instruct and re-educate, to uplift discouraged spirits and vacillating characters by means of beneficial instruction geared towards regeneration by means of practicing the Good!... These moral delinquents harbor all the punishment and chastisement they need inside themselves, in the hell they have made of their conscience as it is assaulted by a thousand different afflictions... thus, it is completely unnecessary to torment them with even more punishments and reprisals! They judge themselves and they themselves apply the punishment they deserve... You want a living example?... Watch...”

He approached one of the devices and carefully flipped a luminous switch. A male figure began to appear on the magnetic screen. He looked just like us, in the prime of his forty years of age. Father Anselmo continued to instruct us:

“This is one of those fearsome obsessors, the leader of a small phalanx of hardened and evil entities, the bearer of multiple vices and moral degradations, a criminal and suicide, who dragged into his abyss of vileness and misery all the careless incarnates and discarnates he was able to lure away

to follow him. His crimes against the divine laws are so serious that we would not be at all surprised if we received an order from the Higher Realms to hand him over to the competent channels for an expiatory reincarnation on a planet that is even less evolved than the earth is; or for a spiritual internship in its astral surroundings, where, in a relatively short time, he could expiate debts that would require many centuries on the earth plane! Such a measure, however, would be drastically averse to the charity and unimaginable love of our Kind Shepherd, who prefers to first exhaust all logical and legal means by persuading the soul to repentance, as well as to regeneration, through the enormous tenderness and compassion that only He can offer!

“Mary interceded before her Son on behalf of this wretch, while recommending to us the utmost patience and deepest expressions of charity and love we could possibly muster in this lamentable case! So, although he is a prisoner, as you can see, he constantly receives all the spiritual, moral, and even ‘physical’ – if I may use the term – assistance that his animalized and coarse nature requires. Christian morality, which is absolutely unknown to him, is furnished to him daily as nourishment he cannot do without in his shocking indigence... He receives it through the teachings of the blessed Gospel during group classes involving images and living scenes, like those you saw in the meetings on the planetary surface, and which are held at what amount to small auxiliary outposts for endeavors originating in the Invisible. Like the other prisoners, he is being helped to study the sublime teachings of the Redeemer and to compare them with his own actions... the Redeemer who, faithful to his purpose as Master and Savior, extends his compassionate hand to him to help him lift himself out of sin!

“But our methods include another, strict and rather forceful type of teaching that only initiates can use because it requires a special, skillful technique... Consequently, it is always entrusted to a specialized person who is one of the most popular in our Colony – Dr. Olivier de Guzman, whom you know as the director of Security. Thus, he has taken on highly intricate responsibilities, not only because it is one of his duties – no good worker is kept idle in the Lord’s vineyards – but also because there is a scarcity of workers, as I mentioned before. But see for yourselves what is going on in this offender-student’s private quarters.”

Indeed! Seated at his study table, face in his hands in an attitude of dejection or profound worry; an abundant head of disheveled curly hair; a demeanor tormented by troubling thoughts that were emitting a thick foggy

substance around his head like a dark cloud, the prisoner was right there in front of us, as if we were in the same room! We were surprised, however, to see that this terrible obsessor was a man, simply a man – or a spirit who had been a man! – and not some extraordinary being! A spirit not in the flesh, certainly, but having a human configuration that was coarse and hard, indicating his low moral standing and lack of spirituality! He was dressed exactly as he had been the moment his physical body died under the blow of suicide: trousers of a fine black woolen fabric, indicative of his high social position, and a white silk shirt with cuffs and a frontal piece of Flanders lace. Judging from such clothing, we believed he must have been wandering around in the darkness of evil in the spirit world for approximately one century, which brought a painful impulse of deep compassion to our souls. At the height of his heart, and despite the long time since it had happened, a tragic stain denounced him as a member of the sinister phalanx of reprobates to which we too belonged: blood, alive and fresh, as if it had just started to flow, oozed from a large hole caused by a sword or a dagger, pitilessly branding his physical-astral body. The blood flowed continuously, without interruption, in spite of the time that had passed, as if to keep the incident impressed on the wretch's dark, hallucinating mind!

The master in charge of him entered the room. He would go from room to room to spark the light of Knowledge in the unlearned hearts of those miserable delinquents in order to guide them towards better pathways!

The former obsessor stood up respectfully, with a gentlemanly gesture. Olivier de Guzman – he was the visiting master – greeted him kindly:

“May the peace of the Lord be with you, Agenor Penalva!”

Maintaining his constrained look, the culprit did not respond. The loving master motioned for him to sit down, while he himself remained standing.

With a noble expression, gentle bearing and paternal voice, Olivier, who, like the other higher initiates, wore the garments characteristic of the wonderful and diligent group he belonged to, began the day's lesson. He asked his student to take notes in a notebook so that he could later analyze and meditate on the lesson in order to carefully imprint it on his mind. The following day, Agenor would have to present an account of his conclusions regarding the subject of study. The lesson, also followed by us, consisted of an important thesis on the rights of the individual (whether in earthly or astral societies) in light of the Magnanimous Law of the Creator, and the rights of

mutual respect, solidarity and fraternity, which Humanity owes itself in the harmonious chain of each person's actions involving him or herself and his or her neighbor. The student was asked to analyze this thesis in the context of his own actions during his last lifetime and also in terms of his stay in the spirit world up to the present time. He was asked to compare them with the norms expressed in the laws that govern the astral world and with those expressed in the codes of Christian morals, indispensable for the progress and well-being of all creatures, and about which he had been receiving lessons for some time now. He had the right to ask questions about anything he found unclear, and even to object and disagree... while we, in turn, benefitted from the master's priceless answers to every one of his hardened pupil's objections!<sup>31</sup> Since this sort of procedure pertained exclusively to the conscience, it could be used on all prisoners, regardless of how well educated they were!

Because we were perplexed by the intensity and extent of the services being rendered in the Tower, we asked our patient instructor:

“Once this poor spirit is fully convinced of the need to do the Good, where will he go?... What's going to happen to him?... Why, manifesting such ill-will, is he granted the assistance of such a valuable master? And why does he receive such profound lessons like the ones we have just seen, while we, who, due to your counsels, have agreed to take a better pathway in the future, are barely exposed to these master initiates. We haven't even received a text for studying the laws that will rule us from now on, let alone something to write with?!”

The conclusive answer was not long in coming.

“In the first place, you mustn't forget that you are patients who have only recently been discharged from the Hospital; since you came here only three years ago, you are still new arrivals who have not even finished your psychical readjustment... Second, there is such an obvious difference between his condition and yours, that the two cannot even be compared! So don't be so surprised that this brother is receiving what seems undeserved... Your time for such instruction will come in due time and you will not be any less wise for having had to wait for it... Agenor entered this Tower thirty-eight years ago and only now has he agreed to apply himself to the self-study he needs in order to accept the Law and to mitigate his situation, which has been weighing on him bitterly... On the other hand, it is precisely because of his low moral standing that he needs greater attention and assistance than you, whose tendency to being converted to the Light bodes well for your futures...

“The hardened heart of this sinner has required a prolonged endeavor, because, as a consequence of his misdeeds, which converted his life into darkness, he dreads the future. And because he is used to dealing with the natives of the North and the semi-barbarians of the East, Olivier de Guzman’s paternal perseverance has been absolutely necessary to convince this criminal to mend his ways! He will reincarnate very soon! His mental state is too damaged for him to be able to enjoy circumstances of real progress! Only a long, pain-filled earthly existence, one that produces decisive mental transformations that rid his darkness-overburdened conscience of a considerable amount of impurities, can give him the chance to embark upon new pathways for normal progress... It is for the purpose of convincing him to make such a decision, without forcing him to; and it is with the intent of preparing him to acquire enough strength for the arduous struggles he will confront on the earth, that we keep him imprisoned and try to moralize him as much as possible so he can be reconciled with himself and the Law! Otherwise, in his next reincarnation he would get caught in the same vicious circle as the previous ones, something that is not acceptable for him or to us, since we took responsibility for his reeducation before the same Law!

“But let’s continue to observe what is going on in his quarters.”

We paid close attention and were surprised by the next set of events, which due to their highly educational nature deserve to be described with special care.

Responding to a gesture from Olivier de Guzman, the patient stood up to accompany him submissively, as if touched by some kind of irresistible influence. Olivier led him down the long gallery lined with “cells.” They entered a large room, a kind of scientific laboratory. It was like a tabernacle where highly sacred mysteries were unveiled, affirming to observers how much it would profit them to learn and progress in Psychism in order to be deserving of the immortal inheritance that Heaven has bequeathed to humankind.

The room was kept saturated with magnetic vaporizations appropriate for its purpose. These vaporizations gently emitted a subtle, bluish phosphorescence that was almost imperceptible to our vision (still too weak for spiritual things) and completely invisible to the brutish perception of the one who was about to undergo treatment. On a platform that was polished like crystal, was a chair made of a substance that also resembled the transparency of crystal. The chair displayed small buttons like tiny stars, and when these



were pushed to turn the strange contraption on, a bluish phosphorescent fluid began coursing through the inside of it, like blood flowing through the arteries of a physical body. In front of the peculiar apparatus – much like the one in the Hospital reception room where we had witnessed the phenomenon of our own disengagement from our physical bodies as, under the direction of Teocrito and the assistance of Romeu and Alceste, we went back mentally to the day of our suicide – we could see an ultra-sensitive fluidic-magnetic screen about two meters square, shiny like a mirror and capable of registering in its immaculate purity the tiniest mental or emotional impression of anyone near it. It darkened somewhat when Agenor entered the room, as if an impure breath had fogged it over.

After studying the apparatus, and lacking the proper tact, I asked impatiently and curiously:

“It looks like a room for transcendental phenomenology! What’s all of this used for, Father Anselmo?”

“Good thinking! It is indeed a sacred place for highly transcendental operations, my friend! That screen is harmonized with substances extracted from the sun’s rays. These substances have magnetic powers. The screen is a sort of thermometer or camera with which we can measure, reproduce and activate thoughts... memories and past deeds that have been imprinted on the psychical folds of the mind, and which, through magnetic action, reappear as if by magic from the debris of the deep memory of our pupils. They become visible on the screen as the reality in which they actually happened!”

A ripple of sheer dread shook the fibers of our soul. As we heard this succinct reply, profound in its dizzying breadth, our first impulse was to flee the place. We were terrified at the prospect that we might also see our own past thoughts and actions brought out into the open.

Inwardly, we already assumed that our mentors knew everything about us in the smallest detail, even our deepest thoughts. But the discretion and charity of those incomparable friends, who never took advantage of such an ability to afflict or humiliate us, made us feel at ease, and we were of the comfortable opinion that we would go totally unnoticed. Ultimately, however, what alarmed us was not the prospect that they knew every detail about us, but the possibility that we ourselves might see pictures of our own pasts; that we ourselves might see horrific scenes reflected on that innocent looking screen. We would be forced to analyze and judge them, and this was

something that unexpectedly appeared to us like a dreadful gallows awaiting us with a new type of torment!

“Illuminated spirits,” the eminent instructor and internal director of the Tower went on to explain, “those who are already educated in the principles of morality and science, do not have to use this equipment when they desire or need to extract their own thoughts or remembrances – in sum, any facts regarding their past – from the archives of their memory. With the mere expression of the spirit’s will and the energy of the mind activated in reverse... the past becomes the present. The mind relives the moment just as it really happened long ago! But for the reeducation of inexperienced spirits, as well as for those that are less evolved, this equipment is useful and indispensable for making our job much easier.

“Nevertheless, everything we obtain from the mind of any patient is a sacred trust that will never ever be betrayed. Rest assured that only the master instructor of that patient will be the recipient of his terrible secrets and he will zealously guard them for the patient’s instruction. The laws of charity demand it. In this particular instance, we will be able to sporadically follow some of what happens since it has to do with your group’s instruction, even more so since your group is infused with goodwill for its progress. I can also tell that all of you are brimming with discretion.”

Agenor, however, was visibly terrified by what was happening and tried to lie his way out of it. He did not take into consideration the mental powers of Olivier de Guzman, who had compassionately made his faculties less evident in order to be more easily understood:

“No, master, not at all! I was not a bad son to my parents!... What I told you about that aspect of my life is true, I swear!... There was obviously some mistake in the details, and that led you to question it!... Just a mistake. You’re being too hard on me!... You’re making me write down the norms of a good son according to the laws of the Lord God Almighty, whom I fear and revere! You want me to study them once more so that tomorrow, in the pages of the diary I’m forced to keep, I can write down my memories as a son and compare them with those norms... But if I’m so certain of what I’ve already said about them, why go to so much work?!... Instead, I’m asking you to send my request for freedom to the proper authority... Why are you making me suffer like this?... Is there no forgiveness and mercy in the law of the good God that I love so much?... I’m deeply religious, you know... and I have repented of my major sins... I’ve been here for so many years!... I went

through the dungeons of hell in the hands of the malefic hordes that captured me after my suicide in order to make me one of them... I wandered around desert islands in torment instead of giving in to their despicable ways... I confronted the dreadful fury of the ocean, abandoned and lost amid lonely rocks... For ten years I was chained to the grave in the cemetery where they had buried my repulsive, filthy and fetid body! I was persecuted by sinister mobs of vengeful enemies. I was beaten like a rabid dog, mistreated like a reptile, devoured by millions of worms that drove me mad me with horror and anguish under the supreme torture of a confusion that allows for no clarity. I could not understand the tragic affliction of feeling alive and at the same time seeing myself buried, rotting, devoured by filthy worms!... Those malefic spirits took me prisoner and tied me up with thick ropes in the grave... where... as you well know, Master... lay the one I had loved so much... Yes! The one I dishonored and then murdered, fearing the reprisals of her aristocratic family... No one ever identified the murderer... But those evil spirits knew all about it, and after my suicide they avenged her death... They hounded me so much that the only way I could avoid their mistreatment was to join their gang and become one of them. That was the only alternative they offered me... That's why I must have a lot of mitigating factors on my side... After all of that, I was captured by the lancers and imprisoned in the Sinister Valley, where I suffered a new series of horrors... And now, in this Tower, I have no freedom at all. I can't even walk the streets of my beloved Madrid. I can't even breathe the pure, fresh air of the fields that used to please me so!... Am I or am I not a son of the Good God?!... Or might I be a brother of Satan himself?!"

With the most striking serenity, the generous mentor replied:

"If someone else had to listen to your constant complaining, Agenor, they might think that terrible injustices were being committed on these premises illuminated by the sublime protection of the Magnanimous Director of our Legion!... But needless to say, the long string of misfortunes you have just described originated from the sinful excesses of your own acts and the truculence of the primitive instincts you still harbor... For thirty-eight years you have been patiently exhorted to reform yourself on the inside. Doing so would assure you of less afflictive situations! However, you have systematically refused to make any effort to grow spiritually and have kept yourself locked up in the ill-will of a pride that has been poisoning your spirit by keeping it from taking any steps on the path of progress that you should have started out on a long time ago! We have been very patient with you,

even though you haven't realized it! You know good and well that your containment within our protective circle is keeping you from being taken captive by the phalanx of obsessors that you yourself used to lead, and you also know that you yourself are responsible for the freedom you desire so much! You have never been mistreated here. We offer you spiritual treasures each and every day, longing to see you enriched by the light radiating from them! As a guest of her Legion, Mary has told its directors not to schedule your return to a new material body – that is, to reincarnate – until you show enough progress to ensure your success as you face future trials, which are going to be extremely difficult due to the gravity of your debts before the Divine Law!

“Our reasons for depriving you of your freedom are explained to you every day. You know that you are guilty. You know that you have lured a dozen unwary individuals into committing suicide because they let themselves be deluded by the nefarious suggestions of your ploys as an cunning obsessor... either disgracing them for the simple pleasure of doing evil, or because you were jealous of them for some reason... just as you used to do in the past when you disparaged poor maidens who were enamored with you and who carelessly trusted you, leading them to commit suicide after having been bitterly betrayed by you – an omen of your future as an obsessor... But your pride stifles the logical conclusions of reason, and you prefer rebelliousness and sophism because they are more comfortable. Consequently, you avoid responsibility by putting off making a commitment because it terrifies you! You are afraid of the future that you yourself have prepared because you loved to live in iniquity! But now you are subject to higher orders: it is imperative that we hasten your progress by freeing you from having to remain stuck indefinitely in the vicious circle that prolongs your suffering. In order to put an end to such a lamentable state of affairs, we are going to conduct one last experiment! We wanted to avoid it because it will not be pleasant. We have given you more than enough time to seek the pathway of rehabilitation on your own. I must inform you that from this moment on, under our supervision, you are to conduct a slow, gradual, highly detailed, daily self-examination that will convince you of how urgent your inner reform is... It's not going to be easy, but you have brought it about yourself by resisting embarking on the road to moral growth!

“So, as a son you were good to your parents?... Excellent! You will have nothing to fear when we invoke the past about it! It is from that angle that we

will begin a series of necessary analyses, since a man's first duty in the society he lives in is the sanctuary of home and Family!

“Let's examine your merits as a son. They will all be fully credited to you and will thus mitigate your future reparations.

“Agenor Penalva! Sit in front of this screen, under this magnetic canopy. It is going to photograph your thoughts and memories! Go back in time to when you were five years old in your last existence! Remember all that you did regarding your parents... especially your mother!... Your actions will parade before you and you will be judged by your own conscience, which will now receive a powerful echo from the reality of the past. It cannot evade it, because it has been faithfully and meticulously stored in the imperishable folds of your immortal soul!”

Like all extremely guilty spirits, Agenor immediately tried to escape. He fled to a corner of the room, screaming in terror at the peak of affliction. He had the wild look of a consummate reprobate:

“No, sir, my master, please, I beg you!... Let me go back to my room so I can prepare myself better! I...”

But for the very first time since we had arrived at the magnanimous institute, we heard one of its kind instructors use a loud, authoritative voice as Olivier ordered:

“Sit down, Agenor Penalva! I command you!”

The delinquent obediently sat down without saying another word! We held our breath. The silence was religious. It seemed like the venerable ceremony was being blessed by the sacred assistance of the Divine Physician of souls, who wanted to influence the conflicted conscience of yet one more prodigal son that was ready to return to the forgiving arms of the Father.

Agenor seemed very calm now. Olivier's demeanor had become profoundly grave, as if concentrating his mental powers to their highest degree. He enveloped Agenor's head in a luminous translucent white band that came from the solar light itself. The band was like a garland, and was tied to the canopy that covered the chair with luminous, almost imperceptible wires of the same substance, which led us to believe that the canopy was the principal activator of the whole apparatus, as simple as it was magnificent. The screen was also connected to the canopy by multiple glittering rays that seemed to derive from the same element of solar light.

Oliver's voice was authoritative, but was also infused with indefinable feelings of tenderness:

“Agenor Penalva, you are now five years old and living in your parents' house on the outskirts of Malaga... You are the only son of an honest, happy couple... Your parents dream of preparing a brilliant future for you!... They are deeply religious and are living examples of their upstanding virtues... They cherish the ideal of consecrating you to God, of having you wear the cassock... Awaken in the folds of your soul your conduct as a son toward your parents... especially your mother!... Do it now! You are in the presence of the Almighty Creator, who gave you a Conscience to be the spokesman for his Laws!”

To our astonishment, the indescribable in human language took place! Agenor Penalva's thoughts – the memories of his past, his wrongdoings, his crimes, even – as a son toward his parents, became living scenes that appeared on the sensitive, unsoiled screen before him, portraying his entire moral image in all its heinousness, as if his Conscience were a repository of all that he had ever done. Brought up from the depths of his dormant memory through a highly transcendental magnetic procedure, they stood out loud and clear, shattering him with the unbearable weight of the horrific truth of the matter!

The lamentable life story of this character – murderer, suicide, seducer, obsessor – could fill a profoundly dramatic volume. We will avoid our desire to tell the whole tale. But to complete this chapter, we will give a brief report of what we saw on that memorable afternoon in the spirit world. We do not think it will be totally devoid of interest for the reader... because unfortunately, nowadays, exemplary children are still the exception in the venerable institution of the Family!

\* \* \*

– Agenor Penalva had been a rebellious son from early youth, with no tenderness or respect for his parents. He never acknowledged the kindness they bestowed on him; instead, he felt that his parents were his slaves and it was their duty to serve him and prepare a future for him, since he, the son, was the master!

– Inside the home he was despotic, hostile, irreverent, and cruel! Outside, he was benevolently likeable, affable and kind!

– He refused to submit to any and all attempts at correction.

– Desirous of ensuring him of a future without the harsh life of hard work in the fields (which they knew so well), and aware of the fact that even though he was ambitious he was resentful about his humble birth, his heroic parents made immeasurable sacrifices to support him in the Kingdom's capital by paying for his right to acquire a position to serve in the King's army, because he showed no affinity to the ecclesiastical life, as his father had hoped he would. He was inclined to a military career. It was more in keeping with his worldly aspirations, and was also an occupation that would facilitate his access to the aristocratic environment that he envied so much.

– He was ashamed of the humble origin of those who had given him life and who had looked after him with selfless devotion from the day he was born. Thus, he dropped the honorable paternal name Penalva for a fictitious one that would resonate better in the ears of the aristocrats, proclaiming himself in blatant lies to be a descendant of Crusade generals and noble knights who had freed Spain from the Arab yoke.

– He had never visited his father during his long illness, and after he died, he left his mother without any means of support! Instead, he took all her possessions and the money she had saved up for old age, leaving her behind in the countryside.

– He caused her to shed the inconsolable tears of disillusionment because of his ingratitude at a time she was in need of protection and care more than ever, leaving her to a dolorous *via crucis* of humiliations in the home of distant relatives, where she was considered a miserable burden!

– He refused to receive her in his home in Madrid – a mother that was poor, old, unrefined, uneducated, and dressed in farmer's clothes – because his home was frequented by important persons from the upper bourgeoisie and lower aristocracy, a class he married into by passing himself off as a nobleman.

– Because she stubbornly continued to beg for his protection in light of her stricken poverty, he secretly moved her to Portugal. He sent her to live with a paternal uncle who supposedly lived in Oporto, but he did not check to see if he still lived there, which, in fact, he did not. Consequently, his mother was unable to locate her brother-in-law and got lost on Portuguese soil, finally finding shelter with some compassionate fellow Spaniards.

– These compatriots wrote to him, telling him of his mother’s situation, and that she was begging once more for his help. He did not respond, excusing himself before his conscience with a trip that he would have to take in a few days.

– In fact, he did sail to the far-off Americas, abandoning even his wife – whom he had deceived with false promises – fed both by limitless ambition and the need to escape the consequences of a revolting passionate affair, in which he had once more assumed the position of persecutor by seducing, dishonoring and even inducing to suicide a poor and simple girl of his kin. Completely disinterested in his mother’s fate, he abandoned her forever. The poor old woman ended up in the streets at the mercy of public charity, while he prospered in the free and promising Americas!

The scenes followed one another, dramatic and repulsive, with a touching realism that rent our hearts, while our mentors bowed their heads in sadness.

Agenor had seemed serene at first, but became gradually more troubled, until he caved in to total despair. Weeping convulsively, he cried out in heart-rending outbursts that they should spare him, that the instructor should take pity on him. He was waving off the visions as if hell itself were about to devour him. His face was contorted, mad with extreme anguish, smitten by a horror a hundred times worse than remorse!

“No! No, master, a thousand times no!” he cried out amid tears and desperate gestures of loathing. “Enough, for the love of God! No more! No more! The pain is too much! My poor mother, forgive me! Bring me a bit of relief by appearing to me so I can see that you have not cursed the ungrateful son who forgot you! Extend the charity of your forgiveness to me since I cannot go to where you are to beg you for it! I’m living in hell as a reprobate, condemned by the wise law of God!... Life without you is unbearable, mother! I have the most sorrowful longing in my heart, where your humble, so-mistreated image has been indelibly imprinted by the burning fires of my remorse for the evil I did to you! May your sad spirit come to me to illuminate the darkness in which my miserable being is immersed, poisoned by the gall of so many crimes! At least come to me in dreams, my hallucinations, so that maybe I can have the consolation of attempting a respectful gesture that would soften the unbearable sorrow that tears me apart me for having hurt you! Appear to me so that God can forgive through you all the hideous evil I did to you!... Forgive me, dear God, forgive me! I was an



awful son, merciful God! I know that I am immortal, dear God! And that you are infinite wisdom and mercy! Grant me the blessing of returning to the earth in order to expunge from my conscience the abomination that stains it! Let me repair this monstrous evil, O Lord! Grant me suffering! I want to suffer for my mother in order to warrant her forgiveness and love, which, though sacred, I did not honor! Punish me, Lord! I repent! I repent! Forgive me, mother! Forgive me, dear God!”

The instructor slowly removed the luminous band from around Agenor’s head.

“Stand up, Agenor Penalva!” he ordered.

The wretch stood up, staggering, his eyes bewildered, as if stricken by drunkenness.

The visions had ended.

Inconsolable and drastically conscious of his wrongdoings, Agenor Penalva fell on his knees, covering his contorted face with clenched hands while tears continued to roll down his cheeks, overcome by the most impressive dismay I had ever seen in our Institute till then...

Olivier de Guzman did not try to console him. He merely helped him up and led him paternally back to his quarters. Olivier rearranged a large album on the study table, the pages of which were somewhat crumpled. On a blank page, the instructor wrote down a title and a subtitle whose depth touched our souls in an impulse of painful emotions:

*SUBJECT: Fourth Commandment of God’s Law: “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”*

*List of children’s duties towards their parents:*

Then he left the room without saying a single word! Another pupil was waiting for him. A new task was requiring his devoted efforts...

Father Anselmo switched off the apparatus. The visions had ended for us also.

I could not contain myself, and almost angrily, I asked:

“How can they leave that poor soul all alone in such a desperate condition?... Does such an attitude really show charity on the part of the

workers of this magnanimous Legion, those who are responsible for watching over it?”

Carlos and Roberto smiled vaguely without answering, while Father Anselmo kindly appeased my indiscreet anxiety:

“The mentors know their wards and their responsibilities in detail. They know exactly what they are doing!... Moreover, who says the penitent is going to be left alone and without assistance?... Isn't he under the maternal protection of Mary of Nazareth?”

When the gates of the fortress closed behind us as we prepared to return to our quarters, we could still hear, resonating distressingly in our stunned minds, the cries of the evil son amid the fierce convulsions of his remorse:

“Forgive me, mother! Forgive me, dear God!”

---

<sup>31</sup> This would be akin to the “counseling” received from Guides, much like what we usually see in well-directed experimental Spiritist sessions, and which are so advantageous due to the surroundings and the wisdom of the expounder. (Medium's note).

---

## The Mental Ward

*If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better to enter heaven crippled or lame than to be thrown into the unquenchable fire with both of your hands and feet.*

*Jesus Christ – The New Testament <sup>32</sup>*

We will not let go unfulfilled our desire to describe how excited we were about the second visit scheduled by Brother Teocrito for our instruction. It was to take place on the afternoon of the following day after we had visited the Tower.

The magnificent gates of the Mental Ward opened wide, allowing us passage as if we were guests of honor.

As indicated by its name, the Mental Ward housed spirits whose mental state had been enormously affected by the repercussions of their suicide, thus keeping them from thinking rationally.

The director of the Ward was a former psychiatrist<sup>33</sup> from ancient India – the cradle of earth’s spiritual knowledge. He was a profound authority on the esoteric science of the human soul, a lucid and veteran expert on mental illnesses. His snow-white hair, escaping from an immaculate white turban, was like a handsome laurel wreath attesting to the merits he had acquired due to his work with and devotion to his unfortunate brothers. His name – a Christian name adopted after his initiation into the redemptive light of Christianity – was Joao<sup>34</sup>, the same name of the venerable apostle that had unveiled to him the radiant principles of the Immaculate Doctrine, to which he had devoted himself ever since. And it was simply as Brother Joao that we became acquainted with that charming character, upon whose shoulders weighed the tremendous responsibility of tending to the sickest patients of the whole Colony! Brother Joao was sufficiently materialized in order to make it

easier for us to get to know him. He was light-brown skinned, as Hindus usually are. He had large piercing eyes, a broad and intelligent forehead, completely white hair, and a tall frame. On his left ring finger he wore the emerald that indicated his status as a physician, and another emerald was affixed to the front of his turban. As a matter of fact, we had not seen any of those wise initiates wearing anything else – they all shared the same particularities. The only exception was the priests, who preferred to wear the alb, in keeping with the nature of their work.

Due to his splendid vibrations, we were deeply captivated by this venerable master and followed him unceremoniously as if we had known him for a long time. As we went farther inside the Ward, we could see that it was rigorously structured to conform to the rules of Fraternity inspired by Christian love, as well as the requirements of medical-psychical science.

“Before we address any topics of interest,” he said kindly and attentively, “I must assure you that my beloved patients are harmless. Their mental state is abnormal due to their suffering. Many are still in a state of complete madness; others are in a state of extreme mental collapse, requiring special care on our part, as you will see. When I say that they are harmless, however, I am comparing them to deranged incarnates. Unlike them, my poor patients would not consciously upset, assault or attack anyone, as often happens with the deranged in earth’s mental wards. Even so, they are carriers of highly noxious dangers – not only regarding incarnates, but also discarnates that have not yet been immunized against them by a wholesome, vigorous mental posture. That is why we have to isolate you from them. Their deplorable vibrational states have sunk to a superlative, low level of depression, and are thus extremely harmful. If they were to approach an incarnate person and remain in his or her presence for twenty-four hours, and if this person, unaware of the power of psychological influences, were to offer a mental affinity that was passive towards external suggestions, it might happen that, although unconscious of what they were doing, they could actually cause the person to commit suicide, become seriously ill, or become completely deranged! If they were near a child, they might actually kill it by means of a sudden illness if the child either did not have someone close by whose natural dispositions could attract the pernicious vibrations instead, or someone who could immediately administer some form of spiritual therapy that would safeguard the child from the harmful contagion, which, in this case, would have the logical effect of a pestilence.”

Highly impressed, Belarmino asked with furrowed brow:

“How could something so awful be allowed to happen, Brother Joao?... How could such a thing be possible in light of the Wise Law of the Creator?... How can I grasp this without damaging my respect for the Law?”

Joao had a look of indefinable sorrow and replied wisely:

“The Law of Divine Providence, my son, has implemented and has advocated the Good and the Beautiful as the supreme standard for harmony in every sector of the Universe. Whenever they stray from that magnificent principle – the incorruptible pathway of evolution – people become responsible for all the problems in which they find themselves entangled! Such cases – like the ones we treat here – happen due to infractions resulting from our state of imperfection, and due to the continuous and disagreeable harm resulting from the inferiority of the planet where they occur. However, I’m not saying that such cases are frequent, but only that they can happen and, in fact, have happened! They happen when there is a similarity in tendencies – affinities – between the two parties, that is, between the incarnate and the discarnate! As for the child, a delicate and impressionable being par excellence, he or she is of course susceptible of being influenced by much lesser factors, whenever they are not in accord with his or her fragile nature. We know, for example, that a fright, a strong impression, or a dominant feeling such as a longing for a loved one, can also cause the child to become sick and abandon his or her little physical envelope!

“But that same law, under which any of those possibilities occur, has also granted human beings effective ways of defending themselves!

“By mental cleansing, by readjusting the sentiments to the practice of the true Good, and by fulfilling one’s Duty; by means of harmonious vibrations originating from the communion of the mind with the Light radiating from On High in nuances of beneficence for those who seek it – that is how incarnates can immunize themselves against such a contagion, much in the same way that they immunize themselves against contagious diseases with prophylactic substances made for the physical body, this is, vaccines... If the case entails a psychical virus, the antidote will, of course, be analogous, composed of opposite energies that are also psychical... On our part, since the Law that governs the invisible world entails an ongoing decree that calamities of such extent are to be avoided as far as possible, we use every effort to do so. It is

our sacred duty to keep incarnates, in general, and children, in particular, from accidents of this nature.

“Unfortunately, we are not always well understood and aided in our endeavors, because incarnates willingly adopt impious and completely careless attitudes to open themselves up to such possibilities, which as we have stated, are not the norm but can and do happen...”

“For those who have given in to a discarnate entity’s barrage, the resultant maladies are the consequence of being unmindful, of the debasement of customs and sentiments, of the heap of inappropriate mental attitudes, and of remaining alienated from the idea of God, forgetting that the idea of God is the unfading resource that furnishes elements that are indispensable for one’s well-being and victory in every area of one’s life! For the ‘unconscious’ perpetrator of the evil, it will be the demerit of one more transgression resulting from his or her suicide, one more burden to be added to all the others.”

“But mightn’t there be better ways to keep incarnates from the terrible dangers they are exposed to, as if they were treading on perilous ground planted with deadly explosives?” I asked, pondering the many earthly tragedies that could be explained by the exposition we had just heard.

“Yes, there are!” replied the learned physician. “There are many ways in which they are alerted, and I can assure you that the warning is continuous, tireless, uninterrupted, and eternal!... Moreover, it is not directed solely to this or that group of people, but to all of Humanity!

“The warnings people need in order to avoid not only this ominous result, but also all the other torments that might strike them during their earthly, evolutionary experience, are found in the admonishments of their own conscience. Conscience is the spokesperson for the rules to follow. It shows people that the practice of Duty is the protection against any and every defeat that might threaten them in earthly society as well as in spirit world society! These warnings make up part of the beliefs and sacred traditions that all cultures have passed down from generation to generation. They are also present in the articles of instructive morality that the Great Nazarene Master bequeathed to humankind and to the spirits that belong to this earth. Far from being the result of the hyperbolic mysticism of a passionate and fanatical people – as the so-called strong-minded believe – it is, quite to the contrary, a logical and vital norm, which, when applied in daily life, guarantees people

the happy states they have been dreaming of for millennia, and which they have been fighting for through valiant incessant struggles. However, this conquest has caused them to waste precious time. They have forgotten to embrace the only elements that would help them on their heroic odyssey, that is, obedience to the laws that govern the Universe and preside over their destinies, and the consequent, indispensable inner self-reform! These warnings are being presented with absolute effectiveness in the luminous principles of the so-called New Revelation<sup>35</sup>, which is currently presiding over the social transformation that has just begun. By facilitating open communication between the material and spirit worlds; by establishing and popularizing the communion of ideas between discarnate spirits and human beings still held in their physical envelope, the New Revelation instructs all who take an interest in its edifying topics, thus enabling humankind to receive from the Invisible everything it truly needs to fortify itself for the science of Victory. In this way, people will become knowledgeable about all aspects of life in the spirit world that their moral and intellectual progress will permit! The glories and beauties of the Invisible will be revealed to them. The supposed secrets that have enveloped death in impenetrable shrouds will be disclosed by clarifying and elucidating facts, as will the perils of the spirit world, such as those we have been describing: the abysses and calamities that could befall humankind due to the activities of the still-unevolved inhabitants of the Invisible. Everything the good spirits have tried to do to awaken the attention of men and women in order to instruct them, warning them about their spiritual destinies, has been attempted by means of the New Revelation. Unfortunately, human beings only respond willingly to the imperatives of the passions! They are only interested in their own personal opinions and the pleasures of the moment! They would rather tend to satisfying their whims, no matter how degrading they may be, and to the demands of the selfishness that causes their undoing... That is why they so frequently disregard anything that could lead them to God and thus enable them to avoid misfortunes, disappointments, and horrific possibilities such as those I have just mentioned. Thus, it is not by degrading themselves daily by yielding to the impulses of the lower passions that they will immunize themselves against a type of evil whose only antidote is to be found in the practice of the true virtues, as well as in the mental ascension towards the realms of the Light! They turn a deaf ear to the appeals of the Divine Protector, who reaches out to save them from the assaults of evil with his Gospel of Love and the principles of

the New Revelation, which, in His name, calls everyone to sublime transformation, as it warns:

‘O humankind! Creatures forged from the radiant breath of the Divine Focal Point! Remember that you are immortal!... Ponder everything you see, touch and possess: the achievements that promote pride within you; the vanities that flatter your selfishness; the mad passions that debase your character and compromise your future; the fictitious worldly glories that cajole your conceit, enslaving you to materiality. All of this is doomed to pass away, to vanish one day, destroyed by the implacable fires of reality and submerged in the forgetfulness of untenable things that cannot last in the bosom of a Perfect Creation. You, however, shall live forever! You shall be left standing to contemplate the ruins of your own illusions as you fearfully await the dawn of new victories in the future! Remember the worlds that whirl in the infinite blue, those focal points of energy and light that soothe your minds when, enjoying a well-deserved rest after your daily chores, you gaze up at them twinkling in the impenetrable depths. Remember the distant planets, which at various points of the sidereal Universe have grown and progressed for millennia, carrying on their benevolent backs other humanities, your siblings, in constant ascension towards the Eternal Distributor of Life, and drawing along in their lovely orbits groups of other gems from the inimitable jewelry chest of the Universe. Remember the Sun, which has seen you being born and reborn so many times on the earth, giving you life, guiding and warming your steps, smiling at your victories as a progressing spirit, watching over your health and protecting you throughout the millennia, and collaborating with you in the struggles necessary for your education as a divine heir. All of them, too, shall pass away and die, to be replaced by new and better versions, which in turn will undergo the same fate! You, however, shall never pass away! You shall behold the succession of the eons, like the One who created you and made you eternal like himself, endowing you with the essence of the Life that comes from Him, and from whose bosom you have come forth!

‘Therefore, take heed, O Humankind! Because your rights of filiation have destined you for divine glory in the bosom of Eternity, you cannot evade the effort required of you for your evolution, the ascension that is proper to your very nature, so that you may reach the realm from which you descended!... On that long, imperative road ahead of you, the more you infringe the principles that determine the harmonious scale of your ascent, the more you will suffer the effects of the dissonance you have created by



breaking the Law you are subject to as a creature of a Perfect Being!... Be mindful of this while there is still time... while you are treading a normal pathway that demands of you only that you practice the Good... Pay heed so that Suffering does not have to come calling, obliging you to endure pain-filled time due to your dereliction of Duty, and forcing you to cleanse your conscience with unappealable reparations!... Learn from your Almighty Father, who, for the glory of his Kingdom, has granted you love and respect for the Good, the unmistakable base on which you must support yourself in order to achieve the magnificent victory you are invited to achieve in honor of yourself, a happiness that by law is an attribute of your immortal spirit!... Therefore, make every effort to shape your character, enhancing with virtues the soul that shall someday in eternity reflect the image and likeness of its Creator!

‘For the accomplishment of such a glorious purpose, Magnanimous Heaven offered you the Ideal Model, the Perfect Instructor, capable of guiding you to your destiny: Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God!

‘Love him! Follow him! Emulate him!... And you will reach the Kingdom of the Father Almighty!’

“Thus speaks the New Revelation that the Spirits have proclaimed on the earth.

“But who is ready to listen to it with reverence, and to accept the sublime invitations that heaven is sending through it?...

“The offspring of misfortune, mostly! Those whose souls, smitten by supreme disillusionment with the world, have received consolation in the celestial truths revealed by the New Revelation’s priceless teachings! The kindly idealists, whose sensitive and humble souls are enamored of the Good and the Beautiful! The thinking minds, uncontaminated by incomprehensible theories originating in fallible personal opinions, minds whose mental impulses have broken through earthly barriers in their uncontrollable and generous longing to find affinity with the harmonious vibrations radiating from the Perfect!... The high and mighty, however, the authoritarians deified by comfortable positions, and whose full moneybags and abundant tables allay all worries; the multitudes that believe in and worship only themselves because they can satisfy all their whims and satiate all their passions, immersed as they are in the illusion of the happiness that deceives the senses while poisoning the soul – these, unfortunately, would rather not come to

grips with any of this, turning their backs on everything that could prevent their march towards the abyss... until they finally plunge headlong into it, in spite of all the reiterated warnings spread throughout the millennia all over the world... And there they entangle themselves even further, reduced to this deplorable state... Would you like to see for yourselves?”

He walked over to a balcony overlooking the large courtyard, a sort of a picturesque cloister where graceful shrubs adorned the enclosed landscape.

Some artistic benches decorated the narrow paths, where sad, pitiful figures of suffering spirits, who like us, used to live on the earth as men, sat in silence to rest.

Brother Joao invited us out on the balcony, which stood about a meter above the courtyard, and continued:

“Those strange figures you see from here – since it is not advisable for you to get any closer – have come, like you, from the Valley of the Suicides. While you have recovered enough serenity to make an attempt at a hopeful future, these poor brothers have managed to disentangle themselves from the exasperation that hounded them, only to fall into this state of apathy, which shows that their moral level and their responsibility for their suicides are quite different from yours... They are dazed and numbed by terribly shocking impressions that are, for now, insuperable! They cannot think as one would hope a discarnate spirit would think. They cannot reflect and make sense of things. They only understand what goes around them as if they were seeing reality from the bottom of a sarcophagus!

“The tragic events that overtook them in the storms of their own irresponsibility, along with the truculence of the evils they surrounded themselves with for so long, have piled up to such an extent that they have numbed the vivacity of the soul itself, the conscious being that had its origin in the divine impulse!

“Here, in this lonely, narrow courtyard, which the eternal mercy of the Lord of All Things has permitted to be endowed with comfort and a pleasant environment, is where many spirits who were illustrious figures on the earth, who received eloquent obituaries in important newspapers by solicitous admirers, in addition to pompous funerals, and who possessed the finest things on the earth, wind up in great moral penury... Unfortunately, they had forgotten that not everything in the Infinite Universe is focused on pleasure and luxury; that a high social position or material wealth is not always a

guarantee for those who used it for doing wrong; and that the practice of abominations or the thoughtlessness of immorality, together with the odious attitude of self-centeredness, are not going to remain unpunished forever – their perpetrators will be forsaken in their irreversible descent into the darkness!

“These are the proud and the sensual who thought they could abuse their physical bodies in flagrant disregard for customs, satiating their senses with a thousand deleterious pleasures. But they knew they were harming their health and would end up in the grave before the opportune time foreseen in the codes of Creation. They were warned about this by the health care providers they consulted when their many excesses brought organic maladies to their physical bodies: it was just a matter of time unless they tempered their ways.

“Every one of them knew this! Yet they continued practicing this crime against themselves! They could feel the depressing effects of their noxious vice on their physical structures, as well as in their moral fabric. Yet they continued without making the least attempt to change their ways! Consequently, they killed themselves slowly, consciously, fully aware of what they were doing because they had plenty of time to reflect on it! Obsessed by their vice, they committed cold and degrading suicide, knowing that they were torturing themselves and disrespecting the priceless gift they had received from the Eternal One: the physical body that offered them a new opportunity to evolve!

“You will see, my dear friends, that many of them wanted to forget their misfortunes by numbing their brains with alcohol; that, inconsolable and beset by irremediable troubles, they sought final consolation in drunkenness, which they thought might just give them a break from their suffering. But such imagined relief is just a sophism that is characteristic of obstinate rebelliousness, because the invitation for relief from the sufferings that afflict and dog humanity has been resonating throughout the world for the last two millennia. I can even go so far as to assure you that, since the time when that invitation was offered by the Great Exponent of Love who gave himself in sacrifice on Calvary, all people have known him, whether in a physical body or during their stay in the Invisible while awaiting reincarnation. Therefore, somewhere on the earth or in the spirit homeland, these poor wretches most certainly had the opportunity to hear him say: ‘Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’

“How could they have imagined they could drown their pungent sorrows and misfortunes in addictive, demoralizing and depressing drinking, which not only could not help them but would make their situation even worse by making them suicides that were a hundred times more responsible?... So listen to me! Offenders like that bear an even heavier burden of responsibility than the poor wretch who, betrayed by the violence of a passion in a moment of supreme despair, let him or herself fall into the abyss!

“Be on the lookout for this new sort: the cocaine users, the lovers of opium and narcotics in general, addicts that succumbed to the ultimate state of decadence that a spirit, a creature of God, could fall into! They are in a lamentable state of vibrational depression. They are the true mental cases of the spirit world. They are morally, mentally and spiritually wretched because their monstrous vices not only drained and killed their physical body, but extended the dreadful consequences of their abominable intemperance to their astral body, contaminating it with impurities and pestiferous influences that polluted it atrociously – that impressionable and delicate organization, interwoven with delicate scintillations, which human beings are supposed to beautify by acquiring virtues that are ever more active and meritorious, and to ennoble through pure thoughts, emitted in impulses that reach the divine realms. But never! Never are they to degrade it by committing such grievous wrongs!”

In fact, as our gaze followed the indications of our eminent instructor, we did see individuals disfigured by the evil they still bore inside themselves as the calamitous result of their excesses. Dazed, weepy, suffering, disheartened, their altered, ugly, sad features still portrayed the tragic scenes of the Sinister Valley. Excessively polluted, their astral configuration displayed the marks of the vices they had succumbed to. Some looked as if they had leprosy, while others secreted repugnant, fetid odors as if the mixture of smoke, alcohol and narcotics they abused so much had fermented into putrid exhalations that contaminated their vibrations, which, vile and heavy, bore the virus that had poisoned their material body!

The “shredded ones” also made up part of the miserable phalanx housed in the Mental Ward. They still displayed the impressive armor of bloody scars. From time to time they were shaken by excruciating spasms, as if agonized by the remembrance of their past. Their motions were heavy and slow. They moved about with great difficulty, as if they lacked the vibrational strength to activate the mind and use the faculties that are natural to the

human being and the spirit. They came across as being rheumatic, like patients wrapped in bandages that reduced the agility of their movements...

Saddened by such dreadful suffering and such moral decadence, we asked, filled with anguish:

“What’s going to happen to these poor creatures?... What future awaits them?”

Filled with undeniable sorrow that melted his noble soul as a disciple of the Gospel, in light of such deplorable manifestations of aberrancy, the head of that singular ward satisfied our anxious curiosity by replying immediately and in the same tone:

“A dramatic future is waiting for them in the expiatory confusion of an impending and unavoidable reincarnation! These cases are irremediable in the spirit world. Nothing here can remedy the wild anguish that oppresses them, or modify the tumultuous situation that they have woven for themselves with the barbarity of their uncontrolled behavior and the sacrilegious improvidence in which they submerged themselves by giving free reign to their vices! No one but they themselves will be their agents of mercy because they willfully yielded to their vices and did nothing to curb them! This will cause them many sorrows, much oppression and infinitively painful suffering – any normal person would be appalled by it! They need to be convinced of their situation and to accept the future consequences of their past improvidence with some resignation. Thus, while they are here, an arduous endeavor of counseling, tireless applications of special fluidic and moral therapy, and loving assistance as brothers and sisters invested with this sacred responsibility, are required on our part. But what happens so often is that these patients are filled with rebelliousness, an impenitent hatred for their misery, which they consider themselves to be victims of and not perpetrators. They refuse to yield to the evidence of the present, and rebelling against everything, they leave here to be reborn in a new physical body, making their situation worse with their ill-will, their insubordination and impatience. They cringe before the expectation of the tormenting struggles of irremediable expiation!

“Exactly as they appear here, some in the future will make up a small band of lepers that will incarnate amid the suffering of the gloomy corners of the earth, and in the most wretched levels of society. Others will be the cancer-stricken, the paralytics, the mentally impaired, the hysterics, the

convulsives, the incurable diseased beset with complexes that will challenge the noble science of earthly medicine... They will be an unpleasant burden on human society because they are the offspring of it and its wrongs; hence it is only fair that this same society house them and keep them as long as necessary – until such a calamitous situation is diminished!

“They will reincarnate soon. They will remain here under the care of the dedicated workers only for as long as is necessary for them to recover from their more violent seizures. They will be reborn as you see them now, for there is no other remedy that can reduce the depth of their maladies. They will mold their future body according to the maculated configuration they presently display, and it will contain all the harm derived from the habits to which they were unconstrained slaves in the past... and in that situation, as I explained before, they will be absolutely wretched beings, painfully crawling around in situations of misery and tears...

“Such ardent manifestations of suffering, however, will enable them to harvest a good yield of gains. In the redemptive fires of misfortune, the impure layers that hide the glow of their astral body will become thinner, enabling benumbed vibrations to come alive again so they can make further reparations. Their hearts, driven by edifying pain, will ascend in trembling pleas in search of the Supreme Cause of Life, in a constant crescendo of fervency and faith, until they reach the light-filled layers of the Spirit World, where they will tune in to benevolent, high vibrations that will slowly edify theirs... Little by little, the virus will be unmade until such time when, with the disintegration of their physical body, they find relief and are in a condition that will allow them to be capable of learning something here with us. Then they can continue their reeducation after being discharged from our establishment.”

“If I understand correctly, is the punitive reincarnation that awaits these wretches simply forced on them by this section of our Department as a medical treatment?... Is it an antidote... a remedy?” I asked, shaken by downheartedness.

“Yes!” Joao replied sadly. “It’s just a medical treatment! A type of treatment that the urgency and gravity of the illness imposes on the patient! A dolorous procedure, but one we do not hesitate to use, because we know that only afterward will their real convalescence begin. However, it will not be a punishment per se, because no one will have inflicted punishment or handed down a sentence; on the contrary, all of us here who serve the Law will have

made every effort allowable to bring relief to their dreadful situation. What it really is – really! – is *the effect of the cause that the patient himself created with the excesses he took pleasure in...* Nevertheless, as you already know, Mary’s maternal kindness, in accordance with the golden law of Fraternity advocated by the Tireless Friend that leads us to redemption, lends them constant, unveiled care. While reincarnated, submerged in the earthly waves of expiation, they will continue to be under our watch-care. They will remain registered in our Department and will be visited and cared for by our physicians as if they were still hospitalized here... And they will come back here after the terrible exile we have prepared them for.”

We proceeded with our visit to the medical offices inside the building. On the way, Brother Joao had us take a look at the infirmaries housing patients that had remained in profound prostration ever since their arrival from the Sinister Valley. They were depleted by excesses of all sorts, especially those of a sexual nature. Their soul faculties had been disparaged, reducing them to this pathetic state – inarguable evidence of the instincts in which they had been entangled!

Lying in beds that the supreme goodness of Jesus had granted them the right to use, and because of the love for the laws of Charity that inspired all the services of the Colony, they were isolated from all the other patients in vast overcrowded rooms. They were from every social class and nationality of the regions served by the Colony. Atrocious nightmares kept them in a constant state of terror, but in spite of them they were unable to awaken from their lethargy. Since they were incapable of moving or speaking, they could not externalize the torment raging in their minds. They uttered only feeble moans, accompanied by repulsive contortions, as if they were being attacked by some unknown virus.

We were extremely moved as we walked between the rows of beds, quickly observing the patients while listening to our enlightened mentor as he explained the heartrending scene.

“If your spiritual sight were sufficiently developed, you would see horrific emanations rising from their minds, degrading and shameful scenes resulting from the debilitating habits they succumbed to, and from acts committed against decency and morality. You need to understand that a person’s every thought and act are indelibly imprinted in his or her perispiritual body. These acts and thoughts then appear like deplorable snapshots right before our eyes, when, in defiance of the Law, they cross over

to this side of life! Suicides of all types are lodged here: from those who used a weapon or deadly poison to those who fell victimized by their addictions! The most ignoble affinity unites them, that is, the inferiority of their character and sentiments!”

Indeed! We were unable to perceive these mental scenes, even though we had been able to in the Sinister Valley, when scenes of violent acts of suicide were visible all around us. But we could not see the dark vapors, like thick clouds, rising from their brains. These vapors spread in heavy waves throughout the room, enveloping it in a gloomy twilight, as if the nocturnal shadows were ceaseless there... This meant that the comforting dawn, which was now signaling to us on the horizon, was still a long way off for these poor victims of their own excesses. But how could it be otherwise? After all, they were moral criminals; tormenters who, compelled by the turpitude of their instincts, harmed and injured their neighbor; human monsters that satiated themselves with the misery they inflicted on the hearts and lives of others... How could rooms such as this one not be contaminated by darkness, when such darkness originated from inside these men; when they had taken pleasure in its folds, causing it and bringing it into their social and private lives, and then making it worse with the horrific blow of suicide?!... There they lay, in their sick beds, exactly as they had been while on the earth: gallant men, seducers, deceivers, hypocrites, liars, corrupt, often occupying the highest positions in society, libertines, drunkards, disbelievers in the Good and God, slaves to animality, crawling around in the muck of their instincts, lowering themselves to the height of worms, forgetful that they were creatures of God and that they would have to give an account to Him someday for their abuse of the freedom to act that He had given them! Now, here they were, annihilated and stigmatized by their shameful past, its image following them like an accusing ghoul, attesting the indigent situation that they had to endure as a consequence of their criminal conduct!

Seeing our interest and abiding by Teocrito’s recommendation to explain everything to us, Joao continued:

“Reincarnation is the only corrective solution that is strong enough to give their depleted energies a lift. Here they can only feebly assimilate the tonic fluids permanently scattered throughout the infirmary because the layers of impurities that envelop their faculties are too thick to allow for any lasting benefit, unlike other patients of our Institute.



“Like others in the same situation, they frequently reincarnate in order to benefit from contact with mediums who are morally capable of furnishing fluidic radiations that help them awaken.”

“When will they reincarnate?... And what relationship will they have with their former societies?” asked the former Coimbra scholar, his eyes wide with curiosity.

“Once their lethargy subsides enough, we will help them reincarnate, although they will not be aware of it. This means they will be incapable of making any particular requests regarding their new existence (because they lack the merit), nor will they be able to collaborate in planning the dramatic endeavor in which they will play the leading role,” answered the servant of Mary. “We, the directors of the Mental Ward, as well as the technicians in the Reincarnation Department, will be the only ones responsible for their life-plan. This is in accordance with the justice of the laws established by the Creator and the sublime principles of the loving charity of the Divine Master, who endeavors to succor all the unfortunate with his unending tenderness, and to whom all workers owe submission, reverence and veneration!

“What a lugubrious phalanx will be leaving here for expiatory existences on the stages of the earth! I do not yet have all the details, but the knowledge I’ve acquired concerning spiritual issues has given me the right to foresee the fact that that crowd will be made up of mentally-impaired, insane, epileptic, deaf and even blind individuals – all deplorably branded by the infamy they committed against themselves and in the degree equivalent to their crime!”

“Isn’t such punishment much too severe, venerable Director?... Based on the premise that all human beings err and commit crimes every day?” I asked in disagreement as I visualized scenes analogous to those presented by the eminent moralist, and as I recalled having seen such examples every day during my last existence.

“That isn’t the way to look at it, my dear friend!” Joao replied gravely. “Instead, reflect on the laws of cause and effect, which I explained earlier. They have been implemented by the Supreme Legislator for the purpose of warning human beings and spirits about the wrongs they commit in opposition to the harmony of all the other laws. Instead, look at the punishment as having been imposed by the lawbreakers themselves, putting themselves in a position of suffering when they reincarnate. The radiant faculties that the Almighty has bestows on his creatures can never, ever be

contaminated with impurities from their wrongful use without the perpetrator suffering the inevitable consequences in return! Since the Good is the supreme foundation of Life, what deplorable situations people bring on themselves by sullyng it, by giving in to evil, by daily departing from the natural pathway that ascends towards Perfection, dragged down by acts that are contrary to those that the Lord has instituted as the normal course on the sublime journey!... Have you forgotten the tears these wretches made their brothers and sisters shed by inflicting them with torments caused by their selfishness and other vile expressions of their criminal hearts?... The slander with which they harmed their victims, taking pleasure in ruining them in the eyes of reputable people?... The accusations, the hurtful criticism, the shame with which they tarnished respectable persons, making use of their intelligence only to hurt others, and thus preparing for themselves the abyss into which they would fall?... Have you thought about their ingratitude towards and betrayal of women whom they entangled in their abominable claws forged in the fires of sordid instincts? Of the children and innocent young people whom many of them monstrously ruined?... Of the despicable dramas they created and lived, spreading corruption and perversion on the material and spirit planes, and polluting the fluidic-magnetic currents that rise from the earth towards the Invisible, overburdening us with the exhausting work of cleansing and sanitization so that our colonies would not be affected?...

“Ah! My dear children! Why are you so surprised that they will be reborn incapacitated, when the existence that was granted to them for their progress was used as a weapon against the sacred dictates of the Creator of All Things, whom, in addition to themselves and their brothers and sisters, they so gravely offended?... Also, remember that they will not be stuck forever in the pit of iniquity that they dug for themselves!...

“Pain the Teacher will correct their anomalies and reconcile them with the Law! God is Infinite Mercy, my friends! He wants his people to live in harmony with the eternal beauty of his laws! And since we know that these laws are incorruptible, it is up to us to obey and respect them so that we don't wind up having to drink the bitter gall of the consequences that we created for ourselves with our freewill when we left the natural and luminous pathway.”

I lowered my head in light of the unanswerable logic of that disciple of the Nazarene Master...

\* \* \*

As we passed through the galleries and lobbies close to the sanctuaries, that is, the medical offices, where mitigating fluids were being knowledgeably and charitably applied, we saw nurses coming and going, aiding feeble and terrified patients coming from the courtyard and from other places for help. The nurses were especially caring towards the “shredded ones” because it was extremely painful for them to walk. Brother Joao informed us that they would be paralytic and infirm at birth and would display striking anomalies in childhood.

Yes, indeed! Their vibrations had been scattered by the terrible jolt of their act and their movements were extremely restrained as a result. Their gestures were uncoordinated and lacking purpose, as if hampered by the blows and counterblows that were tragically imprinted on the sensitive screen of their astral organization! They could not stop weeping, as if it had degenerated into an atrocious habit created by the intensity of their torment. They were perpetually anxious from the excruciating anguish of their agony, although they were also submissive and incapable of blaspheming, which is true of all of the most deplorable suicides.

Leaving the medical offices behind without having entered any of them, we came to a large hall, a sort of plain-looking auditorium, where a young worker was giving a moralizing lecture to his audience. In a previous existence, he had worthily worn the coarse tunic of a Franciscan, but his soul had actually been illumined by virtues acquired from the redemptive teachings of the Testament of the Divine Missionary, whom the order’s founder had served so faithfully.

With his unmistakable gentleness – an attribute of the characters shaped in the true schools of Christian initiation – this young legionary spoke in a simple manner, as if he were counseling or teaching his audience to grasp the idea of God and his paternity over the whole Creation, as well as the mission of the Messiah and its enormous consequences for the human species.

The invitation to pray and examine oneself inwardly was repeated every day prior to entering the offices where the fluidic sanitization treatments were applied by the assistants. These were the principal means used on patients for their mental reeducation, enabling them to establish harmonious currents with beneficent powers from the Higher Realms later on. These transcendental methods were implemented with simplicity – depending on what could be

grasped by those perturbed minds – and under the inspiration of a kind and fraternal charity whose fragrance penetrated the depths of our souls, touched by the sight of such noble hearts lovingly devoted to their brothers!

This young worker, sincere and humble in his immeasurable charitable efforts, did not see those unsightly and repulsive reprobates as being maculated by shameful wrongdoings. He did not see the appalling astral configuration of the dissolute, who wasted their noble senses in the realm of sordid pleasures. What he did see and charitably love in his longing to serve and uplift were his spiritually younger brothers, whom Duty commanded to be assisted by their older brothers to climb the cliffs of progress. He saw them as souls destined for the glorification of the Light, in need of guidance on the long pathway of their thorn-covered journey of ascent towards God, the generator of Life!

“Could you also explain the planned course of action for these patients to return to a physical body?” asked the doctor from Coimbra. He was very much interested in the topics regarding rebirth because his conscience was incessantly troubled by a strong intuition that it was urgent for him to take on a new existence in a material body in order to expiate the crime he had committed against that defenseless woman whom he had loved so much.

“Yes, my friend,” replied the guide. “It is possible, even imperative, for you to be informed of the general work involved in a matter that is so crucial for all of you. However, matters concerning reincarnation are not the job of this Department but of another. You will certainly visit it.

“In that Department you will see laboratories that are extraordinarily important because they are where plans for the delicate endeavor of rebirth are drawn up, where charts and drawings are prepared for the future bodies to be inhabited by suicides, whose guardianship in the meantime is our responsibility. For example, if they have to be reborn in a deformed body, or if they have to lose their eyesight during the course of their existence, or if they are to suffer an accident that will leave them mutilated, their chart will be designed accordingly. The pattern for their future deformity will already be present in their perispiritual organism, because, coerced by remorse, their mental and vibrational state will have imprinted the powerful sensitivity of that subtle organization with the will to become mutilated, blind, deaf, etc. in order to expiate their wrongful past. The same is happening to you, brother Sobral, with your strong sensations relating to your hands...

“Of course, designing such charts is always done by technicians who are fully aware of their massive responsibility, which means that they are spirits deserving of the utmost trust of this Colony’s directors.

“When the charts are finished, they are sent to the directors of the analysis offices, who then compare them with the patients’ expiatory imperatives, taking their merits and demerits into consideration. This is all done in accordance with the decisions made beforehand in the “Recapitulation Programming” department. If there is any possibility at all to mitigate the harshness of their trials, it will be granted by law. Furthermore, their moral strength and endurance capabilities will be taken into consideration.

“I must emphasize the fact that reincarnation is a sublime concession granted by the Supreme Father to his creatures in order for them to progress and evolve, to prepare themselves for the inheritance that is reserved for them in his Kingdom. That is the law. No one will fulfill his or her immortal destiny without having trod the pathway of reincarnation on the earth or other planetary worlds! However, if a rebellious soul wastes too much time, abusing this concession with a manifest disrespect for the Magnanimous Law that allows for new opportunities, the concession becomes even more crucial, because, generally speaking, such a case requires intercession by the Redemptive Master personally, who beseeches the Supreme Creator for a new cycle of lives so that the rebel can be rehabilitated.”

“So, venerable Brother,” I cut in, somewhat self-conscious, “are you saying that since the earthly physical body is a sacred trust, a gift from heaven, incarnates would proceed more intelligently if they conducted themselves according to the concession they have received? That they would behave with respect, consideration and prudence while on the earth, taking advantage of the moral gains that their stay on the planet confers on them?... That they would thus avoid having to repeat the dolorous and unavoidable expiatory existences that result from disregarding the venerable laws to which all life in the universe is subjected?”

“Exactly, my friend! Much suffering would be avoided! And if the physical body is a divine trust that human beings should respect and protect, keeping it from impurities and harm, the physical-astral body, which is the one you have at the moment, is just as important. Moreover, our Soul-Intelligence, Conscience, Reason, Sentiment – in other words, our Being – is

the essence of the Creator himself, a particle of him, a spark extracted from his Supreme Being!

“From this you can infer that we are all temples to be venerated because we possess the glory of carrying God within us. And whether on the earth as incarnate beings or in the Invisible as free spirits, we owe reverence and veneration both to ourselves and to others, since all are perfectly equal before their Creator, beloved gems of the sempiternal jewelry chest of the One who is the Ultimate Reason of Life! From this originates the divine basic law:

*“To love God above all else, and our neighbors as ourselves.”*

Joao had to leave for a few moments to tend to other responsibilities. We remained thoughtful and silent, observing the anguishing figures of the poor patients as much as we could. When Joao returned, the impatient Mario Sobral broke the silence:

“If at all possible, I would like to hear more of your learned explanations, venerable Brother.”

The old servant of Jesus smiled, and responding to the humble request with an amiable gesture, he continued while we paid the utmost attention:

“However, as I was saying, we have had cases where our Guardian does not permit the reincarnation as we had planned it. Instead, she conveys to us the precious favor of her inspiration for a more suitable reincarnation that is consistent with the state of the patient. In any case, the planning of the events relating to a reincarnation will be rigorously studied, firmed up, and revised, always in accordance with utmost justice... and in fulfillment of the highest expression of the immortal decree sanctioned by the Divine Master – which explains all the problems that afflict and hound Humanity:

*“To each according to his deeds.”*

Normally, candidates for reincarnation choose their own trials, the acres of thorns that will dilacerate the days of their earthly lives, and where they will get the chance to amend the consequences of their guilty past. They themselves will beseech the Guiding Powers for new opportunities that will

enable them to demonstrate their repentance and their desire to enter a redemptive path that will offer them the chance to correct the inferior impulses that drove them to their wrongful conduct... These trials can be experienced in a relatively sound body if the mental suffering is extreme, or in a deformed body, or in one stricken by an incurable disease. It all depends on the extent of the offense and the demerits involved.

“So, the patients themselves actually sketch out the charts for their future physical body and the plan for the principal and unavoidable events they must undergo, the logical and inseparable effects of the causes created by their infractions; but they are always assisted by their dedicated mentors.

“But as for the patients in this ward, that will not be the case, unfortunately. My poor patients are not in any shape to do anything on their own. Consequently, their return to a physical rebirth will be the fulfillment of a regulation of the Great Law that grants a new opportunity to the offender whenever he or she failed the previous attempt... It will be the thrusting impulsion for progress, the decisive medicine that will make them convalescents, marking the dawn of redemptive phases in their destinies.”

Astounded by such a profound and intricate subject, which I knew could fill many volumes, I asked on our way back:

“Pardon my insistence, venerable director... but due to its novelty, the intensity and depth of the thoughts it provokes, what you have just expounded is not only exciting information, but sincerely amazing... Would it be possible for us to study any such charts before we have to design our own?... What do they look like?... Or must such a noble endeavor be kept from our profane gaze?”

I was truly moved, even frightened, because I remembered that I too was an offender, that I too had committed suicide to escape blindness, and that everything indicated that poor Mario’s chart would entail deformed arms with no hands. Something was telling me that I would still have to be blind, irremediably blind!

Brother Joao obviously perceived the sorrow that had come over my mind and my heart because he answered with unmistakable kindness:

“Of course an endeavor of such responsibility cannot be made public just to entertain the curious – there are a few of those around here. However, if authorized by the relevant authorities, the offices can be open for visitation. I’m sure you will have access to them since it is part of your education... Use

every effort not to become discouraged in light of future perspectives, my friend! Trust in the unsurpassed tenderness of our Beloved Master and Lord, the infallible Guide of our destinies... Also, remember that the One who established the wisdom of the laws that rule the Universe also knows how to strengthen you for victory over yourselves!”

\* \* \*

When we arrived back at the Indian Ward, the atmosphere was soft and gentle. The sweet invitations to that evening’s meditation reached our ears. It was the solemn moment when the Colony conducted its mental communion with its august guardian, Mary of Nazareth...

I can remember that on that particular evening our prayers were tenderer, humbler, purer...

---

<sup>32</sup> Mt. 18:6.

<sup>33</sup> Someone interested in psychical research. [www.lexic.us](http://www.lexic.us). – Tr.

<sup>34</sup> John in English. – Tr.

<sup>35</sup> Spiritism, as codified by Allan Kardec. – Tr.



---

## Jeronimo and his family again

*Woe to the world for its offenses! It is necessary for there to be offenses, but woe to the one through whom the offense comes!*

*Jesus Christ – The New Testament <sup>36</sup>*

Carlos de Canalejas arrived at the Indian Ward very early, and after greeting us warmly, he said:

“I think that today’s schedule should begin with a trip to the Isolation Ward. Your friend Jeronimo de Araujo Silveira is rooming there and you could use the occasion to pay him the visit you have been planning for so long. He will most certainly find your presence very comforting, while you, on your part, will have fulfilled the duty of solidarity and fraternity.”

The Isolation Ward was not too far from the main building, which was close to where we were staying.

Enveloped in a sad shroud of fog, the citadel of the Department was located on an extensive raised area. The pathways were lined with beds of lilies and white roses, which seemed to be the flowers that were best adapted to that melancholic refuge. We had the impression that the Hospital Sector and Security Department were bucolic boroughs of a great metropolis, whose size we were unable to determine. We talked casually, paying little attention to the fact that we were no longer incarnate men, but spirits without our physical bodies.

Isolation’s directors and the fraternal treatment of the penitents were the same as in the other wards we had visited – everything was inspired by strict justice and loving and fraternal charity.

In fact, isolated on the other side of those high walls – there was even a drawbridge – were colleagues of ours, whose sufferings, caused by their

despondency or rebelliousness, were much greater than their repentance for the wrongful act they had committed. In those forlorn and inconsolable hearts, repentance was limited to the unbearable sorrow of having realized that suicide did nothing more than increase and prolong the suffering they had deemed intolerable, in addition to experiencing, among other things, the disheartening disappointment that they were still alive, but were now separated from the objects of their greatest predilections. One could go so far as to say that the Isolation Ward specialized in sentimental matters... because it is known that sentimentality, taken to the extreme, becomes a severe neurosis, a mental infirmity capable of the most deplorable consequences. As a matter of fact, we encountered the most varied cases of sentimental suicides, in which the reprobate, although unbalanced, was doubtlessly stirred by a true feeling coming from the heart. Such cases ranged from the lover overcome by passion and jealousy due to a rival's fortune, to the head of a household faced with a difficult problem, to the father who caved in to despair before the coffin of a little child who was the reason for his happiness!

A feeling of overall consternation dominated the atmosphere of this particular ward of the Mary of Nazareth Hospital. Invariably discontented, the patients wore the look of those that are impatient and complain about everything, in addition to giving in to suffering without making any effort whatsoever to overcome it. Instead, they hung on to it with the exaggeration of a sickly and overly emotional sentimentality, while coming up with even more reasons to suffer because of depressing self-suggestions that poisoned their every moment.

Much like that of the Watchtower, the internal direction of the Isolation Ward was the responsibility of a Catholic priest instead of one of those wonderful initiates whom we had gotten used to seeing as heads of the Colony's organizations.

The whole staff, as a matter of fact, was comprised of Catholic clerics, except for the clinical personnel, which were made up of psychical initiates. However, if the most important post, that of director, counselor and educator, was occupied by a priest, it meant that he too had to have been initiated into the secret doctrines. He had to be a high order spirit with meritorious standing before the Divine Law and highly respected in the Legion of the Servants of Mary, as well as honorably ranked in the group of scientists that governed the Mary of Nazareth Correctional Institute.

The discipline was truly monastic.

It was imperative to keep these eternally discontented and willful individuals away from attractions to worldly and personal passions, the impure and capricious tendencies that had been their undoing. It was incumbent upon the institution that lodged them to teach them the need for resignation in misfortune, for decisive resolutions and for inalienable self-denial, thereby reconciling them with the true Christian faith, which they had despised up to then.

While incarnate, they had all been educated under the auspices of Roman Catholic doctrine. In their hearts and minds, in the religious ideas that guided their thoughts, there was no room for any other concepts but those taught by the Church they had attended since childhood. Fanatical, capricious sentimentalists, mentally stagnated due to their neglect in exercising their minds on lofty issues, they prolonged the morbidity of their prejudice due to the religious inferences in the catechisms, intransigently adhering to everything that the Catholic traditions had sought to infuse into the immature mind of Humanity. Many did not believe in anything at all, actually. Disbelievers, even Godless, they had never concerned themselves with the religious or divine aspect of things. Nevertheless, attached to the Church through self-centeredness and tradition, they thought that only the Church had the right to guide consciences and the wisdom to interpret the sacred texts.

Hence, it was charitable that the reeducation of such mentalities was taking place in an environment identical to that which used to inspire their trust and respect.

Therefore, a priest would instruct them about the Gospel of Truth so they could learn that above their dogmatic fanaticism hovered the eternal beacon of realities they needed to accept in order to worship the Creator rightly! A priest would lecture them about life in the spirit world, teaching them facts and experiences, sweeping from their brains the narrow-minded beliefs to which they had lazily molded themselves, thus rending the veils to true knowledge so that in the bosom of Religion and Science they could come to their own conclusions; so that the fervor of the faith that orients the heart towards the Most High could shine, purified in the living heat of God's Love!

Informed of our desire to visit one of our friends there after having been given a tour of the place – the details of which we will not give since they were similar to those given by us on other occasions – Father Miguel de Santarem, the director, said to us with a kindly smile:

“You did well in coming here, my sons!... I am very thankful for your caring interest in a fellow brother in such need of comfort. To visit the sick, to encourage with one’s consoling presence, a poor patient disheartened by the anguish of implacable remorse is a meritorious deed sanctioned by the Divine Model, the friend of the needy and destitute... Jeronimo will be very happy... I will have him called for immediately.”

As he spoke we realized that he was the very same priest that had comforted the former wine merchant on his memorable visit to his family approximately three years ago! Brother Teocrito, as we recall, had asked for the priest’s assistance at Jeronimo’s request. Our former companion had remained under his competent responsibility ever since.

As we waited for Jeronimo, our companion in misfortune, Father Miguel continued:

“Your friend is entering a transition phase, the precursor to his recovery. The circumstances that have affected him will enable you to appreciate the type of vibrations of the other patients of our educational establishment. Here we care for cases that have more or less the same origin, as is the norm with all the organizations of our Institute.

“Having overcome the apathy that resulted from his unprofitable insubordination – a consequence of his excruciating disillusionment – he is ready to repeat the experiences in which he failed.

“He is under strict supervision – as are all the others entrusted to us – because both his perispiritual body and his mind are in need of extensive care. The medical personnel in this ward are in charge of treating his astral organization with special magnetic applications; however, we tend to his mind based on the Legion’s statutes, which, in his case, entail reeducation. It is an entirely moral treatment, because the evil that makes Jeronimo unhappy – the same that also torments you – can only be removed by means of individual renewal brought about internally by the patient himself.

“The unbalanced and morbid passion he had for his wife and children served as an instrument for the great expiations they had to undergo due to their debts before the Law of Justice that rules human destinies! Jeronimo loved selfishly, confusedly, hardening his heart against any possibility of assistance from reason and lucid thinking... And, as you surely know, we must always be mindful of the fact that people should not love even their own children with the blind impulses of passion!

“Of course, his devotion to his family will grant him merit before the Supreme Legislator. However, his rewards would have been much more honorable if he had guided his loved ones to the true fulfillment of Duty and had not furnished them with worldly luxury and pleasures in detriment to their moral education, which he should have provided above all else, even amid the blows of adverse poverty. All of the Lord’s people have worth, and it is for the purpose of enabling them to progress and be beneficially educated that God confers paternal authority on the man. If he had fulfilled his sacred duty as an honorable and prudent father, Jeronimo would have avoided the anguish of the shameful situations for which he became responsible with his suicide... Ah! Here he comes... He has some very interesting things to tell you.”

Indeed, accompanied by another religious assistant, Brother Ambrosio, the Oporto merchant entered the room and joyfully embraced us.

“Thank you, my dear friends!” he greeted us, “for having so kindly remembered my humble person! Your visit is very dear to my heart! If you only knew how terrible my affliction has been!”

We embraced him effusively, wishing him personal happiness, since at the time we did not know what else to wish our friends.

Jeronimo seemed to have changed significantly. He was serene, with manners touched with a charming dignity that we had not seen before. As a sort of monastic boarding school, we concluded that the Isolation Ward, headed by virtuous spirits of former priests, obviously had the additional mission of raising the level of the patients’ social manners!

We were burning with the desire to question our former companion from the Sinister Valley, to find out about his poor children, who had been left behind on the earth, buried in tears and misfortune. But the fear of being insensitive held us back, leading to a long silence after the initial greetings. Santarem knew our sincerity of purpose, however, and stepped in:

“We’ve been talking about you, my dear Jeronimo... Your friends would like to know if you are feeling better and more comforted in God’s love. They are about to leave for another sector of our Colony, but they have come to say farewell and to be sure that the friend they are leaving here is on his way to a full recovery.”

We concurred. We wanted to show Jeronimo our own resignation and confidence in the future, as we added:

“Aided as we have been by friends as dedicated as those we have found here, we could feel almost happy if it weren’t for the inclemency of the regrets that hound us for having degraded our souls.”

Jeronimo hung his head with endearing humility and replied:

“So true, my dear friends! It’s likely enough that we will find relief by acquiring resignation and faith, which in turn will lead to acceptance... But I don’t think we will be happy any time soon. It’s definitely not by means of suicide that a person can find that goddess Happiness, who withdraws even farther away the more rebelliousness or insubordination there is in the heart that desires her! I wish suicide had exterminated my being forever; but it didn’t!... And since that is the way it is, I have come to realize that the only thing I can do is to accept the inevitable and face with resignation and courage the deplorable situation I created for myself! I owe the transformation that is taking place within me to the kindness of Brother Santarem, to his counsel and edifying examples, his selfless assistants and the truly providential rules of this educational institution. Just like you, I drank my chalice of gall and swallowed much bitterness amid the howls of despair and the blasphemies of a reprobate! But now I feel like a different person, someone whom trust in the love of the Supreme Being raised from the ruins of the most noxious disbelief, a disbelief masquerading behind the hypocrisy of false faith and the pretentiousness of virtue, both of them coming across with a conventional ostentation which may have pleased society but which did not even convince the person that pretended them, let alone edify his soul before the Creator!...

“I could possibly be happy – somewhat – surrounded by the attention of these noble and excellent care-takers; I have been enlightened, strengthened and comforted by their tireless charity; I am convinced about accepting my struggles and duties, and I am ready to face them with a good attitude. But I committed a crime that had dire consequences both for myself and those I love!... I am laden with wrongdoings... and there is no way for me to be truly happy anywhere while this living and burning repentance torments my every hour. It demands immediate redemption so that serenity can return to my heart, allowing for new, honorable and dignifying enterprises – the exact opposite of those of my former life!

“I must confess that as a merchant who was bankrupt, ruined, disloyal to the honest companies with which I did business, to banking institutions whose honorability I did not respect, and even to the municipal authorities by not

paying taxes and by avoiding tariffs with my frequent smuggling, I am ashamed of myself for not having made an effort to rise above such a web of misconduct, and I'm mortified for having tried to pay these moral debts by hiding behind the macabre illusion of suicide. The shame will be wiped from my face only after I have become a merchant once again in order to pay them with dignity and honesty! Oh, what a shameful act I committed, my dear friends! I owe and have not paid! I defrauded the sacred rights of my blessed Homeland! I have outstanding debts, loans, bills and more bills, letters of credit and more letters of credit to pay!... I haven't paid a cent to this day! The weight of this dishonor, in addition to the misfortune my neglect heaped upon my children, has turned my days into uninterrupted torment!"

"Fortunately," said Brother Santarem, interrupting Jeronimo's humiliating account, "the Law of Wise Providence offers the bankrupt spirit honorable ways to free itself from shameful, vexing situations such as this one, and Jeronimo will be able to repair his past in the not-too-distant future. He will make peace with his conscience and will make use of new experiences and opportunities thanks to reincarnation, which is granted to everyone as a means of progress and rehabilitation... Right now he is very excited about his new journey."

"I rejoice in knowing that you are comforted and resolute regarding your struggle for the honor of a victory that will purge from your conscience the inglorious vision of the downfall that plunged you into the abyss, my dear Jeronimo!... May God multiply the strength in your soul a hundredfold, just as he multiplies mine with new vibrations of my own pain... I too would be excited about undergoing the harshest experiences if it meant that the remorse for the monstrous crime I committed will vanish from my inner visions," offered Mario Sobral, struck with a jolt that made him shake his hands as if trying to free them from something that troubled and afflicted him.

"Guided by Brother Santarem's fertile exhortations, I have learned to pray," continued the wine merchant. "And prayer has become an indispensable resource for my poor soul. My ardent pleas to Mary – our Mother and Guide – have given me the peace-of-mind I needed to gather my despair-smitten thoughts and focus them on thinking rightly... which proved to be the golden key to the solution to so many problems that I used to consider unsolvable..."

"The unforeseen fate of my poor, dear children and the prostituted and debased conduct of Zulmira, who, like me, was incapable of committing

herself to Duty to overcome the trying circumstances of poverty, were events that took me to the brink of complete madness and blasphemy, making my soul like a wild beast of the African hinterlands! But prayer, continuous and humble, as suggested by my good counselor, corrected the anomaly. Little by little my senses recovered their lucidity, and once I became more serene, it seemed that I had been submerged in the darkness of irresponsibility for many centuries! Even so, my children's situation, which, of course, you will recall, has continued to bring me inconsolable suffering!"

As Jeronimo spoke, he became more animated. We all listened attentively, excited along with him. His tone of voice was so lively and suggestive as he described the events, so fervent were the feelings caused by the vibrations with which he expressed the subtleties of his memories, that we felt as if we were reliving with him what he was narrating. And it is as if we had actually been present as the events unfolded that we will transmit them to the reader:

"One afternoon," Jeronimo began, "I was almost completely alone and sad as I wandered the melancholy paths of the immense park that you can see from here... The touching hour of the Angelus was at hand. The religious unction – consolation and hope for the irredeemable wretches – subtly penetrated the folds of my being, and my thought went up to Mary, the blessed Mother of sinners and the afflicted... You all know that the hour of salutation to Mary is faithfully observed by her legionaries and honored with sincere displays of gratitude in this Colony, which was built, has grown and has produced excellent fruits of love and charity – to employ the expressions I have heard used by my kind instructors – under her august guardianship.

"I sat down on the grass and decided to join in in thought. With my heart palpitating with faith, I waited for the solemn moment of prayer, which was soon announced by the sweet melodies that are amplified from the Temple to reach the farthest corners of the Colony – echoes of the vibrations of its most important directors as they commune with the Higher Realms – to continue using the terms of the mentors of this ward..."

"I prayed as I had never prayed before! I begged the loving Mother of our Redeemer for assistance and mercy for my children! For her to intercede with Jesus our Lord to help the children I had abandoned to the inclemency of adversity! I named little Margarida, cast into the gutters of fatherlessness caused by my suicide! I remembered Albino, thrown into prison in the prime of his youth because he did not have a father worthy enough to provide him



with honorable guidance, because I who, before God and society had committed myself to the noble mission of fatherhood, had dishonored both him and myself by leaving him a bad example as his sole, perverted inheritance! I cried out for Mary to intervene in the anguishing situation of both children, even if it meant that my own suffering would be extended for who knows how long! As a pledge of my acknowledgement of any benefit that her tender compassion as a Mother would concede, I offered her my renunciation of them, for I fully realized that I did not deserve the sacred mission of fatherhood! I would give them up forever, if necessary... I begged that, under her maternal support, Margarida be taken from Ribeira Wharf, and that Albino not fall into such despair to the point of committing suicide, but resign himself to prison, to exile, where he could perhaps rehabilitate himself...

“Father Ambrosio, the assistant in charge of collecting all of us at the end of the day, found me awash in tears. I once more described my misfortune to him, and also told him about my plea to Mary. He comforted me tenderly, bringing hope to my aching heart, and concluded while gently helping me back to the community:

‘You must persevere in those pleas, my dear Jeronimo! Do it cheerfully and with courage. Raise the level of your vibrations as high as possible so that your righteous requests can reverberate harmoniously in the higher layers of the astral plane, where, radiating flowers of assistance and blessings, the loving charity of the gentle Guardian of our Legion thrives. I also suggest that you pray together with other spirits, uniting your thoughts with other thoughts, so that your still-feeble energies may be revitalized in the warmth of others... Your prayers are extremely important, a true message directed to Mary... I will talk to our kind counselor about this.’

“In fact, Brother Miguel de Santarem paid me a visit the very next day to invite me to take part in his private meetings with a few others, so that, fraternally united, we could ask for the favors I desired concerning the circumstances that afflicted me the most. After all, it was only right that they offer to help, not only because I was a patient in their ward, but especially because it would be charitable to assist someone who was suffering, a duty that they would gladly fulfill in view of the justifiable aspirations I had for my beloved children.

“And that is what we did.

“Under rustling branches in an isolated area of the immense park, while the melodies of the daily salutations to Mary brought gentle suggestions to the harmonious quietude of twilight, Brother Santarem would lift his faith-filled thoughts and humbly transmit my request to the Lady of Heaven in a heartfelt prayer. Consequently, many times I would let my soul become enraptured. And filled with trust and hope, it would follow the luminous path that the virtuous minds of my counselors would lay out for me with their words. These highly secret gatherings were repeated a few times, always filled with fervor and benevolence. The names of my beloved children were uttered there every day! And how consoling it was to my sorrowful spirit to hear their names charitably referred to by the loving followers of the Master and Lord, who, even when nailed to the infamous cross, tried to regenerate sinners out of compassion for their great miseries!... A tender hope, humble patience, and reverent resignation would then penetrate my whole being, like a ray of sun singing halleluiahs in the desolate darkness after a stormy night!

“A few days had passed, when I was asked to go see the Director of the Ward., I was troubled and emotional as I presented myself, because for many years I had been used to seeing only sorrows all around me. The director, however, immediately put me at ease by handing me a small scroll, a sort of ‘papyrus’ made of rays of layered light, while he told me what had happened:

‘Give thanks to the Lord of all Goodness and Mercy, dear Jeronimo! Your prayers to Mary have been answered in light of the eternal and incorruptible divine laws!... Here is the response of our Dear Lady and Guardian, who, in the name of her August Son, has granted the intervention you asked for!... From the Temple, where the leaders of our Colony meet, and where orders from the Highest Realms are delivered, we have received these instructions, a sort of schedule to be followed on behalf of your children Albino and Margarida... With Brother Teocrito’s permission, we can start today.’

“Stunned by this unexpected news, I didn’t know what to say. I allowed my joyful soul to express, in the secrecy of thought, my gratitude to the Good God, the Merciful God, who had so quickly granted my strongest desires!

“I held the luminous papyrus, turning it over and over but not daring to open it. The director himself, with his usual kindness, came to my rescue and carefully opened it...

“It was comprised of four pages that twinkled like stars in his hands. Bluish characters, as if threads of the blue firmament had been used by the Temple initiates to transmit the sublime inspirations they received on behalf of sufferers, translated the orders that the Magnanimous Lady had sent on my behalf!

“My poor Margarida and Albino were to be taken immediately to an emergency outpost maintained by this Institute either on the earth’s surface or adjacent to it in order to undergo a special magnetic treatment for the psychical readjustment of their mental and nervous systems, which had been seriously compromised by their dreadful environment and disorganized by the intensity of the blows from the struggles they had to go through every day. They were to be counseled, warned and instructed, because what they needed most was inner illumination. A charitable current of love, sympathy and protection was to be established around them because the Higher Astral would create the circumstances needed for events to take place...

“I must confess, my dear friends, that even now I still don’t understand such things very well... I’m merely describing the events as I saw them happening, but I have no aptitude for a comprehensive analysis...

“I was told not to worry about Marieta and Arinda. They were honest, hard workers, and both were in harmony with the circumstances they had to endure. But we did need to persevere in aiding the unhappy husband of the former – *whom I had not included in my fervent pleas but who had not been forgotten by the Loving Mother of the Lord Jesus* – because he had been caught in the claws of inferior tendencies and had become a tyrant in the home. He was to be closely watched over because he would be amenable to the generous influences poured out on him... His obsessors were to be arrested and taken to the appropriate astral communities, which would provide them new opportunities and benefits.”

“We can see that the work here in Isolation is truly arduous and requires of everyone an ever-increasing goodwill,” interrupted Roberto de Canalejas, also visibly interested. “Have you begun the regenerating endeavor yet?”

Brother Santarem replied with a smile.

“Yes we have, and with great success. After all, we have the Mother of Mothers as the sponsor of these cases of redemption... Thus we can easily foresee a satisfactory outcome.”

“I beg of you to please explain how you are going to go about such a worthy yet thorny task, Brother Santarem,” continued the young doctor.

“I’ll be glad to. I know that you are all generous and sincere friends, and that you might even extend to us the support of your fraternal sympathy...

“As it had to be,” continued the cleric, “I assumed responsibility for the task in accordance with the orders of the Director of the Department. I knew that the intervention of our august Guardian, as well as the generous assistance of our Temple superiors, would not abandon us to the indecision of our own frailties.

“That same morning a petition was sent to the head of the Department requesting volunteers for the difficult task – as you know, work of this nature is not obligatory here. Volunteers for outside work offer their help willingly in response to a special notice from us... As a matter of fact, all the workers in our Colony are volunteers...

“I received an immediate response and came to a cordial agreement with the volunteers for the upcoming enterprise. They were all highly interested and filled with goodwill for the cause of the Good, and it was decided that before drawing up the final plan, we needed to visit the individuals in question to study all the facets of the issue and compare them with our capabilities. Thus, on the night of the third day, after our homage to our Guardian, we left for the earth...

“The gentle, melancholy light of the full moon – the humble sister of the earth – softly illuminated the sad roads of the lower astral zones we had to cross. For transportation we made use of slow volitation since the zones we would be passing through would not allow us to go faster without a great effort on our part, something that was not at all suitable, because we needed to save our strength for the tasks ahead.

“Oh, my dear friends!” continued the former priest, “Our hearts were stirred when we saw the contours of the old city of Oporto enveloped in the veil of atmospheric waves that made it seem inundated by a subtle torrent of foggy smoke to our spirit eyes, to which ‘void’ is a meaningless word!

“Our enlightened brother, Count Ramiro de Guzman, who, as you well know, heads the missionary expeditions outside our Colony, and who was the first volunteer to respond to our humble invitation, took us on a tour of our beloved city. He too had lived beneath its friendly roofs, whose cornices and

glass windows, bathed in the sweet scintillations of the moonlight, we could now make out...

“We went looking for Margarida Silveira in the vicinity of Ribeira Wharf. The friendly Douro River lapped against it gently, bringing its poetic sound to our Portuguese ears. The appeal of our native soil – which would become our home again in a future reincarnation – had not yet been extinguished, in spite of our long stay in the Spirit Homeland!”

“Did Jeronimo take part in the expedition?” I asked.

“Oh, no! It would not have been wise for him to come along! We had to keep him away from the anguish of the harsh realities... In fact, he would have been a burden instead of a help...”

“I won’t describe the bitter spectacle in which Margarida played the leading role! But you can just imagine one of those dens of vice and degradation, like so many others that, unfortunately, still exist on the gloomy terrestrial globe, regarded by law enforcement as being one of the worst kinds – as if there could be vices that are less degrading than others! Just imagine the shamelessness, the debauchery, the vile impulses of the inferior instincts, lowered even further by the perversion of customs – and you will have a faint idea of the hell from which we needed to extract Margarida Silveira. Those were the orders from the Higher Astral in response to our pleas!”

“But how could we do that?...”

“Faced with the deplorable scenes in front of us, our souls were nearly overcome with repugnance. Thus, we needed help via mental communion with the directors of the Temple and the Higher Realms, so that our wills would not weaken, thereby harming our mission.

“Tormented by incessant slander, reviled by degradation, shackled to a miserable situation that was insolvable due to her inexperience, Margarida looked like the tragic victim of a new Calvary, where the aid and comfort of generous hearts ready to alleviate and console were lacking! In spite of her inner loathing, she was being subjected to the vile whims of soulless butchers who forced her to get drunk! The poor girl was half naked, her clothes in tatters and wine-soaked from the brutalities inflicted on her. Her hair was a mess, her eyes looked crazed from drinking, and her mouth drooled, disfigured by bizarre distortions. To entertain her foul tormentors, she was being forced to dance to the sound of noisy guitars, and to sing the songs in

vogue at the time. But due to her lamentable condition, she was unable to perform and was brutally slapped by this or that man, and her clothes were ripped even further.

“Recalling that our orders from the Higher Realms were for the poor girl to be taken from that vile ambient right away, I immediately took extreme measures.

“I pointed out the wretched young woman to one of the Security trainees, one of those who were just starting their regenerative work through benevolent service to others, and said:

“‘We have orders from the Higher Astral to get her out of here right now... Put her to sleep with a strong magnetic discharge, using fluidic elements from the incarnates present here... Make it look like she has become violently ill... and also make these brutalizing wretches leave.’

“The trainee was skillful at what he did, in spite of his sparse knowledge and low moral level. Not long ago, he had been the head of one of those phalanxes that are against the Good and Love. But he had been converted to learning about the Light and Truth and was now an obedient worker under the care of enlightening instructors who could guide him towards complete regeneration. They not only assisted in his learning but also taught him to grow morally, offering him opportunities to take part in rehabilitating service to others. His name was Osorio, and of course he is still under our care. He used to live in the Brazilian hinterlands, where he practiced African magic.

“He immediately got to work.

“He approached the wretched Ribeira Wharf fishmonger and passed both hands over her knees. The poor girl staggered and leaned on a nearby barstool. He immediately made the same ‘pass’ over her chest and then her head! She fell to the floor in convulsions, holding her hand to her chest and groaning pitifully. As I was giving instructions to the other volunteers, Osorio approached one of the bewildered men and shouted something into his ear. The man suddenly leapt up and cried out, creating an indescribable state of panic among the onlookers:

“‘Oh my God! The poor girl is dying because of us!... Let’s get out of here before the cops show up!’

“They shoved each other in their confusion, leaving the poor victim of so many cruelties seemingly at the mercy of the charity of that den of iniquity’s

owner.

“Margarida was thrashing around, as if in the throes of death. My assistants and I surrounded her to use whatever was available to help her. I need to point out the fact that neither I nor my helpers were perceived by her or any of the others, since as discarnate spirits we were invisible to them.

“Nevertheless, Margarida was having a nervous reaction caused by the forcefulness of the magnetic discharge that had been necessary in her deplorable condition. Compassionate for her suffering, we applied sedative balsams. She gradually quieted down but was still stretched out on the floor. The terrified tavern owner called for a doctor and put her in a bed upstairs. It was in his best interests to hide the episode. He didn’t want the police to get involved because his business was illegal.

“As for the rest of us, Mary’s servants, we wanted her to be put in a hospital, not jail! For that reason, we kept the police away while we sought to involve the help of some doctor whose charitable sentiments would inspire our trust.

“A few minutes later, the doctor arrived. He said that she was seriously ill due to the amount of alcohol she had drunk, and since we had enveloped him in harmonious currents of compassionate suggestions, he took humanitarian measures on her behalf...

“And thus, just as we had wished – because it had to be – after the dramatic events of that decisive night, the daughter of our Jeronimo was taken to a modest hospital that was charitable enough to keep her while we arranged for her future, guided by Mary’s generous inspirations.”

“If Jeronimo was kept from taking part in the events so that he would be spared bitter torments, how is it that he knows about them now?!... Don’t you feel just awful? Aren’t you shocked by all this, my friend?... Especially because strangers are hearing about it?” I dared to ask, wishing to investigate everything.

“Of course I feel awful. It couldn’t be any other way... As a matter of fact, anguish and grief have been my constant companions... Even so, my suffering and what I have been taught here have elucidated me, and I can think more clearly than before... You have to remember, my dear Mr. Botelho, that if Brother Santarem has described events having to do with me personally, it is because you came here to learn. And besides, you are sincere friends, sympathetic brothers capable of fraternal gestures not only on my

behalf but also on behalf of my loved ones! Our friendship did not start today... I recall very well that we've been united by a moving friendship ever since the sad mishaps of the Cursed Valley.”

“Yes!” Brother Santarem cut in. “He had to be told everything at the right time, even though charity mandated that he not be present when the events took place... As a matter of fact, he could not remain ignorant about it because he was responsible for everything that happened due to having forsaken his family, and because he would have to ponder the intricate events in light of his future reparations.”

There was a brief pause, broken by Jeronimo himself:

“I would beg of you to continue to instruct my friends with my personal drama, Brother Santarem. Based on the many times you asked me to analyze it myself, I think it is crucial that it also serve to edify and instruct them as well.”

“Yes, my son, I'm sure that it will be of great benefit for them to hear about this case in its entirety,” the priest acquiesced patiently, with a kindly smile that softened my impertinence. “Actually, the life of each one of us entails sublime and magnificent lessons, as long as we take the time to understand it in light of the divine laws that rule people's destinies.”

He gathered his memories for a moment, and then continued:

“The instant that Margarida Silveira fell to the floor of the tavern, we took her spirit – temporarily disengaged from her physical body – to one of this Institute's emergency outposts in the adjacencies of earth.

“The services provided there are varied and constant, just like in the Colony. Many infirm incarnates are healed there using the medicine of the spirit world. Many incarnates that have strayed from the pathway of Duty have received new strength and vigor to amend, and consequently, regenerate themselves. And many other afflicted and sorrowful hearts have been consoled, counseled and led to God, saved from suicide and reintegrated into the purpose for which they were born and from which they deviated.

“Margarida was taken there in spirit and submitted to a meticulous examination, which confirmed that the state of her fluidic organization – her perispirit – was precarious and that a rigorous treatment was urgent. Meanwhile, her physical body was being examined by the incarnate doctor at the hospital, where she lay in a coma.



“We decided that it would be best for Margarida’s future if she remained in the coma for as long as it took to carry out the more urgent moral assistance demanded by the situation. We used the utmost care to infuse her physical-material body with the vitality necessary for its health and preservation; after all, she was not really sick but intoxicated by the forced ingestion of alcohol. Her organs were normal but her nervous system had suffered the consequences of her awful lifestyle. Her torment was more of a moral nature, requiring devoted care – the reason why the medical personnel caring for her at the Oporto hospital were confounded by the coma.”

Brother Santarem stopped for a few moments and then asked if we were interested in hearing more. All of us begged him to continue, not only because we were concerned about the future of this young woman, whom we all held so dear after hearing her father talk about her for so many years, but also because of the lesson, which deeply resonated in our hearts. Furthermore, Jeronimo himself was excited about the account, which was an even better incentive for the narrator to go on.

The kind counselor acknowledged us with an affable smile and continued, as our attention increased.

“The truth, my friends, is that not only was Margarida not evil, but she was not even prone to vice. In fact, it repulsed her and she was anxious to be freed from it. Her dolorous case was actually a trying expiation, the unavoidable consequence of things she had done in former reincarnations, things that had been clamoring for justice and reparation for centuries, not only in the folds of her own conscience but also in the harmonious codes of the Supreme Law, which does not harmonize with any transgression from the path of righteousness!”

“Could you give us some examples of what her spirit did in former incarnations that led to her present situation?” I dared to ask, taken by the sincere wish to learn.

“The study of the Law of Reincarnation is profound and complex, my friend, and at the same time simple and easy to understand inasmuch as it explains many of the problems that plague Humanity, and which seem apparently insoluble. You, too, will reincarnate in the future, re-reading the pages of the book of your conscience... Meanwhile, however, there is nothing wrong with satisfying your natural curiosity since you will profit by learning another of its multiple aspects.

“Yes, my friends! The depth of the divine laws is dizzying and can indeed frighten ordinary spirits that are not yet ready to understand them! However, the justice of those laws distills such wisdom and mercy that with a more careful and thorough examination, their fear will change into reverent admiration!

“As incredible and unsettling as it may seem, my sons, in past planetary existences, that is, in more than one earthly existence, the spirit that you now know as Margarida Silveira was incarnated in a male body! And as a man – because the spirit is not subordinated to the imperatives of sexual characteristics as understood on the earth – this spirit, in detriment of spiritual values, abused the freedom and prerogatives that society concedes to men, and thus defiled its sacred duties! As a man, this spirit dishonored respectable homes, violated trusting women, spread the degradation of prostitution all around, and disgraced and ruined lives that seemed to have promising futures and cherished hopes!... However, the day came when the Supreme Law, which does not want the death of sinners, but that the sinner live and repent, intervened and stopped it from continuing its execrable transgressions of its sovereignty! The Law seized its liberty and granted it opportunities to recover from the anomaly of so many iniquities, impelling it to be reborn in a female body in order to more effectively taste the evil it had committed against women. In addition, it would save precious time in its expiation plan if it would subject itself to bitter torments identical to those it had imposed on others with its misguided free will! The spirit reincarnated as a woman in order to learn, in the disgrace of her violated chastity, of being vilified, discredited and abandoned, the crucial lesson that it is not without consequence that one infringes any of the commandments conveyed on Mt. Sinai as the standard of honor for Humanity, and that instead, one should educate oneself with the sublime purpose of loving God and one’s neighbor in mind!”

An unsettling uneasiness filled our minds with dread at this new explanation. We trembled; we felt as if our skin was covered in cold sweat. We vividly remembered that we too had been men and that our consciences had not recorded only the angelical things we had done with regards to such a grave issue. However, faithful to my entrenched defect as a polemicist, which stubbornly accompanied me even after death, I asked, disheartened and confused:

“But if that’s the case, why is Jeronimo responsible for his daughter’s disgrace?”

“Ah, my friend! A little dose of reasoning will be enough for you to grasp the fact that, in spite of that being the case, it does not keep the poor father’s own conscience from accusing him mercilessly! *‘It is necessary for there to be offenses, but woe to the one through whom the offense comes!’* stated our Wise Master, an incomparable educator. When Jeronimo acted as he did, he was in complete disaccord with the virtuous dictates of the Supreme Law! Margarida Silveira had reparations to endure, that is true; but in leaving her without any support, her father’s suicide was the touchstone that plunged her into the sad events that followed! Indeed, her terrible debt would have been paid over the course of time one way or another. It might not have been obligatory for her present existence and would have remained pending for an opportune time in the future. However, by plunging him into the fatal error of suicide, her father’s free will precipitated events that he would not have been responsible for otherwise, and he would not have had to suffer the consequences of his remorse in the present! What about a man who caused the tragic death of a loved one, even though he had not nourished the thought of killing him or her, and even abhorred the idea of seeing him or her die?... Wouldn’t he suffer anyway?... Wouldn’t he live the rest of his days torn by remorse, sorrowful and desolate forever?... Margarida had to expiate her past, that is certain. But the blow of the sinful thing that would strike her did not have to be engendered by an act committed by the foolishness of her own father!”

Disheartened, I kept my silence while Brother Santarem continued:

“The young fishmonger hadn’t taken pleasure in vice. She had suffered immensely from her humiliating situation and was anxious to be freed from it. So it was easy for us to help her, to convince her to regenerate herself and to direct her towards a sure goal.

“I had long conversations with her during her six-day stay at the outpost, since I had been assigned the role of counselor and hierarchical agent for the Guides of Truth that work to regenerate penitents. While sheltered there, she was taken to a room that would be conducive to the type of conversations that were slated for her, a sort of a parlor where magnetic waves of special power would aid the retention of my words in her conscience, faithfully acting on her memory. Her subconscious would thus collect all my recommendations, which she would recall once awakened and act on them at the opportune

moment. That is what in fact happened later on, when, without realizing it, Margarida followed the advice that had been given to her spirit while her material body was in a coma – advice, which, of course, she forgot when she woke up!

“To start with, I exhorted Margarida to pray, which she did, bathed in tears! I conveyed to her the value of prayer as the redemptive light that could extricate her from the darkness she was immersed in and guide her to rehabilitating purposes. In the small amount of time available to me under those unusual circumstances, which had been brought about out of necessity, I thus ministered to Margarida, who had never received even a rudimentary religious moral education. I spoke of the duties imposed by the Supreme Creator in his Laws, and reminded her that in the love of the Divine Crucified One she would find the strength to move the mountain of iniquity that had been enslaving her, and that she would also find effective consolations to mitigate the torment that brought so much unhappiness to her life. I infused her with new hope and courage for a second phase that was imperative for her destiny, and with trust in the Heavenly Master who extended his compassionate and protective hand to sinners to assist them in their renewal... I convinced her that if as a woman she had been disgraced, her soul, on the other hand, contained principles whose divine origin demanded noble and heroic acts from her will, acts capable of promoting her rehabilitation in accordance with her own conscience and in accordance with the One who took from himself sparks of light to give us Life!

“Faithful to instructions I was receiving from the Temple through telepathy, I encouraged her to use every effort to leave Oporto, and even Portugal! If she remained in her homeland, her will would not be strong enough to make amends... She should even forget that she had once lived on Ribeira Wharf! She should use the heroic effort of her will to create a chasm between herself and her tragic past in order to start a new phase in her life. It was imperative that she trust herself, deeming herself good and strong in her struggle against adversity!... Heaven would certainly send her opportunities for her renewal! Brazil was a hospitable land, a friend of the unfortunate, while its harbors, as well as the hearts of its children, were generous enough to receive her without caring about her past... She should prefer exile on Brazilian soil because it would become a comfortable dwelling place for her... Because in reality, the spirit is a citizen of the universe; its true homeland is the infinite, which will enable it to understand that wherever they are, people will always be in their homeland, a place they should love and

serve, honoring and helping it ascend towards its lofty moral destiny! She should forget! Forget her entire past! And with heart and soul turned towards the Eternal Compassionate One, she should wait for the action of time and the gifts of the future. The benevolence of heaven would not forsake her on her pathway to regeneration!”

We were all touched in our appreciation for the story. It was broad enough to be of use to anyone undergoing similar trials. We kept quiet, however, while Brother Santarem, whose words became more soothing the further he got into the story, continued after a short pause:

“Afterwards, it was necessary to awaken Margarida, that is, to return her spirit to the sacred temple of her physical body to continue the tasks imposed on it by the course laid out for her life.

“Since she had not really been sick, her awakening was gentle and natural under our loving assistance, as if she had returned from a prolonged and beneficial sleep. The doctors and nurses were astonished. The young woman, however, seemed sad at having had to return to physical life and she wept inconsolably. Irrepressible sorrow weighed on her heart. She could not recall one thing that had happened to her spirit during those six days of magnetic sleep. Only a vague feeling of love brought to her inner being a mysterious and sweet longing that she could not define...

“After a few days of anxious expectation, she decided to move to Lisbon in search of her sister Arinda, whom she knew was working for a reputable hotel.

“But the situation was still hard for the unfortunate young woman. She had no means of travel; her stained past and her bad reputation kept her from finding work in honest homes as a maid. However, there are always guardian angels around the unfortunate, and they are ready to intervene at the right time to remedy situations considered insoluble. For Margarida, the intervention of heaven for the money needed for her to travel came via the help of two of her former hospital roommates. After seeing her crying so much, they were finally able to make her confess her dire situation. Poor, humble, suffering and good-hearted, and due to their own circumstances, they could better understand the hardship of others. Consequently, the good women asked for help from their husbands and relatives, and after just a few days, Margarida had received enough money to travel to the capital of the Kingdom.

“Arinda welcomed her sister. She forgave her for her past behavior because she knew that in such an awful drama there had been more ignorance and disgrace than evil – Arinda had no idea whatsoever about the spiritual antecedents that I just revealed to you concerning the events surrounding her little sister.

“Since that time, she has employed her at her hotel and has kept her under her close supervision. She wants Margarida to get used to domestic tasks that might help her find a job in a private household someday. But the truth is, my dear friends, Margarida is going to move to Brazil sooner than expected... It just so happens that there is a Portuguese family staying at the hotel right now, and they live in the large Brazilian industrial center, Sao Paulo. They are visiting their homeland and have made a stop in its capital, visiting the city for the first time... Margarida is being guided by her sister to serve them with attention and kindness... The affinity is mutual... The family invited the young woman to go back to Brazil with them as their maid... Arinda agreed to the idea, understanding the advantages for her little sister... And Margarida has joyfully accepted. So, in just a few days this dark page of her life will be closed so that she can start a new life that holds new opportunities for progress and accomplishment.”

We looked at each other in relief, and then at Jeronimo, the main character in this stormy odyssey due to his tremendous debt before the divine law for having caused it all with his deplorable suicide! The wine merchant, however, remained with his head bowed in deep thought.

Suddenly, in the midst of the august silence, a compassionate, sincerely interested voice asked:

“And Albino, Brother Santarem?... Hasn't Heaven granted him a blessing also? Surely it has.”

It was Belarmino. Converted to making amends, his benevolent soul was now displaying the best and solidest characteristics of fraternity of all the members of our group.

“Albino?” replied the priest with a smile, as if absorbed in a happy memory. “Albino is doing very well, maybe even better than his sister!... The isolation of his jail cell has been propitious for meditation, enabling him to reflect maturely and to seek God in the redemptive wings of suffering! Like his sister, we instructed him at our outpost. He readily accepted our admonitions and quickly resigned himself to his awful situation. He

understood that his punishment was fair because he had indeed committed wrongs against society! He dedicated himself to educational reading and study, guided very closely by a noble, incarnate soul in whom we put a lot of trust as our faithful agent and sincere spokesperson. He is a medium, a Christian initiate of the Third Revelation, who goes by the name Fernando<sup>37</sup>...

“Fernando still works at the outpost, and while his industrious spirit is transported there during deep sleep, he is given instructions about what to do to assist us with the young man in question. Professionally, he works as a police detective, but as a disciple of the Third Revelation he strives to live according to the principles of the Divine Missionary as much as possible. Among the many benevolent things he is doing as a Christian Spiritist, we would point out his concern for inmates and the condemned, whom he endeavors to help and serve. He brings them a ray of love with each visit. He infuses hope into their despondent hearts and calms their inner rebelliousness with the fraternal gentleness of his inspired words overflowing with regenerating counsel that quenches their thirst for justice and protection!

“Albino was enthralled by those kindhearted words as they revealed the tenderness of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to him. They spoke to him about a new world, a new era that could take place in his life as a forsaken young man! Fernando’s big, dreamy eyes, reflecting the fount of Light that brightened his soul as a chosen one of Heaven, strongly impressed the amazed Albino, who, overcome by irresistible affinity, told Fernando his entire tormented life story! Our dear agent was profoundly moved. He comforted Albino, giving him a moral-religious education in the light of the Third Revelation, exactly as we had asked of him, which made an enormous amount of work on our part unnecessary...

“In the solitude of the jail cell, Albino was soon able to receive our encouragement. Due to the compassionate efforts of the Lord’s servant and the penitent’s own goodwill, we were able to communicate with Albino through Fernando by dictating the educational norms that he needed so much in order to strengthen himself on the road to redemption! In addition, bathed in tears, Albino himself wrote down what we whispered to his mind through intuition, displaying a continued goodwill for the future!

“Fernando’s fraternal assistance did not stop there, however.

“He has friends in the Necessities Palace.<sup>38</sup> Because of his efforts with regards to the unfortunate son of our suicide Jeronimo, he attracted the attention of Her Majesty, Queen Amelia of Portugal. He told her that Albino was fatherless, and because of his inexperience, had succumbed to malefic seductions, but with a bit of fraternal protection and assistance he could still be useful to society.

“Here in our Institute it is known that the spirit of this illustrious lady is quite benevolent, compassionate, and always aiming to do the right thing. According to our instructions from the Higher Realms, for Albino’s moral and spiritual progress it is unnecessary to prolong his jail time for another three years. Therefore, we are working with Fernando to obtain, as soon as possible, the prisoner’s transfer to Africa, where according to what has been established, he will be released.”

“Excuse me, Father Santarem! But I would rather see Albino transferred to Brazil – the second homeland of the Portuguese – where we find it so pleasurable to live and die if it has to be outside Portugal... Poor Albino!... To go Africa!... So inhospitable and harsh...” intruded Mario Sobral frankly, without measuring the inappropriateness of his words.

“No, my friend! Albino still needs an eye to be kept on him, either by the police or by the guardians in the spirit world in charge of his future... In Brazil, he would find things too easy, which could lead him away from the pathway he’s been treading since having become friends with Fernando and an adherent of the wonderful Science of Spirituality! He would have too much freedom since the grand democracy of Brazil is not appropriate for him at the moment... It might make him take a harmful detour. Since he has barely begun his regeneration, he’s still too weak to overcome the many temptations that would come his way in that generous country. Inhospitable Africa will be more beneficial for his spiritual interests! There is more charity directing him there than to environments that would be contrary to the corrections he is being called to make on behalf of his immortal spirit!

“Consequently, we are anticipating him being transferred to Lourenço Marques<sup>39</sup> or some other African location.”

Considering the fact that the events described by Isolation’s director would certainly touch the troubled heart of that suicide father, furnishing him with tormenting memories and encouraging hope, I congratulated him on the successful outcome of his prayers, while also joyfully praising the loving



solicitude of the Maiden of Nazareth, whose intervention remedied situations that seemed impossible. I concluded with a question, the answer to which was so interesting that I absolutely must include it to finish this chapter. Embracing him fraternally, while my companions seemed to support my gesture with amicable smiles, I asked:

“My dear Jeronimo, now that the most pressing problems that used to darken your days have been resolved, aren’t you more serene in thinking about your future? I know it has already been greatly harmed by the constant affliction and unproductive impatience caused by the memory of your dear children... Aren’t you overjoyed at knowing that the heir to your name is about to serve society honorably and has opened his heart to the celestial teachings of a religious faith that is like a blessing from the Almighty, glorifying his future?... Can’t you smile in acceptance, knowing that your blonde Margarida will be living with a respectable family, so respectable, in fact, that it was honored with the attention of the Virgin Mary, to whom you prayed for her to return to the pathway of immortal rehabilitation?... Yes, Jeronimo, you must be overjoyed! We all congratulate you, my friend!”

But he looked up at me with a sad face and answered in a tearful voice:

“Yes, Camilo, my friend! The benefits I have received from the assistance given to my beloved children are so vast and so profound that there will never be enough words to express my gratitude to my Savior’s Blessed Mother... unless an even greater mercy is extended to me: to become a protector of orphans and abandoned children and keep them from falling into the abyss that I saw my own children immersed in!

“I live with the hope of such a miracle, Camilo! I have learned from my devoted instructors in this welcoming place that the spirit lives many lives on the earth; that it is born and reborn in human form as many times as it takes for its soul to find the blessing of God! Therefore, I sincerely want to do this someday in another human form! If, as I now fervently believe, we do possess an immortal soul that evolves steadily towards God, once I’m reincarnated on the earth again, I will show my thanks to the Powers of Heaven by building loving and hospitable Christian orphanages and boarding schools where orphans can be sheltered from tragic situations like those my defenseless children had to go through!... Yes! I certainly am comforted, grateful and hopeful! But jubilant, no; not while such a painful amount of outstanding debt still burns in my conscience, scorching it with the unforgivable fires of a thousand reasons for remorse! No, I do not blame Zulmira, because I feel

guilty for her downfall too! Irremediable poverty, accumulated privation and tormenting hunger hounded and defeated her because she was morally unprepared to endure the daily struggles against adversity. She had not been prepared in her father's home, and I, who loved her so much, got her used to the excessive and counter-productive comfort and the reprehensible idleness that badly spent money can produce! As the head of the household, I should have been responsible for the sacred duty of caring for my family's future by defending and honoring it, but I failed miserably. I abandoned it in disgrace by hiding behind suicide in order to avoid the honorable struggle. I was completely weak-hearted about the mission that even the lowest beings of Creation fulfill with devotion and love. As the natural person in charge, I made a promise before men through Matrimony and before God through Paternity to lead my family to the sanctuary of Honor and Happiness. Instead, I abandoned them to the fate of the world's iniquities, hiding beneath a grave dug by the cowardice of suicide. Who was I to expect someone else to take my duty upon her shoulders?!... What could poor Zulmira do if I, worse than what she did, went so far as to kill myself to evade the fulfillment of my inalienable duties?!... For Zulmira to have been able to overcome her situation, defending and honoring four minor children, she would have had to possess lofty principles under the guidance of advanced Christian ideals – as Brother Santarem remarked so many times at seeing me suffering and repulsed by her behavior! Just like me, poor Zulmira knew nothing about the fact that she was a divine creation... in spite of the religious affectation expected by the heretical and hypocritical society in which we lived! Now, prayer is my comfort, together with my studies regarding my plan to receive a new physical body... I praise God for everything I have received, my dear friend, which for someone like me, who did absolutely nothing to merit such mercy, is above and beyond what I deserve.”

“Could you tell us something about the conditions under which Jeronimo's new material experiences will take place, Brother Santarem?” I asked, interested in the sequence of the lessons deriving from all the facts that had been presented to us.

“That won't be hard to do, my friend, and any student who applies himself will grasp it easily.

“When we return to the Spirit Homeland after having committed irremediable crimes in earthly society, we prepare ourselves to revisit the theater of our infractions in new existences to recapitulate the past by *acting*

*in a way opposite to the way in which we failed.* In light of this rule, Jeronimo will once again have to confront financial ruin and commercial dishonor, according to the earthly concept of a failed business. He will face poverty and discredit – the very same motives that led him to commit suicide – in order to test his repentance and the moral qualities the bitter experience beyond the grave enabled him to acquire. He will go bankrupt, despite all his efforts to avoid it and despite his personal honesty, contrary to his former negligence, where he wasted on pleasure and vanities the loan of the wealth which the Supreme Distributor had entrusted to him for his own progress and the progress of his brothers and sisters... The grave impasse he created with the family he abandoned to dire straits, fleeing his sacred duty to fight to defend it, will remain... Since he has free will, his conscience will counsel him as to the particularities of such a delicate reparation, in accordance with his sentiments. However, his expiatory struggles, the anguishing trials and dramas he will have to endure within the ambit of his unavoidable reparations, will be aggravated by precarious bodily and mental health, both indefinable malaises that medicine will not be able to cure. They will represent the harmful repercussions on the nervous system of his new physical body, repercussions deriving from his perispirit, damaged by the trauma of suicide. Since he killed himself by damaging his auditory system with a bullet, deafness and a mild palsy that affects his vision might be part of his future... You know, my dear friends, that as a living and semi-material organization, the astral body – the perispirit – is of course also affected by the brutality of suicide... and as such it will shape the future body by suffering mentally from the same injury.”

\* \* \*

We said goodbye to Brother Santarem with tears in our eyes. We could not find the words to thank him for having instructed us so kindly. We embraced Jeronimo and left, feeling sorry for him due to the gravity of his situation. In spite of everything we had just witnessed, our poor companion was nothing more than a lonely man confined to the Isolation Ward, a place he could not leave even to visit his children. He would have to remain there to be instructed according to his abilities under the strict watchfulness of his mentors. Due to his heavy and shocking vibrations, contact with his beloved children could be harmful to them and lead them into disastrous situations.

“You should end this series of visits with a brief stop at the Reincarnation Department,” counseled the older Dr. Canalejas, “because in a

few days, you will be able to fulfill your old dream of visiting your Homeland and your former homes.”

A small vehicle was waiting for us, and as the enormous drawbridge was lifted behind us, we headed in the direction of the field covered with white lilies. A nagging sorrow filled our hearts, as I expressed both my own and my unfortunate companions’ sentiments:

“Goodbye, poor Jeronimo! I don’t know if we will see you again before the long and inevitable journey of reincarnation separates us!... May the Heavenly Benefactor have mercy on your spirit, illuminating your thorn-covered pathway with the blessings of his paternal clemency! Your story is our story – we know that well!... As Brother Santarem was illustrating your problems with his suggestive and elucidating words, we were well aware of the fact that he was charitably wishing to warn us of the difficult moments waiting for us as well.”

---

36 Mt. 5:27-30; 18:6-10.

37 See previous footnote referring to this medium in the last chapter of Part One, “Our Friends – the Disciples of Allan Kardec.” – Tr.

38 The Palace was built in the eighteenth century by Dom Joao V, following a vow that the monarch made to Our Lady of Necessities (whose chapel stood on the site). – Tr.

39 Now Maputo, the capital and principal city of Mozambique. – Tr.

## Preludes to reincarnation

*Truly, truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.  
You should not be surprised at my saying, "You must be born again."*

*Jesus Christ – The New Testament <sup>40</sup>*

The Reincarnation Sector was located at the far end of the Mary of Nazareth Correctional Colony, bordering on the regions properly considered spiritual, or the educational zone. This is easy to understand once we realize that groups of candidates for the great trials of the flesh – reincarnation – come from the lower zone, as well as from the regenerating zone of the Colony, to knock on its doors.

This important service center was comprised of the following interdependent departments, all exercising crucial functions:

Seclusion

Analyses (Private area, off-limits to visitors)

Recapitulation Planning

Research

Physical Body Planning

Reduction Laboratory (Private area, off-limits to visitors)

We began seeing more female workers, because a large part of the personnel that devoted their energies there were composed of spirits that had risen in the spiritual hierarchy by taking on female bodies. The key posts, however, as well as the general supervision of the Sector, were under the responsibility of the initiates of the magnificent phalanx we had already gotten to know.

The Sector was bordered by walls forbidding the entrance of non-credentialed visitors. As we entered, we were surprised by the soft light of the sun. This was the first time that we had seen colored tones in four years of hospitalization.

We were amazed at seeing that it was a very busy hub with superb buildings in a refined Hindu style. The profound wisdom of legendary India appeared along those picturesque and enchanting avenues, inviting meditation, study, the lofty cultivation of Spirituality's sacred things, and the destinies of the Soul!

Those stately buildings, surrounded by columns or adorned with characteristic domes, as well as the gracious and suggestive residential homes (lovely miniatures of the former), where the servants dedicated to the Redemptive Cause of the Master of Jerusalem resided, were marked with the august and indescribable beauty of the sacred atmosphere of the Spirit World served by high order spirits, whose ideal entails observing the Supreme Law, serving Jesus, and watching over the weak. It seemed that we had found the real Hindu civilization, the one that had been glimpsed only through the ecstasy of the initiates of the ancient secret sanctuaries, a civilization never rightly understood, and therefore never rightly established on the earth!

We were in good spirits. Optimistic emotions spoke of hope and comfort to our souls. And to crown our happiness, the beautiful sun bathed the parks and gardens, the sparkling lakes and waterfalls, the houses, as well as the expansive horizons, in sweet expressions of beauty, caressing them with gentle tones, as if its flowing golden color were filtered through veils that made the majestic panorama seem as though it were made of fine porcelain...

Guided by our esteemed Carlos and Roberto de Canalejas, father and son, we entered the building where the Sector's central governance was located.

The kind and eminent governor, the initiate Brother Demetrio, assigned us a local instructor who was capable of instructing us as beginners in things concerning spirit life. This instructor was a young woman, whose beautiful and smiling demeanor immediately infused us with trust. We were unable to learn anything about her except that her name was Rosalia and that she had lived in Portugal during her last earthly journey.

Our guides were not needed at this point, so they left us in Rosalia's care, while they went to fulfill more pressing tasks. They promised they

would return later to take us back to our ward.

As we descended the steps, Rosalia said:

“I’ll start the small task entrusted to me by our beloved governor Brother Demetrio, my dear friends, by telling you that I find it immensely gratifying to convey this lesson to you, which I will do as if I was addressing my dearest brothers. I can tell that you have a laudable desire to examine things in order to learn and progress, so I can foresee a rewarding future whose aim is to serve those in need of love and aid! However, I will not congratulate you just yet, because it would be premature. Above anything else, I pray that the merciful blessings of Heaven will help you stick to your current good purposes...”

Enchanted, we thanked her. We continued walking down one of the magnificent avenues fringed with lush shrubs. Industrious workers and specialized personnel were coming and going, lending the surroundings a busy character. We could not help but notice that a noteworthy silence reigned over this new sector, just as it had all the others that we had visited.

The young woman proceeded with her instructions, emitting a notable current of higher vibrations that reached the depths of our souls, awakening in us the highest respect and veneration.

“As you will see, no one sheltered in this Institute as a temporary patient needing to recapitulate his experiences can do so without first staying in our Sector for a period that varies from one to two years – depending on his or her condition – before any measures are taken that have to do with the new body he or she will animate on the earth. We receive spirits every day who are longing to return to the theater of their failures, eager to repair the past whose remembrance brings them such desperation, to expiate their wrongs and to recapitulate their dramas in order to overcome the crushing remorse that writhes in their conscience – bloody ghouls of their inner selves tied to the ignominious consequences of suicide!

“After receiving the necessary approval from the Temple for their intended reincarnation, which received previous approval from the Higher Realms – where the sovereign governance of the Legion resides – these spirits present themselves to the leadership of this Sector and are taken first to Seclusion, where information is registered concerning their upcoming incarnation on earth – their “boarding school” – under the paternal care of their guides, who will faithfully assist them from that moment onward,

following them unconditionally and without fail during their expiatory 'Via Crucis' on the earthly stage.

"After that, the technicians of the Analysis department take over in order to study the patients' characteristic tendencies and conduct a meticulous psychological examination. Their soul, their being, the innermost folds of their conscience are scrutinized by these judicious servants of the Lord. Because they are high order initiates of their illustrious phalanx, they are quite capable of the task. They use their superior magnetic faculties to compel the patients to unfold the pages of the immense book of their Soul, reliving the past and thus revealing themselves exactly as they are. In case you are still unaware of it, you ought to know that all individuals carry their life history imprinted in indelible characters on the labyrinths of their being, and under certain circumstances they are able to relive it in detail and convey it to others for examination, whether they are still tied to their physical body or not...

"There is one exception, however: the patients in the Mental Ward. Unfortunately, they will reincarnate just as they are! Nothing can be done for them except return them to the flesh. That is the therapy imposed on them to correct the overall imbalance of their vibrations, thus creating a sort of 'trial run' for new attempts at growth in the future. This therapy, made easier to bear by the prayers that are ministered to them daily in sympathetic, gentle and beneficial currents emitted from here on their behalf, is all that these poor brothers and sisters can receive for the time being, despite our great desire to see them serene and happy!

"Once the analytical character study is complete, the technicians submit a detailed and highly precise report on their findings. The case is then sent to Recapitulation Planning.

"From what I have told you, you can see that these analyses are indispensable, for they furnish the information necessary for planning the new existence. The merits and demerits of the reincarnating spirit, his or her most serious past failures, i.e. the ones that need reparation the most, as well as any mitigating concessions that may be applied – in sum, the structure of the projected new existence – are established based on this investigation. I need to explain, however, that this highly important task is carried out in two distinct ways that require quite different modes of operation. On the one hand, the procedure is very difficult – to the point of demanding several attempts in a process that is torturous even to the operator – when those condemned to imprisonment in the flesh come from the lower zone of the Colony, that is,



from the hospital departments and Tower prisons. On the other hand, only a simple technical revision is needed when the candidates have been patients of the Institute per se, that is, the regenerative place where the stages for reeducation take place, and students of the School of Initiation, etc., where you yourselves will be sent before long. In either case, this endeavor is greatly facilitated by information provided by the Temple, and by the cooperation of the missionary Guides appointed by the Higher Astral. Without their concurrence, absolutely nothing is attempted for the purposes of reincarnation.

“Once the reincarnating candidates’ plan is drawn up and the outline of their expiatory or reparatory struggles is finished, in accordance with the strength of their moral endurance, that is, their potential for victory; once the endeavors involved in their expiation per se are determined, in addition to any other accomplishments they may be capable of; once the opportunities they might encounter along the way as a consequence of previously acquired merits are determined; and once any difficulties that, for their benefit, they might run up against during the unfolding of their existence as a just consequence of demerits due to their wrongful past are determined, then the panorama of the future life that awaits them during their reincarnation – which is not only required of them but longed for by them – turns out to be a beautiful piece of work, a veritable, wisely designed epic, which is then sent to the Colony’s general management for examination.<sup>41</sup>

“There are cases where adjustments are necessary. This may include, as a concession of extended mercy, a decrease in the number of trials, putting off to the distant future the solution to certain issues. Or it may include an increase in the number of reparations over a shorter period of time, depending on the ward’s abilities! But the Temple will only give its approval in the latter case after having received authorization from the Higher Realms. Nevertheless, since the penitent’s missionary Guides and the technicians of the Reincarnation Sector are high order spirits bearing profound knowledge and glorious inspiration in serving the cause of human redemption, the plans they draw up are usually approved by the Legion’s General Government, which, through the Temple, authorizes the preparation of the earthly-physical body for the upcoming learning experience.”

We had stopped under the canopy of the trees lining the avenue to focus our attention on these explanations, while recalling certain ancient books containing lessons, based on somewhat analogous principles, given by

Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato to their disciples in the shade of the sycamore trees in the parks of Athens.

Belarmino, who was taking in every word with obvious relish, asked Rosalia:

“Are you saying, ma’am – my sister! – that the dramas of human life and the tragedies that shake the globe daily, making people appear to be toys of blind, superior forces, are actually directed by an uncontrollable fatalism?”

Smiling with charming simplicity, the learned servant of Mary replied, while gesturing to us to follow her up the stairs of a stately building surrounded by columns and veiled by lovely colored shrubs and leafy trees, over whose doorway was the simple inscription: *Seclusion*.

“No, my friend! Common sense states that people cannot be ruled by the blindness of an abominable fatalism! Rather, you should understand that what you call fatalism is nothing but the effect of a cause that men and women themselves created by what they did in the past while incarnate, living divorced from the Good, Morality and Duty, or while in the spirit world when, having strayed from the Law, they became brutish in the darkness they have surrounded themselves with. It is the spirit itself, through the good and evil it commits, that determines the consoling or punitive nature of its own future! Of course there is fatalism – if you will – but not the blind fatalism that reduces people to mere toys; rather, it is a fatalism that is the logical, intelligently corrective outcome of criminal transgressions, an outcome brought about by their own free will for having preferred wrongdoing instead of the dictates of reason and conscience! Therefore, since it is a corrective measure, this state of things goes away once the cause, that is, the evil on which the acts were based, is corrected. Likewise, the plans drawn up here regarding moral delinquents’ futures do not include the minutiae, the daily activities that they will have to attend to due to the dynamics of earthly life, nor do they include the particularities necessary to reach the inevitable! We only include the major points, those that will constitute reparation, the critical incidents, the strings of events that have to do with the logic of previous ones, that is, the Cause! Expiation itself is so deeply rooted in wrongdoers’ consciences as an effect of remorse, of the need to move forward from a criminal past, *that under the impulse of their free will, wrongdoers would execute it themselves even if it were not spelled out in the plan*. That has to be the way it is done, because if wrongdoers were left to their own devices, they would slide back into harmful excesses, creating disastrous possibilities.

“On the other hand, their meritorious capacities will also be included, and these can even be defined... since no spirit, incarnate or not, simply because it is undergoing its trials, will be kept from aiding its own progress by being devoted to worthy causes or by dedicating itself to generous endeavors on behalf of others. The reincarnate spirit will be free either to carry out or reject the endeavors that it had committed itself to as it prepared the outline for its future. It will have its free will, no doubt about it. However, if it does reject its commitments, great sorrow will visit it later when it realizes that it did not honor its pledge to its Guides, and thus did not acquire any merits that might shorten the difficult recapitulations still ahead... As you can see, my friend, this is not fatalism, but a harmonious chain of ‘causes’ and ‘effects.’”

We entered a large antechamber, whose doors were never locked. The only barrier was a light curtain of a very fine sky-blue fabric. The silence inside was impressive. It seemed like the whole building was immersed in solitude. A delicate, suggestive fragrance, however, lent an indefinable enchantment to that attractive interior, penetrated by a soft golden light streaming in through graceful arches festooned with white roses. Bouquets of the same flowers discreetly decorated the place, making it known that a feminine taste had inspired the ornamentation.

At the far end of the vast room we saw what looked like a semi-circle shaped platform. A woman of an indefinable age stood up immediately upon seeing us, and smiling kindly, she greeted us in a singular way as she walked toward us with right hand extended:

“May the peace of the Divine Master be with you!”

Rosalia introduced her affably.

“I’ve been expecting you, my friends! Brother Teocrito contacted me this morning and told me that you would need some brief explanations regarding this department... I will accompany you on your visit to our quarters... This Seclusion department will receive you someday because everyone interned in this Colony has to pass through its doors.”

She was a nun. Her snow-white habit was beautiful. Reflecting the pale golden phosphorescence coming from the light filling the pleasant ambient, it resembled the tunic of a glorified legendary maiden in an enrapturing sacred poem.

I did not know what religious order such a charming woman could have belonged to while on earth, someone who, now in the spirit world, was a

servant in a Colony devoted to rehabilitating suicides, working in the Lord's vineyard with the illustrious initiates of the Secret Doctrines. But I did know that, having honored her humble habit by carrying out ennobling endeavors on the earth, I could see that she was now sublimating it in the Beyond, amidst an exemplary, fraternal congregation, where she had sufficient merits to head one of the most important departments – Seclusion – fulfilling her role as a faithful Christian initiate!

Gracious and kindly, she invited us to rest for a few moments, offering each one of us, including Rosalia, one of her beautiful roses as she spoke with a smile:

“When I lived, secluded and silent, in the Convent of Santa Maria, I raised roses in my spare time, that is, whenever this or that sick person did not require my services outside those isolating walls... That was the only pastime I enjoyed in the world during my last pilgrimage on its soil! I would talk to the roses and to the other flowers too! I understood them; I taught them; I cultivated them as beloved beings; I was entertained by them and confided in them, depositing on their fragrant petals the tears arising from the sorrows that disillusionments and longings extracted from my heart! We could not have a pet in the Convent, not even a little bird, nothing that might draw the nuns isolated there away from their austere duties or the invariable inner contemplation meant to purify the character and sentiments for a good attunement to the divine emanations... Actually, I did not cultivate the flowers for myself, but for the whole community... However, I followed the norms established by Francis of Assisi and was convinced that there was no harm in extending a little of my love to the precious flowers that bloomed in the garden beds under my care... I have been accustomed to them ever since... Not only did they enable me to harmonize my vibrations with the realms of Love and the Good back then, but I have continued raising them in my spirit life as well.”

Impressed with the charming personality of this religious maiden, Belarmino posed a question that I thought indiscreet and in bad taste.

“Yes,” he said, “I can see that you continue to raise your roses on this plane of the invisible world... But I'm a bit confused... Is such a thing really possible, Sister?”

“Sister Celestina... at your service, dear brother Belarmino! And why not?!... You can actually see the flowers, can't you?... Why not raise flowers

here, since the true pattern of life does not exist in the material world but in the spirit world, which is enriched every day by the progress of each of its inhabitants? Concerning the Good and the Beautiful, is there really anything on the earth that is not just a pale reminiscence of the Spirit Homeland retained by the reprobates living on its surface?... Is not the fluid of Life, which makes earth's plants and flowers germinate, beautifying and making them charming, the same that fecundates and animates the quintessence and its derivatives, which we utilize in this world?... Is not the Divine Artist, who decorated the earth with so many lovely things, the same who vitalizes and beautifies the whole Universe?"

We thanked her for the roses, which seemed to glow and vibrate, imbued with unknown magnetic principles. We inhaled their subtle fragrance as Sister Celestina led us through the vast gallery held up by majestic columns. It all resembled a convent. On both sides were lines of doors carved in classical Hindu motifs. And from above, the same gentle, fluidic light flowed down in golden hues, infusing our steps with trust and joy.

Sister Celestina led us through a few of those doors and we were surprised to find large sleeping rooms behind them. She explained:

"Once the necessity has been verified and the time has come for patients of this Colony to return to the learning experience of incarnation in order to complete their commitments left over from the life they cut short through suicide, they are accompanied by their mentors as they present themselves in the Reincarnation Sector and hand over the recommendations and authorization of the head of the Sector where they had been housed.

"From Brother Demetrio's office, they are brought here, where they reside as interns. We room them here, surrounding them with love and happiness to make their stay as comforting and refreshing as possible... Suicides are sad, inconsolable individuals whom nothing can make happy, knowing that they will soon have to return to the earthly arena under harsh conditions. Consequently, they become even more troubled once they cross our threshold.

"They live here while preparations are made for the long journey ahead of them. Their apprehensions, their thoughts about what is in store for them once they are in a physical body again, increase by the minute. They are highly aware of what is waiting for them on the stage where they will have to play the heroic role of those who must habilitate themselves to reach the

planes of the true Good! This state of anxiety increases as the preparations get underway, and it becomes truly distressing, provoking frequent tears from their hearts torn by repentance, fear and longing... The day that candidates for reincarnation come through Seclusion's doors, they are saying farewell to the Colony, the Institute, the masters who have instructed them, and their friends, who they will only see again once their exile on the earth is over... Of course, even while reincarnate they will not actually be apart from them, as one might suppose; on the contrary, they will continue to receive the attention of all those who cared for and assisted them during their stay in the Colony. After all, their existence in the physical realm will not lessen the duties of their friends towards them. Thus, they will never actually be disconnected from the Colony. Because sleep in the physical body will give them a relative freedom, they can even continue to come here to receive counsel, to be instructed, and to be comforted by their former mentors. And they will in fact do so because they are still under our assistance; they are still a ward of our Institute. Reincarnation is nothing but another one of the resources we use for the education needed for their recuperation and return to the normal pathway of the glorious march of Progress!

“Nevertheless, they know that once they have taken on the heavy burden of the earthly clay, they will not be as lucid as before, that they will forget the fraternal fellowship, the blessings derived from the presence of those who had been the guardian angels who dried their bitter tears. Consequently, they agonize and suffer!

“My aids and I here in Seclusion watch over them, helping them re-adapt to the things of the earth and awakening in them their fondness for life in the generous bosom of the planet so well endowed by the Wisdom of the All-Merciful, and which only human folly has rendered unforgiving and thankless!... We have to bear in mind that suicides became disenchanted with their stay in earthly society; that they detest it and would rather live under circumstances that speak better to their inner desires! They only get to know the details of their upcoming expiations once they are interned, and many of them become terrified and regret having come here. Their resolve and courage leave them and they ask that their rebirth be put off a little longer. This is granted to them. In tears, they are sent back to the sector they came from, and they remain with their tutors there and do not make any further progress until they finally decide to take the only measure that will grant them the possibility of better days – reincarnation!

“But once they come here to stay, they do not remain inactive, waiting for someone to prepare their future life for them. They collaborate with their instructors in the exhausting endeavor of choosing parents that will best fulfill the types of trials they will have to endure in light of the sacred laws they infringed. As a general rule, suicides do not reincarnate into the circle of their most endearing affections, but outside of it. Under the direction of their missionary guides, they study the plan of their activities on the earth, in a sort of practical class taught by using images resembling theatrical or cinematographic scenes. In this way, they learn to plan their activities, carry them out, correct them, and take them to their heroic finish, acting with certainty and prudence. They travel to the earth frequently and stay a while – always accompanied by their benevolent tutors – seeking to get acquainted with the customs they will have to adapt to in the environment where they will live out the shameful condemnation they carry within. It is to their advantage that they resign themselves to the situation before they actually reincarnate, so that they are not overwhelmed by the change from the customs that they had gotten used to in our Colony. Once they have finished their research and have chosen their earthly family, they stay around their future parents for a while, trying to adjust to them, get to know them and adapt to their way of being, especially if their punishment or need for progress entails being reborn into a hostile environment where they will be surrounded throughout their days by enemies from previous existences, or by unknown spirits that are indifferent toward the misfortunes that will strike them.”

“What exactly do you mean by the research you are talking about, dear Sister?” I asked when she paused.

“I mean the research carried out in search of a family, an environment, of parents, especially, who are sufficiently charitable to agree to receive into their midst an unfamiliar child who will be a constant cause for concern because he or she is condemned to the dolorous trials that accompany the reincarnation of suicides! Moreover, there are cases that are extremely hard to resolve, my friends! For instance, the poor wretches in the Mental Ward who live here while we find parents for them. As you know, besides being incapable of collaborating with their mentors on their own behalf, their state is so precarious that they will have to be reborn into a physical body afflicted by incurable ailments. A normal state will be completely unavailable to them, and this will be a bitter trial for their parents! You will recall that many of these poor wretches will return to planetary life in bodies that are paralytic and deformed, possibly deaf, bearing incurable diseases, etc., and they will

only live in an environment where their parents, too, are undergoing harsh expiations. In these cases, their guides and dedicated mentors establish covenants with those who may be their parents and who have grave debts of their own before Divine Justice. These agreements could entail terms such as these:

“That they agree to receive such wretches as their children and that they help them on their ‘Via Crucis’ of expiation, because they need reincarnation to awaken from the numbness caused by suicide, and thus better their situation.

“That they commit to such a sacred charity out of love for the Divine Lamb, sacrificed on Calvary for loving sinners and for wanting to save them for the alleluias of Life Everlasting. The Ultimate Law of Love for One’s Neighbor will confer on them merit for their Good Deed, granting them worthwhile opportunities for quicker accomplishments in the realm of evolution, and for lives that are happier and more rewarding.

“That they consent to become temporary agents of the Legion of Mary by harboring its wards – some of the most wretched due to their criminal past – in their generous homes, until they have completed their expiation, the horrific consequence of their suicide!... Since the Law determines that Charity covers a multitude of sins... these parents, who also failed before the supremacy of the Incorruptible Law, will thus see many of their wrongdoings paid for in light of that sublime virtue they are called to practice in serving the sacred designs of the Creator!

“However, my dear friends, while some charitably agree to this honorable yet bitter commitment, others reject it, preferring to pay for their own wrongs down to the last cent, instead of making a loan to one of these unfortunate beings so that he or she can repair the consequence of his or her macabre act under a loving and honorable roof. Since the divine law does not obligate them to make such a commitment, they prefer the bitterness of their own trials accompanied by healthy, lovable offspring to ease their suffering, instead of receiving the concession of a rewarding and generous opportunity by exercising the sublime charity of becoming parents of deformed children who would only bring them chagrin and worry.”

“My God! Then how will such miserable companions-in-disgrace finally reincarnate?!... How will we, ourselves, reincarnate, wretches that lack everything, including parents?” I asked, impressed and extremely concerned,



remembering that I would most certainly be born blind, that Mario would be born without hands, and that Belarmino would be sickly and depressed from birth.

“Everything will be explained to you in Research, my dear brothers! For now, let’s continue our visit of these premises. They will be home to you too someday, when you begin your own reparatory journeys.”

Seclusion resembled an enormous boarding house comprised of four distinct floors, which were not much different from each other as far as layout was concerned.

The first floor was for spirits coming from the less sorrowful regions of the Colony, that is, the patients and students from the Institute who had already been initiated into the Science of Spirituality per se. The second floor was for patients from the Mary of Nazareth Hospital who needed to reincarnate immediately, as well as those from the Isolation Ward. The third floor was for inmates from the Tower, while the fourth was reserved for patients from the Mental Ward. Female interns had an identical arrangement but in a separate building nearby.

Celestina encouraged us to scrutinize everything. The candidate for reincarnation would register his name, date and place of (re)birth, parents’ names, the length of his upcoming existence, etc., so that everything about him could be filed properly.

Those interned in Seclusion all shared identical worries, although they were guided by their tireless assistants who did everything they could to see them triumph in their earthly trials. Wherever their obligations required them to be, that is, whether it was earth and the Analysis department, where they were submitted to the delicate procedures already described, or whether it was the Recapitulation Planning or Research department, the Seclusion department would always be the place they returned to. It was where everybody converged until they were finished with their preparations, and it was where they would come after having finished the earthly existence they had prepared for. The preparations were frequently quite lengthy, except in the case of the patients from the Mental Ward, whose arrangements for the return to earth were short, almost exclusively entailing only the research procedure.

The painful initial phase was followed by the phase of implementation. This was when the head of the Sector gave the order to the head of the

Reduction Laboratory to start the magnetic procedure necessary for rebirth, as well as the consequent attraction of the spirit to the fetus, whose biological elements would already be in the process of development in the fertilized ovum in the sanctuary of the maternal womb.<sup>42</sup> The womb was actually a continuation of the Laboratory, a sort of temporary or emergency auxiliary of the Reincarnation Sector. It was watched over by the technicians in charge of the magnificent endeavor and by the spirit's guides. Thus, with its normal vibrations constrained and restricted, the spirit would then shape its own body as the gestation progressed. We were told that the mold that would define the form of the developing fetus would actually be the spirit's current astral body – the perispirit. This fully explained to us what type of body we would occupy in the future. It would be a body structured according to the sickly magnetism of the vibrations arising from suicides like us, a fact that our patient mentors had already pointed out!

We were not allowed entrance into the Reduction Laboratory or the Analysis area, but were told that, when a spirit entered the Laboratory, it would not remain there very long; on the contrary, potent magnetic currents coming from the unlimited, divine forces that uphold the Universe would impel the spirit towards the body it would inhabit, attuning itself to it, and that it would also harmonize its perispirit with the person who had voluntarily – or compulsorily by a provision of the Great Law – agreed to be its mother, to suffer and weep with it as the dramatic and irremediable consequence of suicide, of grave and dishonorable crimes! That during the period of this attraction, which happens slowly as the gestation progresses, the spirit starts to gradually lose the ability to remember its past because its astral body has undergone the necessary reduction relating to the shaping of the fetus, something that also occurs due to the magnetic and vibrational assistance of the psychists in charge of the delicate operation on the patient's will and mental vibrations. That as gestation progresses, the spirit's vibrations become more and more compressed, and its memories and vivid feelings from the painful dramas of the past become more and more deeply stored in the astral body, leading to Forgetfulness, imposed as an added Mercy by the Supreme Legislator, who is aware of the misfortune that would arise if people were free to remember the true reasons why they have been born into miserable conditions, often struggling and weeping from cradle to grave! That upon entering there, something akin to a pre-agonic state commences in their anguished soul, something easy to understand in light of the constraint of all its faculties, mind and vibrations! That such a state, extremely trying for any

spirit, is truly odious to suicides because their astral body has been jolted by the shock of the violence of their act, and they will only find relief from it many years later, after the slow and natural loosening of the magnetic bonds that tie them to the physical body, to which they start being connected from the moment of the procedures in the Laboratory. We were also told that the accomplishment of this entire epic, worthy of being Divinely Written, is much easier when patients demonstrate sincere repentance for their wrongful past, along with goodwill and humility for righting their wrongs, and when they proceed in search of the dignified approval of their conscience. In such a case, their will becomes malleable under the protecting action of their devoted Guides, who use every effort to see them emerge triumphant and rehabilitated from that ugly web of failures and crimes against the Incorruptible Law of the Almighty!

Thus, after visiting all of the various departments and receiving invaluable explanations by Sister Celestina, Rosalia and other supervisors, we reached the premises reserved for Recapitulation Planning, the purpose of which has already been described fully in this chapter. We would just add that, upon entering the comfortable building that housed that department, we were met with a pleasant surprise: its workers were all women – some still young, barely out of childhood, others middle-aged, and even venerable elderly women! Active, lucid, perfectly capable of fulfilling their lofty responsibilities, they were consulting the notes provided by the Analysis department and the Temple in order to intelligently draw a sketch of the existence for each of the Colony's patients that were returning to the earth in new physical bodies. However, they were being supervised by learned initiates and each patient's missionary Guides, to whom they paid filial obedience. As mentioned earlier, we could see that several candidates were taking part in the designing of these charts that would constitute the rosary of their expiations, the days of anguish that would make them shed scalding tears from their hearts; of the decisive trials that all delinquents feel the need to submit themselves to in order to cleanse their conscience of the dishonor that darkens it, especially if they are suicides, who, more than any others, are inconsolable before the abyss they themselves created.

I could not contain myself. Seeing one of those sketches – a veritable compendium of salvation which, if followed, would turn the wrongdoer into a model human being converted to the sublime principle of duty – I asked one of the illustrious technicians that supervised the department:

“And once reincarnated, will all of us suicides be able to follow such a plan down to the last detail?”

The venerable psychiatrist smiled, but displayed a bit of melancholy in her answer:

“Everything contained in the plan derives from a cause, my friend, and it is obvious that this cause must be corrected so that the resultant effects become harmonized with the incorruptible law that governs Creation! If there is just one plan to be followed, it is because Supreme Justice dictated it; thus, it will have to be observed, despite any inconveniences or sacrifices! The legislation on which the principles of this institution are based is the same that moves the Whole Universe! Therefore, our determinations are in full compliance with it, which means to say that it is impossible for a plan not to be strictly followed by the penitent, since if the plan does exist, it is because the patient himself originated it by means of the causes furnished by his wrongdoings! So the plan is inherent to the patient! It is within him as part of his personality! And he has to abide by it in order to free himself from the darkness that his non-compliance infused into his soul! Yes, as a matter of fact, he can follow it because he has every ability to do so. If he does not always follow it, it is because he has once more let himself go astray from the right path! Consequently, he acquires more debt and will have to repeat his planetary pilgrimage two, three, four times, until he has paid the last cent to the Supreme Law, according to the Divine Master’s warning!”

At this point we said our farewells to the amiable flower cultivator, leaving Recapitulation Planning and heading for Research.

There was a large number of industrious workers there under the supervision of one head director and several deputy directors, because the work had to be done by commissions comprised of groups of two to four individuals and one leader, each group being responsible for preparing the reincarnation of a particular group of persons.

However, we could see that there was a dearth of workers. Thus, we saw individuals whom we had met in other departments lending their invaluable assistance in this one. These included Teocrito, who headed a small group that included Romeu and Alceste, and whose work on the earth’s surface we have already described. Other familiar faces included Count Ramiro de Guzman, who headed a commission that included the two Canalejas physicians; Olivier de Guzman, the emeritus educator from the Tower,

together with Father Anselmo; Brother Joao, venerable in his impressive oriental posture; and many others who were sufficiently knowledgeable and enlightened for carrying out such a lofty mission.

We acknowledged with deep emotion the undeniable benevolence of these servants of the Meek Nazarene. Following the example of their beloved Master – who had not disdained to appear in human likeness in order to teach the creatures entrusted to his Guardianship by the Supreme Father – they too lowered themselves, lessened their vibrations and materialized themselves almost to the point of being human in density, in order to serve the cause espoused by that incomparable and unforgettable Master! We were amazed to receive such expressive displays of fraternity from them while our touched souls whispered to us inwardly that we should correspond to their loving kindness by assuming a compliant attitude that was worthy of such noble instructors. Brother Teocrito interrupted our ponderings, approaching us and greeting us with a smile:

“Well, from what I have been able to tell, my friends, you have benefitted immensely from what you have learned... I have been informed about how you have shown an interest in everything. I am truly delighted because it announces a compensatory change in your resolutions, and thus in your destinies... What have you concluded from what you have seen so far?”

Belarmino de Queiroz answered for all of us:

“We have concluded, most eminent brother, that if we had known about these things when we were men on the earth, we would have most likely avoided suicide and taken pathways completely opposite to those on which we became lost!... As far as I myself am concerned, I know that I will have to be very strong to face the consequences entailed in my future destiny... until I can cover the debts that have stained my conscience! Oh, dear Brother Teocrito! I am still suffering, but I feel like a different man altogether... I mean a different spirit! Beams of unquenchable hope have been lit within my being, beams that are powerfully fortifying and strengthening me, inducing me to leave here in search of my future, whatever it may be! To know without a doubt that I *exist*, that I *am*, that I *will be*, convinced that none of my most sacred affections, aspirations and ideals, nor any of the efforts employed for enriching my moral and intellectual capabilities, will ever be lost, crushed by the execrable claws of death, which I used to think was the final stage of everything that exists; to be certain that Eternity is my sublime inheritance, to which I have legitimate rights due to the divine sonship that has been

bestowed on on me as a spirit; and furthermore, to be sure that I will continue to evolve throughout the ages, enriching my faculties with attributes that will enable me to reach the magnificent planes of the Spirit World with honor by conquering myself in order to realize the divine ideal – all this, for me, is ecstatic bliss that will enable me to surmount sacrifices and tears, overcome fatigue, and face all the criminal consequences of my past so that I can concentrate on the conquest of my future, even if I have to endure dolorous and excruciating Calvaries! Never as an incarnate did I conceive of the possibility of becoming the hero of such a sublime epic! I am ready for the struggle, Brother Teocrito! Ready to struggle, to learn, to endure, to triumph! I know what awaits me on the pathway of my ensuing existences! I know that trying times will shake the potencies of my soul in the centuries ahead on my evolutionary journey. But that doesn't matter! Not at all! I am immortal! And if an Almighty God has destined me to Immortality, it must surely be for a sublime ideal, whose true perfection escapes my still untrained conceptions as an inmate of a Correctional Colony. And it is not to err and suffer forever, for the Omnipotent Creator would not have limited himself by leaving to his descendants such paltry resources for their lives!... Oh, venerable Teocrito! I still feel that I have evolved so little! I haven't even gotten rid of the bacilli that devoured my last body, a body that I destroyed before the terrible tuberculosis consumed it once and for all, unnerved as I was at seeing it so nauseating and repugnant! I know I shall have to return to the earth in the very near future as a poor orphan suffering from tuberculosis, visited by daily disenchantments, a reprobate that will not harbor the warmth of one single illusion! I know this! But I am ready to face anything! As a matter of fact, I rejoice at the severity of this Sovereign Justice, because the irrefutable logic that proclaims it to be so also shows that its origin lies in a wisdom that imbues it with the power of Divine Law! And as such, I bow my head, reverent and resigned!"

Teocrito smiled. He placed his right hand on Belarmino's shoulder and added paternally:

"Your words are lucid and on fire, my dear Belarmino!... As you were speaking, I was imagining how wonderful your lectures on Dialectics must have been!... That you persevere in such lovely and edifying resolutions is my sincere wish... If you do, the evolutionary pathways that you will have to tread will be smoothed out and easy to conquer!... Even so, don't let yourself be too enraptured with the splendor of the divine panorama of Life that has dazzled many others before you... The spirit's evolution towards the Light is

grand and marvelous, no doubt about it. The life of human beings on their incessant ascent towards divine perfection is a glorious epic that honors those who live it! But the journey is hard, my friend! There are thorns and brambles aplenty on those redemptive pathways, demanding from the pilgrim of the Light the most active energies and the most edifying sacrifices! I can see that you are sincere, an idealist animated by a dignifying goodwill, and this makes me very happy! But enthusiasm by itself does not lead anyone to real victory, but only to a dubious adventure! Think long and hard about the need to acquire solid moral qualities for the tumultuous road that you must take in order to climb only the first step of that immense evolutionary spiral of your destiny, a step that ought to be merely your next existence in the earthly arena... You have come from an incarnation in which you were the firstborn of an illustrious family; thus, you had no lack of attention and respect! You were a cultured individual who lived at ease amid the pleasures and comfort lent to you by the wealth and kindness of a dedicated and loving mother... But in spite of this, you failed. You couldn't even endure the afflictions of physical infirmity, a patrimony of all Humanity! Just think, Belarmino, what your life will be like, if, as you desire, you live as a poor, sick orphan, lacking all consolation and hope, hounded by irremovable adversity!... That too will be an epic – neither small nor without sublime grandeur – to be lived and conquered – because you want to triumph! It will be a Calvary of redemption that you will have to endure with resignation and dignity, without any rebelliousness or offense towards Providence, for that would weaken the victory, if it did not annul it altogether!... You will need something more than just enthusiasm, Belarmino! So much more!... and you must prepare yourself before the struggle even begins.”

Mario Sobral approached, restless as always:

“Would you be so kind as to lend me your ear for a moment, Brother Teocrito?”

“Of course, my son! You can trust me.”

“It's... I need to make a decision... Well, I've already made one, actually... but I need a bit of help... I'm somewhat at a loss...”

“I know, Mario, but go on,” the director of the Mary of Nazareth Hospital replied kindly.

“Brother Teocrito! Who is directly responsible for me here in this Correctional Colony?”

“I am, Mario!”

“Oh, good! I hope that will make it easier to tell you about the plan I have in mind... Sir... Brother... Whatever you are, have pity on me. I just can't go on like this! Please make arrangements for my return to earthly society. I want to incarnate again! I want to right the wrongs I committed against my family!... My mother – Oh, God! – for whom I caused so much grief from cradle to grave... My wife, whom I betrayed and left abandoned to the daily vicissitudes of life! My children, whom I rejected and forgot about... and Eulina... I want to rid myself of the obsession blazing in my memory from remorse for my crime against that poor woman! I need to forget, Brother Teocrito! Oh! Above all, to forget in order to get a bit of peace, a bit of serenity to do something that will soothe and mitigate the anguish burning in my conscience! I want to try to do all that, so that I too can evolve – because, according to what we have been taught here, the Law prescribes incessant evolution for all Creation. I want to expiate and amend my wrongs!

“The fragile and humiliated image of Eulina, defenseless against my brutality, struggling in the abhorrent agony of being strangled by my hands, has taken over all my thoughts and has annulled any desire for anything else. It obsesses me, deranging the innermost fibers of my being! I need to erase that devilish picture from my mind in order to feel Heaven's forgiveness refreshing my inconsolable conscience with hope! I want to suffer, Brother Teocrito! The tragic torment of the Sinister Valley wasn't enough! I didn't suffer there for Eulina; it was for myself, the consequence of my suicide! I got down on my knees before the dolorous image of Eulina in her agony and promised to incarnate once more as a man, and to plod through an entire lifetime, from crib to old age to grave, without the hands that strangled her!... I will inflict myself with such a punishment as proof of my sincere repentance! It is not the Lord that imposes it! It is not the Law that demands it: no, it is I, myself. I willingly beg the All Merciful God to grant it as the supreme comfort for my misfortune as an offender of his Law of Love for One's Neighbor, as the supreme opportunity for my rehabilitation; for death is an illusion that deceives the fool who plunges into the abyss of suicide! Yes! I shall live without the hands that served to murder a poor defenseless woman! May my crime against Eulina come back on me! May I find myself without hands, defenseless, just as Eulina, bereft of strength, was defenseless on that abominable night, overcome by my ferocity! Brother Teocrito, I believe that



that is the only way I can ever find relief, so that, later on, I may face the remainder of my debts with the paternal help of my God and Creator!”

The old Lisbon bohemian had spoken bathed in tears. Our venerable tutor was touched and replied gravely:

“Have you thoroughly considered the extent of responsibilities you will take upon yourself with such a reincarnation, my poor Mario?”

“I have, indeed, Brother Teocrito.”

“Yes, I can see that you are sincere and strong enough for this expiation, and that you have fully repented of your guilty past! Indeed, that will be the recommended course of action for your case, a drastic measure that will lead you in less time to the honorable rehabilitation that your conscience demands! But remember, too, that you were a suicide, and that is what caused the dire condition of your astral body, your fluidic envelope, the matrix that will structure your future physical body so that it is infirm at rebirth, debilitated by irreparable ailments on the objective or earthly plane.”

“I do so desire it, Brother Teocrito!... Everything and anything will be preferable to the terrible torment of this remorse that shackles me to the hell that has spread over my soul!... At least, when reincarnate as a man, when I lack everything, when only misfortune accompanies me, I will have one comfort, which the Mercy of the Almighty Father will grant me as the supreme charity for my irremediable situation: Forgetfulness!”

Filled with pity, the wonderful initiate promised to immediately take care of the matter, adding paternally:

“Mario, once your instruction here is over, come and see me in my office. We can talk more about the preparations for such a complicated endeavor.”

He then invited us to take part in the entourage that under his care would research the means for the reincarnation, already ordered and planned, of some of his other wards who would be submitting themselves to the “therapy par excellence.” These were individuals who were still under his watch-care, although several of them were no longer connected to the Mary of Nazareth Hospital per se. We would be going along as simple observers since our condition did not allow for collaboration of any kind.

With the necessary instructions in hand, and ready to start the delicate endeavor, the selfless servant of Mary said to us:

“We still have some time because the work I’m responsible for can only be done at night. Get some rest, my dear friends, as we will be returning only at dawn. I will send for you when it’s time for us to go to the indicated spot.”

Roberto and Carlos de Canalejas came to take us back to our ward. Rosalia said goodbye and promised to meet us again at the same place the following day to carry out the recommendations of our much loved tutor, Brother Teocrito.

---

40 Jn. 3:3,7.

41 We should not draw extreme conclusions from this exposition. Before reincarnating, a spirit can choose the trial of poverty, for instance, thus subjecting itself to the degree of poverty that will benefit its existence most effectively. But one should not infer from this that every single aspect and event related to this anticipated poverty is laid out in detail in the spirit world. If the reincarnating spirit is to become blind or physically deformed, this will happen without the need to indicate on the plan drawn up before the spirit’s return to the earth what specific accident or illness will produce the state conducive to this trial. This is what one is to derive from the basic works on Spiritism. – (Medium’s note).

42 See a detailed account of this procedure involving the reincarnation of the spirit Segismundo, in *Missionaries of the Light* (Brazilian Spiritist Federation, 2017) by the spirit author Andre Luiz, psychographed by the medium Francisco Candido Xavier – *Tr.*

---

## “To each according to his deeds”

*Truly I say to you, you will not get out until you have paid the last cent.*

*Jesus Christ – The New Testament <sup>43</sup>*

Around midnight the two Canalejas doctors came bearing our paternal friend’s invitation. Filled with excitement, we left the Indian Ward.

Until then, we had never gone out at night. The strict discipline of the hospital departments was a correctional method that obligated us to be in our ward by 6:00 p.m. No patient was to be outside the walls of his room after that. The Sector director was the only one who could make an exception to the rule, which he did only rarely and only for instructional purposes.

The places we would be crossing before reaching the neighborhood of Security, as well as the other departments and Sectors, were not dark but were lit by a lighting system that would be nearly impossible to describe. We could not grasp the nature of that light that shone over the long, tree lined avenues draped in fog. Later on, we concluded that it must have been actual electricity adapted to the astral plane. What was certain was that that light, however moderate and subtle, infused the mist with interesting, even beautiful, crystal-like effects in the snowy surroundings.

A vehicle similar to those used by the local patients was waiting for us. When we arrived at Security, we found that a large caravan was ready to depart, with guards and lancers making sure that everything was done in an orderly manner.

For a while, the ride was so smooth and trouble-free that we were not paying any attention at all to our mode of transportation.

Suddenly, the vehicle stopped and an attentive guard asked us to climb out, which, curious and happy, we did.

We found ourselves standing in a vast courtyard surrounded by imposing walls. Despite the late hour, there was a large number of incarnate and discarnate spirits moving about. The incarnate ones were in their astral bodies while their material bodies lay sleeping in their beds. Towards the back of the courtyard a white building, well-lit and glimmering from the powerful lighting, looked like a hotel or public office intended for nighttime assistance. But in reality it was simply a Colony annex that was necessary for that noble Institution's many services, a mobile emergency station that the head of our Sector had told us about, and which was not totally unfamiliar to us, since we had heard it mentioned in the Margarida Silveira case. Legion Guards were at their posts at the entrance gates to keep an eye on the building and the surroundings.

Within the building, each group of the caravan's constituents had private quarters where they established their operations. When we got to Teocrito's quarters, we saw that they were comprised of an office containing a private parlor and a variety of apparatuses that we recognized from the Colony.

Teocrito was joined by Romeu and Alceste, and as he directed us to sit in the comfortable chairs located in the antechamber, he handed them two different addresses, saying:

"About two hours ago, the two women at these addresses fell into restorative sleep. Bring them here, after infusing their physical bodies with magnetic reserves... Use every effort to bring their husbands or companions along with them, although it's not absolutely necessary."

He furnished them with local assistants from the outpost along with guards to watch after their safety, sending them off with reassuring words. He then sat down next to us and started a lively conversation.

We felt truly happy. The presence of this venerable instructor, whose democratic attitudes we appreciated so deeply, infused us with such gentleness and benevolence that we felt enchanted and invigorated. A natural shyness, however, kept us from speaking to him before he spoke to us. Perceiving the anxieties floating around in our minds, he did not waste any time before explaining things to us in his kind and smiling demeanor:

"I know that a lot of questions have piqued your curiosity since this afternoon. Such curiosity about our present endeavor is praiseworthy because I can see that you are truly eager to learn. While we wait for my assistants to

return from their missions, let's use this time for a few observations. I am at your entire disposal for any questions you might have."

As usual, Mario dared to speak first. As we know, he always became highly agitated every time he heard references to the earth and reincarnation on its soil.

"Would you mind telling us what your assistants went down to the earth for?"

"Of course not, my dear friend! I wouldn't have brought you here if it wasn't to provide you with some information regarding our research work. Romeu and Alceste have gone down to the island of St. Miguel and to a small town in Northeastern Brazil – places where poverty and misfortune reach levels unconceivable to the content inhabitants of civilized centers – to get two of our Colony's wards whose names are filed in our archives as great delinquents in the past, but who are trying at the moment to grow morally by means of lives of severe trial, of repentance, resignation, humility and patience... My two assistants will bring their spirits here, while their physical bodies are in deep, restorative sleep because of how late at night it is. We are going to talk to them about the possibility of them becoming mothers of two poor patients from the Mental Ward, whose only means of relief at this moment is reincarnation in an obscure and suffering family circle. That is the only way they can free themselves from the depressing darkness with which they have surrounded themselves."

"From what we have seen so far, are we to assume that these unfortunate brothers are to be reborn into appalling conditions?" asked Belarmino.

"Yes they are, brother Belarmino. They are in such an unfavorable situation that before they can repeat the lifetime they evaded through suicide – which they willfully committed and for which they are fully responsible – they will have to animate a physical body that is sickly and somewhat non-functional, where they will feel limited and unhappy throughout their entire lives! In such a body – with which they will have attuned themselves through their own actions – they will complete the time they still had remaining on the earth before they cut it short with suicide. They will alleviate the vibrational hindrances they created, and will gain the capacity and serenity they need to repeat the lifetime in which they failed, although it is obvious that that will have to wait for a second reincarnation... We have already asked several women from other analogous localities if they

would be willing to perform the charity of receiving sickly children for the love of the Good and reverence for the sublime precepts of Universal Fraternity! But unfortunately, none of them possessed moral principles lofty enough for them to willingly acquiesce to selflessly serve the Divine Cause! Consequently, those two sufferers' return to the world of expiation has been held up, whereas it is urgent to provide them with some relief through such a drastic measure! The Institute's leadership then sent us information about these two women. They should both be capable of undertaking this difficult mission as debtors to the Laws of Creation!"

"But Brother Teocrito, what if they refuse?" I interjected, hanging on to the bitter pessimism that had not yet left me.

"That's not likely, my dear Camilo. They are two souls that are very sorry for their wrongful past. Now humble and forgotten by society, their only desire is rehabilitation through sacrifice and selflessness! I have been given the responsibility of convincing them to accept the delicate and heroic task willingly. But even if they refuse, Divine Providence, through the Law that governs the realm of Causes, will have the right to impose it on them as a trial in the work of righting past wrongs. In past existences, both failed in their duties as mothers by criminally aborting the physical bodies being prepared for spirits that were to have been born through them – some were to have been on luminous missions – and by lamentably neglecting to care for other children that the same Providence had entrusted to them in prior lives... Now, immersed in the darkness of the crimes they committed against the Divine Laws by disdaining Nature, Morality, Marriage, and the rights of others, as well as their own, they are now incarcerated on the earth. One lives on an isolated island from which she will never be able to escape. The other lives amid the harshness of the dry Northeastern hinterlands of Brazil. Instead of having helpful, intelligent children, considered noble and worthy in the spirit world, and therefore useful and well-liked by earthly society, they will have to expiate their past infanticides by bending over miserable cribs where different spirits will *moan and gnash their teeth*, spirits that are guilty, with reputations as great criminals in the spirit world, inhabiting a repulsive body due to their expiatory reincarnation. These two women will have to dedicate themselves to them as true mothers and will have to be loving, patient, resigned and willing to die in defense of the fruit of their wombs, no matter how displeasing it may be!"

After a painful silence, during which, anguished and confused, we all lost ourselves in confusing conjectures, Belarmino once more expressed himself, justifying his former renown as a professor of dialectics:

“Tell me, Brother Teocrito: does the Law oblige us to reincarnate amidst complete strangers?... As children of parents who are completely unknown to us?... I think that such a measure is just awful!”

“Yes, it is just awful, my friend! But just and wise! This is usually the case not only with suicides but also with those who failed their family, bringing dismay to the hearts that loved them! Suicides, however, disrespecting their own family by afflicting them with harsh suffering due to their act, plainly scorning the sanctuary of the Home that loved them, or making themselves unworthy of the blessings of a new family of their liking, have brought about the bitter necessity of repeating their physical existence outside the family circle that they loved so much. Even so, there are cases where suicides can return to a loving environment if there are former loved ones that are once more toiling in human existence at the time of their reincarnation, and if these loved ones agree to receive them to assist them in their expiations... In any event, they will reincarnate into a circle that is favorable to the type of trial they need to undergo. Frequently, there are also other, more dolorous cases where suicides will have to live amongst enemies to recommence the physical trials they avoided, which is so much worse than reincarnating amidst mere strangers... I must add that all people are brothers and sisters because of their spiritual nature, and that it is necessary that such things happen under the sublime Law that must unite forever all the children of the same Creator and Father!”

Meanwhile, two unfortunate patients from the Mental Ward were brought in with the help of Brother Joao’s assistants. They were filled with sadness and seemed unaware of everything that was going on around them. Their gaze was empty and indecisive, their steps were hesitant, and they wore expressions of indefinable anguish! They disappeared from view as Teocrito led them into the parlor. A few minutes passed. Brother Joao’s assistants respectfully waited for new orders in the same room where we were seated. We did not dare utter a single word. Silence dominated the vast ambient of the Post and a vague fear kept us from engaging them in conversation.

Suddenly, there was movement outside, as if something very important was happening... Romeu and Alceste, in addition to Carlos and Roberto and some other assistants, entered the premises accompanied by two women of

very humble social condition, flanked by lancers as if they were very important prisoners!

Curious, we examined them. One was frail and delicate, looking sickly and fragile with a somewhat fair complexion, her astral body reflecting the clothes she wore in her daily life. She was Portuguese and looked no older than 18. Everything indicated that she was a newlywed. Her humble and respectful husband was with her: a fisherman! The other woman was vivacious, skittish and more nervous, and had a darker complexion. She immediately came across as Brazilian, resembling the classic Egyptian type, with long, straight black hair, high cheek bones, an enigmatic expression in her beautiful, deep-set sparkling eyes, where floating tears seemed to reflect incoherent sorrow! She was alone, unmarried. A deceitful seducer had left her at the mercy of an unhappy love profaned by male betrayal, in a society that does not forgive women for being deceived by men in whom they deposited their trust, as we found out later on, much to our dismay!

The three incarnate visitors were protected by what looked like a very thin, crystalline covering, whose form was exactly like their profile. A thin luminous cord extended from them as if the other end of it were tied to an immovable prison stake!<sup>44</sup>

Teocrito greeted them kindly, and treating them with immense tenderness, had them taken into the parlor, where Brother Joao's patients also had been taken. We were surprised by the presence of Brother Joao, who approached us with a smile. We greeted him respectfully and he greeted us in return. He went into the parlor with Teocrito... and silence once more fell over the premises.

Although we were there to learn, we could not see what was happening in secret between the two workers for Christ and the delinquents in need of redemption. Now, however, as I draft the outline of these memoirs – thirty years after the scenes actually happened – I can describe to the reader the dramatic event that unfolded in that august place that at the time was closed to us. Since then, after such a long time has passed, I have acquired a solid knowledge that qualifies me to describe it.

\* \* \*

Teocrito and Joao sought to arrive at an understanding with the Portuguese couple and the Brazilian woman regarding the advantage of their



giving rebirth to the two wretched offenders of the Sovereign Law, who were in such need of an earthly existence to find relief from the unbearable suffering they had been going through! Matters were explained in detail to all three of them and the candidates were introduced to them in the full dramatic truth of their circumstances. The patient champions of Fraternity acted as eminent advocates – which they were, in fact – of the Supreme Law, effectively and respectfully expounding the sublime extent of the remedy they were recommending. The candidates for this grand mission of charity, that is, of receiving the sacred deposit of two of God’s children in need of becoming children of human beings in order to rehabilitate themselves from wrongdoing, were resistant, however, and tried to turn down the invitation:

“Oh, no, no!” said the humble Portuguese couple. “We don’t want a sickly, deformed or mentally retarded child! We just got married a month ago!... And our most cherished dream is for the good God to grant us a rosy and healthy little angel as our firstborn! We do want children, yes we do! But they should be strong and happy... so they can be our precious support in old age!”

And the Brazilian woman replied, struggling with shame before the venerable Teocrito, who knew her innermost thoughts and everything she had done:

“Oh no, sir, I cannot be a mother; I would rather die! How could I bear such shame before my parents, my neighbors, my girl friends?!... They would all despise me... and so would ‘he’; I know he would! A paralytic child!... Dear God, how would I ever be able to take care of him?”

Logical and grave, Teocrito replied – seconded by Brother Joao – as a worthy defender of the Redemptive Cause, whose founder had died on a cross showing humankind the sublime pathway of selflessness:

“Because you erred as a woman by breaking the sixth commandment of the Supreme Law, which imposes on maidens the respectful duty of chastity before the sacred advent of Matrimony, you must now right your wrong through selfless sacrifice by faithfully observing the other commandments of the same Law. This will enable you to amend your infraction of the sixth! The opportunity is presenting itself as the natural result of your own acts! If you will become a mother – since that is a woman’s natural role in the divine service of reproducing the human species – then accept in your body a poor spirit, delinquent like you and in need of rehabilitation! By helping him out of

the abyss into which he dove headlong, you will work out your own redemption. Furthermore, I can assure you in the name of the Divine Messiah that if you will carry out your duties as a mother, even though others cover you with shame and humiliation, and chastise you for what you have done, Heaven will give you the strength to endure every struggle and emerge from this trial victorious! It will glorify you spiritually for your heroism as the mother of a miserable, sickly child – a poor suicide – who needs someone charitable enough to love and protect him in spite of his misfortune, someone serving the merciful designs of the Lord, someone to take care of him as he expiates his wrongs! As you bend over the poor, simple crib of your child disdained by all, but not by you or Divine Providence; as you lovingly smile at the little paralytic looking up at you with sad, hopeful eyes, who recognizes your voice among a thousand others and becomes serene at your loving words, you will have found, my dear daughter, the generous nymph that will wash away the dishonorable stain you carry within.”

The visitors from the earth still hesitated. But Teocrito and Joao continued to expound the advantages of the endeavor, the merits they would acquire before the Supreme Law, the heavenly assistance that would be credited to them, and the applause they would receive in the future by the Legion of Mary as the supreme award for their charitable gesture to their poor wards!

During the grave discussions, the two suicides were present but barely aware of what was going on. Nonetheless, they were unusually attracted to the two women, tuning in to the vibrational tonus emitted by their mental and emotional emanations. One could even say that, at that very moment, the magnetic attraction that is indispensable for incarnation via birth began to receive the divine impulse that would solidify it! But because the three incarnates, weepy and unconformable, were nowhere close to entering into a final agreement, the two tireless instructors, with Romeu and Alceste’s help, decided on a more forceful measure that would lead them into a willing accord.

Under the influence of the will of the two selfless servants of Fraternity, the two women and the man started to remember their own past lives, archived in the imperishable layers of their perispirit: the unspeakable things they had done against the Sovereign Law, harming others and ultimately themselves; the dreadful crimes they had committed, crimes whose

consequences would demand centuries of reparation and readjustment amid tears and terrible heartbreaks!

The Portuguese couple saw themselves as rich aristocrats that had immigrated to Brazil, using slaves to provide them with the good life, driving to desperation poor Africans, sick and exhausted due to the cruelty of excessive work, mistreated each day by arbitrary and compassionless orders! The Brazilian woman, in turn, saw herself in her past life as someone proud of her beauty, irreverent and vain, trampling on her marital duties in disrespect of her wedding vows, in addition to refusing to comply with the sublime laws of nature, which required her to become a mother, a refusal that drove her so far as to commit infanticide!

A sinister parade of abominable, calamitous wrongs, of irreverent and dreadful acts, emerged from the vault of the consciences of these individuals who had reincarnated wishing to rehabilitate themselves. And now, through the mercy of the Almighty, they were receiving this invitation to help their own cause by practicing the admirable act of rendering the services of paternity and maternity to other delinquents like themselves in need of evolution and moral progress! These revisited scenes were so intense that we could hear the piercing cries from where we were.

After a while, silence once again enveloped the premises. The door to the private room opened and everyone emerged. Sorrowful but resigned and ready to carry out her benevolent mission, the Portuguese woman walked beside her husband, who shared her sense of the inevitable. The Brazilian woman, covered in burning tears, was supported by the fraternal assistance of the elder Canalejas and his inseparable son, Roberto.

\* \* \*

The next day it was already somewhat late when we were picked up for the continuation of our instructional visits before our release from the Hospital.

We were taken to Sector headquarters, where we met Rosalia, just as she had promised.

“Today we will be taking our final trip,” she said. “Brother Teocrito wants to take you to the earth, where you will complete your instruction. Since you already know what a ‘Research’ endeavor entails regarding the environment most favorable to the conditions of your individual

reincarnations, I'm going to take you to the department for Physical Bodies Planning.

"You know, my friends, that before the reincarnation of any suicide is finally set, not only the environment but the physiological health of the future parents, the issues regarding physical heredity, etc. will have been examined, especially if the guilty spirit is slated to suffer physical deformities, serious or incurable diseases, etc. Only after all these issues are clarified will the plan for the future body be drawn up. This, of course, is done with the reincarnating spirit present, along with the Lord's scientists in charge of the remarkable endeavor."

"Welcome, friends!" greeted the woman that received us after Rosalia's introduction. "Come right in... Sister Rosalia can accompany you."

She took us to a very large room surrounded by artistically designed doors covered with long drapes that scintillated and waved like the best of silks.

We went in through one of those doors and were greeted by a kindly, smiling initiate.

We were surprised to find that we had entered what seemed like an art room, a "charming refuge," if we may so label such an atelier of eminent artists, a place where masters of design worked on sublime endeavors, aware of the responsibilities vested in them by Divine Providence.

A number of other rooms followed in a lovely circular perspective, all of them interconnected in a straight line by means of magnificent arcades designed by engineers of the purest Hindu influence. Each room opened to the outside via an independent entrance, as we had seen in the antechamber guarded by the sentinel.

In the first of this admirable line of circular rooms we saw workers bent over documents and pages of important notes concerning the work to be done. These documents had come from other departments such as Analysis and Research, as well as from the Temple. They had to do with various candidates for reincarnation.

There were long tables for study and work, designed in the same fashion as the room itself, that is, in a semicircle, under impressive bluish-golden light coming in through majestic domes, recalling old cathedrals. Through the windows – impressive masterpieces of architecture – one could see the vast

panorama of the Sector with its gardens softly colored by the magnanimous influence of the blue sky brightened by the sunlight, which spread the wholesome principles of its magnetism, resembling an inspiring blessing that illuminated the minds of the artists there.

Once the content of the documents and notes had been studied, orders were sent to the Modeling department in the next room in order for the future body to be designed according to the instructions received, as follows:

- a. Deformed at birth
- b. Possibility of becoming deformed in the course of life, through illness or accident
- c. Possibility of acquiring serious or incurable diseases
- d. Normal

These options would be decisive factors in the patient's life plan, depending on the trials and expiations of the case. We must not forget that many of those wretched patients, our companions, would possibly reincarnate in normal, even healthy and handsome physical bodies if their new experience required it. In such cases, this would denote remediless struggles and sufferings solely of a mental nature.

In the next room, we could see the forms of the former bodies that the suicide had damaged and destroyed before the assigned time. These were appropriately cataloged and set on pedestals in a place of easy access to the observer. Due to their perfection and naturalness, suggesting the real presence of the destroyed body, they looked like wonderful, movable statues. The information regarding them was as follows:

- a. The former body in its suicide-destroyed state
- b. Next to it, a phosphorescent plaque with the description of the state the body was in at the time of the suicide: state of health, amount of vital energy, degree of vibration, mental state, level of education, environment lived in, date of birth, date when normal death and extinction of vital energy would have occurred, date and location of suicide, type of suicide, causes of suicide, name of offender
- c. The suicide-stricken organ, whose alteration had caused the death of the body, was shown in the replica with a wound identical to that suffered by the physical body

d. Special cases: drownings, crushings, falls: a molded reproduction of the remains as they looked after the suicide

The remarkable precision of the reproduction of the body in item (d) would shock any observer who was not enlightened like those masters, or who had not dolorously experienced it as we had.

After this room, which would have been the most wonderful and suggestive if there had been one room that was more so than the others, we came to the room for preparing the sketches of future bodies and the ensuing incarnation. This was the Molding department. Identical to its counterparts, this room stood out because of the intensity and intricacy of the work going on and because of the large number of personnel. The charts and sketches were strictly organized according to instructions, and then forwarded for review and approval by the Temple and by Analysis, Research, and even Seclusion, where the candidates studied them at length under the supervision of their mentors and personal Guides. Oftentimes, the future inhabitants of those bodies approved them amid outbursts of bitter tears, and there were cases where they requested a delay of the final preparations in order to strengthen themselves a bit more and drum up the courage for the inevitable! However, if the condition of the penitents was so precarious that they did not have enough lucidity for an appropriate examination and approval, the Temple and their Guides would make up for the deficiency, watching out for their interests with justice and love, as judicious attorneys would do for their clients.

We walked around the place with singular emotion, observing everything with utmost interest. Accompanying us, in addition to Sister Rosalia, was the initiate responsible for the department, Brother Clemente, whose knowledge and high standing in the spirit world were easily recognized due to his responsibilities.

“Yes, my dear friends, my brothers!” said Clemente, while guiding us paternally from room to room, offering us marvelous and comforting theses on the Sovereign Laws, of which he was a worthy interpreter, and which brought so much enlightenment to my poor, sin-darkened soul that I will not say no to my desire to describe them in these unpretentious pages from beyond the grave. “Yes, my friends, blessed be the Supreme Creator, Ruler of the Universe, whose infinite wisdom and kindness lift us from the misconceptions of our wrongdoings to lofty paths of regeneration by means of planetary rebirths! Human beings on the earth are still a long ways from

understanding the supreme meaning of that Law, which only Divine Thought could, in fact, have established, endowing Its Creation with the potential for victory!

“Ignorance of the lofty principles that preside over people’s destinies, the rebelliousness against the knowledge that would lead to the enlightening founts of Life, as well as the prejudices of a mentality enslaved to the servility of inferiority, have kept human beings from recognizing that vast and glorious foundation of their evolution, of their spiritual emancipation! Men and women of science, for instance, regarded as demigods in earthly societies, from which they expect all sorts of fictitious honors and praise, would never admit that their enormous pride will probably condemn them to a subsequent obscure and humble reincarnation, in which their hearts, arid and bereft of edifying virtues, will acquire the sweet sentiments of love for one’s neighbor and the delicate expressions of true fraternity, something that only respect and veneration of the Christian cause can inspire while the intellect rests... Or the sovereigns, the magnates, the classes considered ‘privileged’ by earthly society, those who frivolously use the gifts given to them by the Supreme Sovereign so that they would contribute to the endeavor of protecting Humanity and developing the planet, will not admit that the folly they are committing in disregard of the divine laws will induce them to live miserable reincarnations, in which they will experience poverty, servitude, humiliation, and continuous, adverse struggle so that during such harsh recapitulations they may expiate their indifference or wrongdoings of the past, when they refused to care for the oppressed classes, the overall well-being of their society and nation, having preferred cowardly and self-serving selfishness rather than the fraternal solidarity human beings owe one another! The white-skinned Caucasians, touting purity of race, the prejudicial combination of pride and vanity making them think they have been blessed by divine favor, would never agree to render homage to a Divine and Universal Law that will someday impose on them the requirement of new physical existences in bodies whose skin is black, yellow, or of mixed race, leading them to realize that the spirit, and not its temporary, circumstantial physical-material body, is what needs to be cleansed and made to shine by means of selfless virtues and mental and intellectual acquisitions, which they can acquire as members of any race whatsoever! And that blacks, whites, yellows, etc., all come from the same Principle of Light, from the same Immortal and Eternal Center of Life – the Supreme Father of all Creation!

“However, my dear friends, whether or not these earthly citizens believe the imperative of that magnificent Law, and whether or not it is repugnant to them and to you, the truth is that it is irreversible and indestructible. Consequently, all human beings die in one body, re-enter the spirit world, and are reborn in new bodies... until their progress earns them the right to reincarnate on happier planets, in whose societies they will begin a new cycle of progress on the ascending scale of the long and glorious preparation for Life Eternal! Of course, this takes millennia upon millennia!...

“Thus, no human being or spirit can ever escape that Law, whether they are repulsed by it or respectful of it, for it is a necessity for all Creation as the agent of its progress and evolution until it reaches Perfection!

“In the Lord’s Vineyard – the Infinite Universe – there are workers with the delicate endeavor of tending to it. As for the earth, these workers are under the supervision of God’s Beloved Son, who is in charge of the redemption of humankind. People may see the sun rising and setting on the horizon every day, and they may feel the wind blowing and see the rain falling, the plants growing and blooming, the flowers spreading their fragrance and the stars shining in the infinite firmament, and yet they cannot fathom the immensity and difficulty of the work this all entails, let alone the dedication and sacrifice that such a sublime endeavor requires of the legions of invisible servants from the astral world who have been entrusted with maintaining the planet according to the highest designs of the Omnipotent Creator. By the same token, unaware of the moving and enchanting divine epic before them, people also see thousands of other human beings and other living creatures being reborn every day! People have become so used to being surrounded by divine manifestations that they have become indifferent toward them. They do not stop to appreciate and praise their magnificence. They consider them to be natural, even commonplace – which they really are! But how could it be otherwise, if human beings themselves are immersed in the bosom of the Divine Universe as offspring of the Divine Creator of All Things?”

We all listened attentively, without daring the slightest interruption. It was all new and very exciting to us. We felt small, ashamed before a society we realized we were incapable of being part of. At the same time, we were astonished at receiving such kind treatment and friendly attention from such a society at that very moment!



We went over to one of the splendid galleries where the molded statues were lined up. In front of each of them was the operator's worktable. There were several initiates in the room, faithful to the ennobling duty of serving their brothers who were less experienced in the science of Life, those who were farther behind on the pilgrimage towards God! Some were studying in great detail the minutia of the configuration under their care; others were studying the notes and instructions, while others were examining the photograph of the remains, sketching charts for future bodies to be sent for approval, etc. Seeing everybody employing their utmost attention and goodwill in the endeavor gave us a hint of the ideal worker who was conscious of the duty to be fulfilled!

We approached the statues. They reflected the old body as it was before the suicide. We were amazed to see that these remarkable models were animated by movement and vibrations, making them the ideal type to be molded. Flowing through the arteries in all the vigor and strength natural to the human body was a stream of luminous red liquid symbolizing the blood with its normal functions in a physical body. The viscera, like the blood, were composed of highly subtle, translucent, luminous fluidic substances, as if they had been taken from the reflection of the delicate light of the moon... As for the cartilage, the lacework of the nerves, and the flesh, these were also made up of delicate textures, with shades of white, yellow and beige, respectively, lending the piece an expression of great beauty!

The small universe of the human body was represented there in all its details, molded by the mastery of true artists and anatomists!

There were separate premises for the female cases and models. Never, in our observations, did we see the two sexes mixed together in any of the departments we visited!

After a few minutes, Rosalia exclaimed with singular emotion:

“Indeed, my dear friends! The body is a magnificent mechanism!... Human beings should consider themselves honored and joyful for obtaining from the unsurpassed goodness of the Creator the gift of being able to carry out their planetary evolution in such an instrument!... In the Universe, there are physical worlds where those who reincarnate on them have to conduct their cycles of progress in very heavy material bodies, which, if compared with these, would be considered monstrous.”

Shocked, given our ignorance about the exciting and venturous issue, we kept still. We could find no distracting arguments, so much to our liking. Rosalia, however, addressed us with her usual smile:

“Indeed, the body is more than merely a mechanism, my friends! It is the Universe itself in miniature, where astounding phenomena are reproduced at every moment, since its nature participates in the many conditions contained in the organization of the Universe itself! It is a Temple!... A sanctuary where the divine spark that emanated from the Almighty is deposited, that is, the Immortal Soul, so that it can beautify and perfect itself through the sequence of rebirths...

“Look at the heart! Heroic and sensitive organ, tireless sentinel, designed for the highest services of reincarnation, a coffer where the spirit places the seat of the sentiments it brings with itself from the spirit world!... Examine the brain, a prodigious apparatus, a jewel that could only have been imagined by the Sublime Artist, the priceless treasure received at birth, upon which the spiritual mind will act, utilizing it for new acquisitions from its work! It is another universe in miniature, a beacon of light that guides human life itself, a benevolent compass amid the darkness of the physical-material imprisonment!

“And what about the apparatus of sight, which takes impressions of images to the brain to be translated into understanding, comprehension, certainty and facts?!... Is it not worthy of as much praise as the heart and brain?... It is in this precious sanctuary of light that the sublime powers of spiritual sight will be harmoniously and sensibly concentrated for proper use by the individual during the earthly physical period, thus facilitating the accomplishment of endeavors that are his responsibility in human society...

“Examine the auditory apparatus, that delicate labyrinth that works in harmony with sight! It is so well-equipped, so perfectly structured that it enables human beings to pick up the most delicate vibrations, those that are needed for their progress, the tasks they must carry out, and even, in many cases, the subtle expression arising from an intuition, a whisper from the invisible planes!

“But that’s not all. There is also the system of taste. Subtle, obscure, modest, this precious quality of the material envelope is nevertheless absolutely indispensable to humans, benevolently aiding them by co-participating in the work of nourishment, a faithful collaborator in the

conservation of the physical body! So, how grand the work of the tongue must seem to the conscientious observer, that organ that translates the incarnate spirit's thoughts by means of the magic of enunciated words! Oh! How dignified people would be if they used that sublime apparatus only for the task of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True! It is due to the complex structure of the tongue that the vibrations emitted by thought enable people to understand one another through speech. It is thanks to its productive labor that the most beautiful sounds known on earth are expressed, such as the sweet promises of love, when the enthusiastic heart, ennobled by lofty sentimental plans, becomes inflamed with ardent aspirations; the arresting harmonies of your most endearing poems, as well as the soft whispers of a mother's love beside to the crib where a smiling little angel sleeps... and when the sacred name of the Almighty is whispered in fervent prayer!

“Not a single useless part! Not one single superfluous item created for idleness! All the particularities are essential, making up the benevolent whole. They are indispensable to its splendid harmony, completing, communicating and collaborating with each other in a majestic beauty of subsequent heroic activities, and they depend on one another to work together for the equilibrium of the spirit that is inhabiting it temporarily, like a sacred lamp in a sanctuary of efficiency!

“Nature, my dear friends, which is the Will of God manifested under the sovereign touch of his Divine Magnetic Power, rendered the human body a luxurious dwelling for the spirit in need of reincarnation for the learning experience that is its to fulfill during its earthly lifetimes... You can be sure that the purpose of reincarnation is to prepare the spirit not only for the toil of expiation, but for the triumph of immortality! Expiation is simply the consequence of a detour from the pathway of righteous, and exists solely due to the moral debts of each individual!

“The definitive state of the human body as the temporary dwelling for that which has come forth from the Divine Breath, the model originated from the will of the Sublime Artist and painfully developed over the centuries, is Beauty! Disharmonies within the body as a whole derive from the fact that the spirit that molded it in order to inhabit it for its own progress or for excellent causes, wanted it that way, whether out of modesty and humility, or whether out of fear of troublesome situations, because physical beauty may be greatly admired but it can turn into a dangerous quality, bringing all the temptations and excesses that humans are constantly exposed to. Many times, those

expiating great past wrongs also reject Beauty, preferring its opposite or the mediocrity of modest features. You know that since unattractiveness, the abnormality of features, is not the natural condition, it can become repulsive and painful to those who display it, constituting a trial!

“Look at these life-sized replicas!... When their owners reincarnated, they received perfect bodies just like these: beautiful, gifted with vital and magnetic energies that would guarantee excellent organic functions, lasting good health, and the capacity for daily living. Their occupants lacked nothing but willpower and the courage to struggle and triumph! The assistance that was dependent on Nature in order for them to succeed was granted to them with a physical body that was suited to their task, like solid armor for warriors that fight for the victory of the spirit! However, in spite of all the blessings bestowed upon them by Heaven, they not only failed by running from the duties for which they reincarnated, but they even destroyed their precious, so well-endowed body through suicide!”

These explanations by the Planning technician did not set well with our consciences. A bitter sadness weighed on us with each new concept. Nevertheless, we willingly obeyed when he invited us to come closer to the tables where the inspired anatomists were drawing up charts of future bodies to be molded in the flesh by guilty, soon to reincarnate spirits.

“Here, on these tables,” he continued in detail, “my assistants prepare physical body charts for hugely indebted suicides, who before their failure, had bodies that were well-endowed throughout.

“But they abused their magnificent health. Health – that invaluable gift that human beings scorn, pretending not to know that it is a divine aid that the kindness of the Most High gives to human beings to encourage them in the ennobling endeavors that will earn them the laurels of spiritual progress!

“Without the least show of reverence to the authority of the Creator, those unfortunate brothers poisoned their precious bodies with all sorts of excesses! Slowly, they destroyed them with alcohol! They intoxicated them with cigarette smoke! They debased them with sexual vices! They brutalized them with gluttony, which caused gastric alterations, enlarging the hepatic glands and thus damaging, with over-activity, the delicate digestive system, the primitive model of which you see replicated over there in the statues you admired so much! Others, not satisfied with this grievous disrespect to themselves and the Generous Donor of Life – which in itself is actually like

an act of suicide – and incapable of enduring the consequences of such intemperance, consequences such as cancer, tuberculosis, an ulcer, neurasthenia, mental impairment, hallucinations produced by the dreadful state of their nervous system, hypochondria, self-created physical, mental and moral diseases, they made use of an act of violence equally reproachable... and crowned their cumulative reckless behavior by brutally killing the body granted by the paternal goodness of God, striking themselves with murderous weapons!

“Hence the result that has terrified them ever since!

“They did not die after all, since their true being was not the destroyed sanctuary, but the individuality that inhabited it! And now, repentant, tormented by remorse and convinced of their error, they have to return to the theater of their wrongdoing in bodies completely unlike those they destroyed by their own will, but appropriate for the kind of expiation they created as the natural consequence of their infraction.”

At this point we felt exhausted with afflictions and melancholy. The blatant reality that radiated from the charts; the ambient itself, profiled with suggestions inherent to expiatory reincarnation, infused our hearts with a very bad feeling of profound anxiety! However, since this state of apprehensiveness and anguish was so normal for us, we did not utter a single complaint, but fell into a pensive silence.

The industrious Brother Clemente invited us to listen to him further and arranged comfortable chairs for us to sit in. He sat down beside us and continued:

“Sister Celestina explained to you how your internment in this Sector works, so I won’t have to repeat what she said. I will only say that we are responsible for you as long as your planetary existence lasts: that abnormal existence you created for yourselves outside the plan instituted by Divine Providence. We will assist you in the difficult moments of your ardent expiation. We will dry your tears in the worst moments by infusing new courage into your hearts through benevolent, helpful suggestions. Through your faculty of intuition, receptive and refined by your sufferings, we will whisper consoling measures for the afflictions that strike you. We will look after your health, the physical condition you need for your stay in the earthly experience. We will watch over you so that your trials are not made worse, given the selfish conditions of the societies where you will be called to testify

to your repentance, conditions that could make your triumph extremely difficult by adding excessive pain to your pathway, which by itself already has enough briars and thorns... And we will end our enormous, difficult mission only when your reparatory, suicide-induced expiation comes to an end. We will cut the fluidic cord connecting you to your corpse and we will bring you back here. Then, we will take you to the Sector where we first received you, and which, in its turn, will wait for orders from the Temple to take you to other places that suit you by right and affinity.

“Never – we will repeat – will your return to the physical realm be done against your wishes. You can stay in this Colony for a long, long time if you want, for you will not reincarnate against your will. Not even the Sovereign Law will force you to make a new attempt at the earthly struggle, because one of its most sublime provisions – one that induces us to acquire honorable merits – says that the fulfillment of duty is not to be imposed on anyone, but that everyone is to be offered the chance to do so willingly! The most we will do, with the intent of encouraging you to undertake the magnificent task, will be to advise you and try to convince you to reincarnate as a result of your own reasoning and examination of the facts. But such measures will be implemented during your stay in the Sector you have come from, and not here, as you already know.

“Generally speaking, however, suicides are in such a precarious condition, whether physical-astral or moral and mental, that we very seldom have to use such measures to convince them to reincarnate! They, themselves, eagerly desire it. They are in a hurry for it and they even beg the All-Merciful for it through ardent prayers, but they do so in an untimely manner and this forces us to go against their wishes. We make them wait a while longer in order to ensure a greater chance of success.”

Our highly regarded instructor paused to attend to a couple of assistants asking his advice about the important work they were doing.

We observed him with great interest during the few minutes in which he spoke with them. We could not hear what they were talking about, but we did notice that he wore the same captivating smile that could very well be the characteristic of his always affable being. Brother Clemente was a young man with chiseled features. One could say he was the ideal model that inspired the sculpted masterpieces of ancient Greece, masterpieces that have never been replicated since! He seemed to be less than thirty years old, which really surprised us, given his high level of responsibility. At the time, we did not

know that the spirit is independent of age, and can present itself under the aspect that is dearest to its heart and memories. We saw him as if he really was a man, wearing the noble garb of the initiates. But something more, something indefinable radiated from his persona, attesting to his excellent spiritual quality, despite his charitable kindness in materializing himself to such an extent in order to console and serve us.

He returned to us and continued, gravelly and patiently:

“Of the extensive phalanx of penitents that come through these doors, I’m not including the Mental Ward patients in what I am explaining to you. They are so damaged and their vibrational state is so limited that they will have to reincarnate within the imperatives of the Law. Still, they will be assisted by the Paternal Solitude of that One who is Supreme Love for all creatures! Because they are in no condition to help themselves, and because they are incapable of using reason and exercising their free will, their blank spaces will be filled in by their Main Guardian and other devoted guides, who will directly supervise everything that is best for them!”

Brother Clemente showed us a few charts that had been given to him by one of his disciples for us to examine. They were sketches of the future, miniatures ordered for upcoming reincarnations, whereas the life-size statues represented the physical configuration, the physical body that had been killed via suicide. As we examined these miniatures, we noticed that they did not at all resemble the features portrayed on the statues. Instead, they were squalid figures, tormented by heartrending symptoms of profound inner anguish, caricatures marked by the dreadful infirmities, such as paralysis, blindness, madness, etc. that so often afflict human beings of every social class!

He led us over to one of the classic statues lining the beautiful statuary gallery while explaining this particular case with a strong hint of sadness. We were astonished to read this curious description on the plaque of the pedestal:

*Vicente de Siqueira Fortes.*<sup>45</sup>

*Reincarnated on October 10,1868.*

*Should have returned to spirit world at 74 years of age, that is, around the year 1942.*

*Committed suicide in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in the year 1897, throwing himself under a train at 29 years of age.*

“Now, take a look at this miniature,” continued Clemente, indicating one of the charts we were examining. “Thus modified, it represents Vicente’s reduced mental and vibrational state resulting from the desperate act he committed! This chart was taken from his own current physical-astral state, which means that if he looks like this it is because he himself caused it; the Law that creates Beauty would never impose this heartrending, ugly appearance on one of its creatures! Like so many others here, poor Vicente has to return to a physical body, *to be born again in order to complete the time he still had remaining on his previous lifetime!* It is imperative that he reincarnate after only nine years in the Invisible. His infernal decision to kill his physical body was such an enormous shock to his astral organization that, in order for him to obtain enough comprehension to make reasonable progress, his internment in the flesh is necessary, because, as you already know, that is the only therapeutic measure strong enough to give him a little relief! However, he will mold his physical body according to his current perispiritual mold, which means that he will be reborn infirm, stricken by atrocious maladies that are incurable outside the psychical laws. The resultant abnormal vibrations will make it impossible for him to enjoy good health even if he inherits a vigorous physical organization from his parents, and he will be devoid of any feelings of peace and joy as well! And if his parents are syphilitic, alcoholic or anemic, etc., for instance, he may be affected by paralysis, mental impairment, tuberculosis, etc.!”

“Couldn’t he stay in the Mental Ward until this lamentable situation is mitigated somehow, so that he won’t have to be exposed to such tragic and dolorous conditions in the realm of reincarnation?” I asked, forlorn.

“Oh, no! Such a delay would not be good for his spiritual interests at all! It would be way too long and painful! He doesn’t have, nor can he acquire, any perception of the spiritual life as long as he is like this! He needs contact with vital forces in order to recuperate, forces that because of his suicide have been improperly scattered within his physical-astral organization, with which they have powerful chemical-psychical affinities. The dreadful result is this perispiritual and mental poisoning, not foreseen in the Law but caused by the one who disassociated himself from the mental and moral laws that lead to the true idea of God!”

“But... illustrious Brother!... Is such a state of affairs in keeping with the high standard of Heavenly Justice in which we put so much hope?... Considering what you’ve just said, that is, that the Supreme Love of the



Father Almighty will be with these wretches during their expiatory reincarnations... What am I saying?... That the Father's Love will be with Belarmino, Mario, Joao, and me because we are all bound to this unfortunate phalanx?... Is there really mercy in Providence allowing this mountain of misfortunes when – wretches that we are! – if we lost ourselves in the abysses of suicide it was because so many adversities were already making our lives miserable?" I asked, overcome with superlative anguish.

Brother Clemente smiled kindly, disregarding my protestations. He simply answered with a disconcerting naturalness:

"Have you forgotten, my dear friend, that the whole Universe is subject to Harmonious and Immutable Laws, and that it is our job to try to know and respect them, and to honor ourselves by obeying them? Why do incarnates neglect the duty of examining themselves in order to know themselves better, respect themselves, and give themselves worth as a divine creation?... What we are focusing on at the moment is merely the non-observance of those Laws... It is a simple, logical effect of disharmony, nothing else!... It is what it is. It is what humans have invented to torment themselves by being in disaccord with what the Creator has established for their happiness through his Harmonious, Immutable and Perfect Laws... In fact, isn't it precisely for the purpose of bringing relief to suicides by disconnecting them from this state – unsustainable for a spirit – that the Law impels them to reincarnate?... What do you think we should do for Vicente or any one of you, in light of the loving watch-care of the Heavenly Physician and the maternal counsels of his Mother, by whom we are guided?... For Vicente's current condition, reincarnation is the best medicine! He will continue to be watched over by our Institute while incarnate! He will also continue to be a patient of the Mental Ward, just as he is now – assisted by its physicians and psychical experts, in addition to being watched over by the Hospital, the Reincarnation Department, the Temple supervisors, and the missionary assistants appointed by the Higher Realms! This reincarnation may horrify you, but it will serve as a complex surgical procedure, a drastic measure foreseen by the Great Law for the reaction of the Best against the worst, which will provide relief and healing, the rebuilding of his vibrational energies and the recovery of the faculties damaged by the atrocious trauma!

"Does the Law really show love and mercy by allowing him to return to the earth in his current condition?!... How could you possibly imagine greater tolerance, support and mercy than the Most High granting this great sinner –

called a suicide – a new opportunity to climb out of the abyss by honorably lifting himself up, under the tutelage of the Gentle Nazarene, by means of his own efforts and the edifying nobility of Duty faithfully fulfilled?... Is he to be robbed of his rights as a creature of God, of a spirit on its evolutionary journey towards the glory of Life Immortal?... On the contrary, isn't he being granted precious opportunities with reincarnation?... Isn't he supported today and tomorrow by the care of Jesus of Nazareth, paternally assisted by His workers, Mary's legionaries, who will help him on the harsh pathway of this Calvary forged by his insane act against God' Law?... The spirits that soar in the celestial spheres, like the Divine Physician of Souls himself, aren't they, too, concerned about him, asking the Omnipotent Sovereign to grant him new opportunities to get himself out of his humiliating situation in the shortest amount of time possible by means of just and meritorious acts?...

“If he suffers, whose responsibility is it?... And, as a matter of fact, isn't suffering a magnificent lesson that increases wisdom through experience?...

“Who on the earth doesn't know that suicide is an infraction that must not be committed because it goes against Nature, the Divine Laws and God's Love?

“Religion, reason, sentiment, common sense, honor – everything reproaches and condemns it!

“And the reason is simple: the thought, the intuition about the deplorable situation to which the suicide's soul is reduced!

“As you can see, the Law granted Vicente the sacred right of living on the earth while animating a perfect physical-material body, like the replica you see here on this pedestal!

“But what did he do with this body?

“He rejected it! He trampled on it! He brutally destroyed it!... with such disrespect that it was as if he had flung it back into the face of God Himself!

“Scorning the Law like that will cost him dearly!

“He will expiate the natural consequences of his act; he will repair the damage he did to himself as well as to others, if others were damaged; he will endure sacrifices and tears, the logical inheritance of his wrong, until he is able to gather enough vibrational energy for Divine Providence to grant him another body like the one he destroyed; another material temple, perfect and

healthy, in order to continue on his way on the normal pathway of evolution interrupted by the detour of suicide!

“He suffers, true. But... who made him suffer?... Why does he suffer?...

“Where does the greatest responsibility for his sufferings lie?”

Downcast and sad, I lowered my head and said no more.

---

43 Mt. 5:26.

44 This is referring, respectively, to the covering of vital fluids proper to all living beings and the fluidic cord that bonds the spirit to the material body during incarnation.

45 Fictitious name. Any similarity to the name of a real person is mere coincidence. (Spirit Author)

---

## First attempts

*Inasmuch as you did it for one of the least of these my brothers, you did it for me.*

*Jesus Christ – The New Testament <sup>46</sup>*

Two days had passed since the events just narrated, days when we seriously pondered everything we had seen and learned during our visits to the various Hospital departments.

We had grasped what was taught.

We could not possibly hold on to any illusions after having concluded the clear and wise lessons we had learned in each one of the departments!

We were extremely troubled! And in our somber room in the Indian Ward, amid longing and solitude, we saw the tears that bathed each other's faces.

On the morning of the third day, Roberto de Canalejas once again helped us out of our depression by inviting us to take a walk with him in the park.

With his usual charming, discreet and simple affability, he warned us as we walked:

“Discouragement is always a bad advisor and we have to fight against it with all our might! You need to snap out of it, my friends. Fight against your depression by turning your will towards the Supreme Power that emits all the energies that nourish the Universe... and you will instantly sense a regenerating disposition enhancing your ability to proceed on your journey...

“When you feel discouraged and downhearted before the inevitable, do a bit of work! If you find yourself in a crisis, seek new opportunities, worthwhile and honest activities to restore your faculties! Whether on the earth as incarnates or in the Invisible as discarnates, we are never too

insignificant and powerless to serve our neighbors, working for their relief and well-being. Instead of imprisoning yourselves in this Ward, giving in to gloomy and unproductive thoughts that only aggravate your sufferings, come with me to visit a few of your brothers who are suffering even more than you, and who are still hospitalized, immersed in the darkness that used to cover you... Let's return to the Hospital in order to revisit friends, colleagues, the nurses that assisted you so kindly by consoling your pain-stricken hearts, and the doctors that helped you expel from your minds the usual thoughts that deadened your spirits."

We acquiesced. He accompanied us the whole day as we visited patients, spoke fraternally to recent arrivals from the Sinister Valley, and embraced Joel and other dedicated friends who had watched over us during the days and nights of anguished memory. We also rendered respect and homage to the eminent psychiatrists who so many times had come to our beds bringing charitable relief through the reconstituting energies of their lofty virtues!... And as a result of all these activities, warming our own hearts alongside virtuous hearts who understood us, a gentle feeling of comfort dislodged our apprehensions, teaching us to make peace with our own suffering by alleviating the suffering of others!

When we returned to the Ward that evening, one of Teocrito's emissaries informed us that the next day we were to meet at Security headquarters to join a large caravan that would be visiting the earth.

Teocrito would not be joining us, but his authority would be represented by his worthy disciples Romeu and Alceste, who would look after our interests and needs while we were away from the Institute. They would exercise this authority indirectly so as not to deprive us of our merit and responsibility. Carlos and Roberto de Canalejas, as well as Ramiro and Olivier de Guzman, Father Anselmo and other dear friends, also made up part of the large caravan. They were under orders from higher up to be in charge of giving exact instructions in case our activity during this time of freedom called for broader action.

...And when my homeland began to appear dimly amid the heavy emanations of the atmosphere, tears welled up from deep within me, in a sacred impulse of longing, reverence and joy!

Sixteen years had passed since the material body that Mother Nature had granted me to assist me on my way to the radiant kingdom of Immortality had

collapsed in diabolical convulsions, crushed in the horrific claws of suicide!

Sixteen years of confinement, of tears, of excruciating suffering that would be impossible to describe!

Somewhat disoriented because I was unaccustomed to my own native land, I was stricken by an irrepressible fear of having to walk alone down the well-known and longed-for streets of my beloved Lisbon, Oporto, and Coimbra! I felt inhibited and downcast as I became aware of my temporary freedom. Most of my friends had vanished from sight, taking shelter in an invisible state that I could not reach. I was left to my own devices, although I had not been completely abandoned. Of course, the long period of suffering in the spirit world had produced profound changes in me. I found that I was timid and fearful surrounded by that society that I had loved so deeply and despised so deeply at the same time. I had lashed out in outbursts of uncontrollable anger against its maladies, while at other times I had praised it in moving pages emanating from my heart, always feeling hurt for rightly tragic reasons! I recalled that times of adversity had comprised my existence, which despair had finally destroyed. It had been an existence which, if not characterized by virtue, had at least demonstrated the standard for wretchedness!

With my subconscious awakened – so lovingly soothed by the therapy of the Mary of Nazareth Institute – this return to the stage of my past caused the drama I had lived to unfold in my memory with the same bitter taste as before, unsettling my inner world with the worries and tribulations I had suffered back then! I remembered those I had loved and those who had loved me – or at least had had the duty of loving me – and I was afraid to go looking for them!

The disillusionment suffered by Jeronimo Silveira was too much alive in my mind for me to imprudently provoke the same situations for myself by thoughtlessly visiting my old home, my friends and relatives, from whom I only received sparse news. I had never received any evidence that they missed me or any displays of good wishes from them in the fervor of a prayer!

I availed myself of Belarmino's friendship and begged him not to abandon me, but that we proceed together on the visits we had planned... Mario had already left in search of news about his wife and children, of whom he had had absolutely no information in the spirit world so far!

The former professor agreed, so I went with him to the house where he had been born and grew up, where he had enjoyed a loving family life, and upon whose carpeted floors the inconsolable figure of his mother seemed to continue to move about in madness after having seen him dying with his wrists slit! The beautiful property no longer belonged to the Queiroz e Sousas, and the dear old lady that he was desperately seeking was not there either. Remorse gushed from his soul, inconsolable for not having ever received any news from her in spite of the fact that his soul trembled with anxious longing for her!... Belarmino wept in front of the chimney and then fell to his knees where his mother's rocking chair used to be, asking her to forgive him for the pain he had inflicted on her loving maternal heart, and amid afflictive and moving tears, begging her for her presence if only for a few moments, in order to mitigate the piercing suffering of the longing that crushed his soul!

Like a desperate pilgrim, he looked for her everywhere he thought he might find her, but the loving mother, whose life, happiness, and joy consisted of him, could not be found anywhere! A disconcerting idea suggested one last possibility, and he went to the family mausoleum where his ancestors' ashes had been laid to rest. His mother's would surely be there too...

Indeed they were! Her adored name was there, engraved on the headstone next to his own name...

Belarmino knelt in front of his own vault and prayed for his mother, bathed in tears.

It was getting late when we silently descended the grassy hill of the Hallowed Ground. I tried my best to console my dear friend, and as we walked the streets, I commented, in an effort to comfort him:

"It will be easy to find out what has become of your dear mother, my friend! Obviously, she is not imprisoned in that box of marble and decaying matter, vanishing forever with the last material elements contained there... you, yourself, aren't even there! Common sense says that if you and I are beings possessing eternal spirits, she must be too... and just like us, she is in a place appropriate for her extra-corporeal existence. But it certainly isn't a tomb."

"Of course not!... I already thought of that, Camilo... But where could she be? Where in the Infinite Invisible?... And why is that I, being immortal, have never been able to find her?... Why haven't I ever seen her reflected in

the powerful equipment of our infirmary?... Will I be able to see her someday?"

"Forgive me, Belarmino... But I seem to remember that your mother shared in your materialistic beliefs.

"So how could you expect her to pray for you, making herself visible by means of a device that measures spiritual vibrations, as explained by our dear friends in the Colony?... First let's ask Dr. de Canalejas or Roberto where she might be... As far as I'm concerned, I have no doubt that you'll be able to see her again! If everything that has happened to us since we entered the spirit life is ruled by logical principles, those same principles will lead you to see your mother again, sooner or later."

"Yes, we can ask one of them about it again... How many times have I already done that, with them evading the question?... But where are they?... They didn't leave us an address!"

"Let's wait until we meet up with them again... Let's be patient, my dear Queiroz e Sousa! In sixteen years of astonishing misfortunes, I think that by now I have learned the rudiments of the sublime virtue named Patience!"

"But Camilo, my friend, I think I would rather not have returned to Portugal at all... I feel anxious and sad."

We both felt tired and in need of rest.

But where could we do that?

Decency and respect for other people's homes kept us from seeking shelter in the houses of strangers... As for as our old friends, even though they would not be able to see us, they were even more deserving of our respect, and we did not want to indiscreetly intrude on their privacy.

Accustomed to the comforting discipline of the Institute, we walked the streets longing for its kindly refuge. Uncontrollable sadness clouded our hearts as the sunset spread nostalgia all around, increasing the gloom that had stricken us.

Belarmino suggested that we seek shelter in a church, whose interior filled with believers openly invited intrusion. But I declined, faithful to my former incompatibility with the clergy. Several other places were suggested, but they were rejected as soon as they were mentioned...



Suddenly, as if the fraternal kindness of Teocrito were watching over us via a magnetic screen, following our steps as he had done with Jeronimo, an idea illumined my mind and I exclaimed joyously:

“Fernando!”

Yes, Fernando de Lacerda! The unforgettable guardian, whose charitable thoughts of love and peace, transmitted in scintillations of prayers, had visited me so many times in the fearsome disconsolation of the darkness, where my soul was expiating the audacity of having anteceded the determination of the Righteous Law!

Yes, Fernando! The kind heart, who, in his charitable and tireless way, continued to captivate me with his constant visits in thought, his affable embraces converted into beneficent radiations of prayers for better days on my pathway!

We knew the location of our old friend’s residence and the location of the office where he carried out his honest work. We also knew the location of his favorite spot where he and some colleagues conducted scientific and instructive experiments. As we had seen on our first visit to the earth, that was where he did his best work. Therefore, discreet and humble, we sought shelter in his residence. It was a “penthouse” situated on top of the roof, which one might say had been set up by the spirit world for guests like us.

Just a few days with Fernando and his companions were enough for me to readjust to earthly events and social life, although I did so with obvious hesitation. I sincerely longed for the serene and loyal camaraderie of the spirit world society that I had gotten accustomed to.

I spoke extensively with the medium that was so loved by our Institute. In the warm ambiance of the rooftop shelter, I gathered my ideas and outlined a plan according to Teocrito’s recommendations. First of all, I had to inform my old friends, colleagues, editors – even my enemies – that suicide had not actually ended my life, my intelligence or ability to act. Speaking to Fernando’s mind via friendly dialogues that I found to be greatly comforting, I made use of his hand as a glove that covered my own hand<sup>47</sup>, and wrote long letters to old friends, telling them that death had not brought me oblivion. I sought to identify myself by using my former, familiar literary style, and gave them a true and sincere account of my experiences. This time, however, my writing did not entail any vanity! My plan was to set the stage for ampler articles in the future. Above all, I wanted to tell them that I was

still alive, very much alive and conscious, in spite of the inconceivable tragedy that the grave had hidden from frail human eyes! My desire was to reveal myself to that society in order to bring it the good news that, just like me, its members were also immortal, and to conscientiously warn it of the dangers lurking behind the somber trap set by that monster called Suicide!

However... despite my goodwill and the dedication of the friend that loaned me his invaluable assistance, I experienced the disillusionment and shame of being rejected by nearly all those I wanted to serve by revealing myself to be an independent, normal thinking individual and a living intelligence, in spite of the fact that they could not see me. Unintentionally, I caused poor Fernando great grief, whereas I wanted him to be respected and honored for his magnificent gift: effortlessly communicating the thoughts of the souls of the dead. Instead, he was the target of overly fervent and unjust criticism, ungrateful scorn and abusive disparagement!

I was disappointed, vexed. It could not defend my worthy friend in spite of my goodwill, since they had no desire to listen to me. It was in vain that I had conveyed exciting news about my snowy residence in the Great Beyond in order to surprise my old literary competitors; and a number of impressive dramas and narratives to enrich editors, whom I thought would surely recognize me by my familiar language! I was forced into silence, because very few had accepted the fact that I had returned!

Nevertheless, my interaction with Fernando made up for my defeat in other areas. I felt highly edified by our frequent conversations and I felt great affection for him and an increasing gratitude for his courtesy towards me and my companions.

\* \* \*

One sunny afternoon about a month after our arrival in Portugal, when the scent of the oleander mixed in with the suggestive fragrances of the abundant orchards, spreading life and enchantment in the atmosphere, I made the daring move of returning, alone and pensive, to the farmstead of S...

Painful memories emerged like obsessive little imps with my every step on the warm grassy road... and the Past began to impose itself little by little, stirring in my memories the embers of forgetfulness that heaven's kindly blessings had sprinkled over my pain, thus fanning them to singe my heart once more!

The old house looked empty. I went into the lonely rooms one by one, oppressed by the mental anguish of an uncontrollable anxiety. Shadows of bitter grief invaded my thoughts, compelling me to return to the past with the emergence of each memory, creating a strange look back on the life that had been so filled with adverse and disappointing events! A veritable panorama of what my life had been like, including its daily struggles and responsibilities, developed miraculously in my mind overly excited by the phenomenon of willing introspection, forcing me to the subservient position of once more feeling, suffering and fully living what had stung me so much, wounding my soul! Agony-filled sweat poured from the subtlety of my astral being, informing my conscience of the complete lack of merit, which, in that difficult moment, could have rewarded me with contentment! It was as if the events evoked by my emotions regarding that ambient of the past, where I had lived, thought, acted and infused with deleterious mental energies, greatly increased my momentary hypersensitivity, becoming tyrannical ghosts that depressed me, when they were not accusing me!

The unbearable domestic life that those walls had witnessed; the constant conflicts and incompatibilities that had made my life a raging sea; the morbid weight of thoughts set on a sickly discontent, which depression finally dragged down into a complete nervous collapse; the despair caused by the onset of the blindness that robbed my eyes of the light; the long premeditation regarding my tragic end; the final despair; the fall into the abyss – everything arose astoundingly from the depth of my being, under the oppressive suggestions of the unwelcoming place that had witnessed the last days of my existence as a man! And – O amazing faculty that both rewards and punishes our conscience according to the acts that have been imprinted on your folds! – I saw them again and felt their effects down to the very last moments, that is, the macabre convulsions of death prematurely destroying the body that had been entrusted to me by the divine solicitude as a sacred loan for my recovery from an ominous, shame-filled past!

Disoriented, stricken by a bewildering crisis, I lost my awareness of the present and plunged into the problems of the past, as if overcome by a hellish derangement. I began crying out, a reprobate in the diabolical convulsions of the past, howling and moaning, blaspheming and weeping the devilish tears of someone for whom all hope of consolation and peace had vanished!... And if any of those who perchance lived in the house – or any who might come near to it – could expand their psychical capability to perceive the tragedy I was

recalling, they would say that sixteen years after my death they could still feel my presence there, moaning and weeping in uncontrollable suffering!

When I finally came back to my senses and recovered from the horrific collapse, Romeu and Alceste were kindly anointing my forehead with the soothing outpouring of their magnificent magnetic power, bringing relief to my soul like water droplets on a dry and withered plant!

The moonlit sky revealed that I had been in that state for many hours, going mad within the igneous circle of the Past. Night had fallen, and the distant stars twinkled, beautifying the firmament!

I found myself resting in the breeze of the fragrant trees, and the old foliage of a nearby vineyard told me that I was still at the farmstead. An unprecedented sorrow pierced my heart while tears rolled down to soften the oppression that was suffocating me.

I implored my eminent mentors to grant me the mercy of taking me back to the Indian Ward, where I would feel safe from any trap set by my mind, stricken by remembrances of my past stupidity. Portugal, with its dearest memories, Lisbon, old Oporto – in sum, Earth – all darkened my spirit, predisposing it to recall sufferings that I wished and needed to forget! But, for the benefit of my moral rehabilitation, my mentors did not consent. They said that I needed to come to terms with something in that environment as proof that I had acquired a capacity for self-denial and detachment for new incursions into the spirit realms, which neither I nor my companions had truly reached as yet, in spite of the abhorrence inflicted by the tormenting remembrances of the present locale!

Moved to tears, I uttered fervent pleas, intimidated by the heavy responsibilities weighing on me:

“Noble and beloved mentors, then please tell me what can I really do to mitigate the mental torment that poisons my energies, robbing me of my will! The memories, the environment, the disillusionment, the sentimental forgetfulness of those I trusted the most, are disappointments that pierce my heart, overexciting my sensitivity to a distressful level!... May I do what is right, something that has merit, something sufficiently worthwhile to bring me true relief and consolation! Please give me your advice!”

As I uttered my plea, and while the images of the two young assistants started to disappear under the opaline rays of the half-moon that decorated the landscape, I was answered with a question:

“What was Roberto’s warning to your group the night before your descent for this new lesson?”

“Ah, yes!... now I remember... We can find relief for our pain-racked faculties... by bringing relief to those who are in a much worse condition... And if we seek encouragement in contact with kind and sincere friends, whose hearts, illuminated by the refulgence of pure virtues, are sufficiently strong to warm us up from the cold of discouragement and show us the steps of the promising course to follow.”

“Then do it... Roberto was right.”

I summoned up all the strength I could muster, calmed my emotions, lifted up my mind to the Nazarene Master, and prayed fervently and humbly for help and guidance.

The surrounding solitude was terrifying! I contemplated that sinister house and goose bumps of hateful emotions only increased my desire to flee, to flee far, far away, to a place where I could forget the tragedy that everything in that place evoked in my memory! I started off in great haste... but when I reached the property line, a rewarding surprise greeted me, obviously the answer to my prayer to the Divine Friend: Ramiro de Guzman and Roberto de Canalejas were waiting for me!

“Blessed be the Lord!” I exclaimed in a gasp of profound gratitude...

I entrusted myself to them and they took me back to the modest earthly dwelling. We left shortly thereafter.

\* \* \*

After much consideration, heeding the advice, warnings and examples of our guardians and instructors, we organized a sort of “task force” for study purposes and for doing things to combat the idea of suicide and the sickly predisposition toward it that contaminates all social classes, to which we could now return as invisible spirits. This enormous undertaking was loaded with difficulties, however, and if it had not been for the help of those who were inspiring us, the results would have been disappointing.

At first, we wanted to make ourselves seen and understood by incarnates via our frank and detailed accounts of the realities of our world, either by disclosing our identity or using any other means within reach. We wanted to develop serious and amicable relationships with them by means of interesting

and elucidating conversation. It would be an ongoing communication of information that we considered as being of utmost usefulness to all humankind, because it aimed to warn it of the unknown danger that suicide posed for society. Very rarely, however, did we find anyone who actually believed us, and when we did, he or she was usually someone we did not even know, and in many cases, was living outside of Portugal! What usually happened was that after enormous efforts to create opportunities for the desired outcome, after days of exhausting work with the mediums we found here and there, they refused to believe us because our poems or our prose from beyond the grave were somewhat marred because they lacked the purity of style that we had been known for – as if we did not already have enough to worry about by overcoming exhausting problems, not only involving the mediums themselves, but especially the demanding and merciless retinue that usually surrounded them. They would rudely and shockingly reject us with criticism filled with scorn and offensive remarks, improper for educated souls. They would label us as undesirable vagrants from the Beyond and would accuse us of being ill-willed frauds! If we tried to describe the shocking peripetias caused by the detour of suicide, or if we tried to portray life beyond the frontiers of the tomb using the strongest colors because of the novelty of the matter – seeing it our duty of solidarity to help the unsuspecting to beware – they would wander away from such serious and worthwhile spiritual issues and ask us about lesser matters that were only of interest to them and of which we were ignorant, matters that we were embarrassed to ask our instructors about in order to please those who asked about them. They preferred to dwell on frivolities and meaningless issues, which frequently saddened and disappointed us to tears, since time was flying by and we had not been able to register anything that was good and meritorious in the austere book of Conscience!

In the midst of this struggle, we were suddenly struck by the strong desire to try Brazil. We knew that Brazil was a vast, accessible field for what we were trying to accomplish, and that we would surely run into much less prejudice than we had encountered in our Motherland. We still remembered that wonderful meeting that our instructors from the Institute had taken us to one night in the state of Minas Gerais. Thus, we would try to communicate with Brazilians and see if we might get better results. But how could we get there?...

Once more the tireless servants of the Legion heard the vehement pleas for aid from our anxious minds united in prayer to Sublime Charity, of which

they were the worthy representatives. They took us to Brazil and provided us with new instructions in a secure dwelling that would protect us from any unpleasant surprises. It was a praiseworthy institution registered in the Spirit World as a recipient of high-level inspirations, and it served as an example to others that wanted to branch out in the “Land of the Holy Cross.” The institution was devoted to the studies and practice of the secret doctrines and to the benevolent activities of true Christian initiates.

And thus we began our arduous and exhaustive endeavor.

We used everything at our disposal in order to work with the Brazilian mediums on our project, the sacred purpose we had in mind! Humble, obedient, affable, loving and sincere in their desire to serve, we found many who might support us in our afflictions, mitigating our Calvary of reparations and trials. We did everything we could to utilize their faculties for the literary works with which we wanted to show God our repentance for having infringed his laws.

But Oh! The language was pure torture!

My God, why did Brazilians – our descendants, our race, our blood – deviate so much from our culture in the way they spoke Portuguese?!<sup>48</sup>... And why couldn't humankind at least try to adopt a universal language that would enable them and us to communicate easily?... Just imagine what we could then produce by utilizing mediums such as the ones in Brazil!...

I then recalled Roberto warning me about the problems I would face in trying to communicate with incarnates, and I realized them to be just and true!

I was overcome with discouragement! A profound sadness was threatening me with depressing thoughts again, when one night as we were gathered in the venerable Brazilian institution discussing current concerns, we were surprised by a visit from Fernando as his physical envelope was deep asleep in his home in our beloved old Portugal. Impressed by our frequent appearances within the realm of his mediumistic gift, he had prayed for us before going to sleep. And driven by charitable inspirations from the ethereal plane, it did not take him long to find us and offer us his help. An amicable and useful conversation was established in the auspicious silence of the noble institution. He said that we should use prayer more frequently, thereby creating a more direct means of communication with our mentors in order to receive their inspiration more easily. We were like pupils being tested on what we had learned before we could pursue new endeavors in the future. He

reiterated the fact that he was more than willing to help us out, troubled as we were by the obstacles we were up against. He urged us to continue to convey something to the world through his mediumship and not give in to defeat in the face of the ranting and raving of adversaries in the habit of senseless criticism. He would continue to make available his crystalline mediumistic faculties, reflecting us like a mirror! We received advice and caution from his benevolent heart, which mitigated our horrific anxiety at the thought of failing the painful tests to which we were duly exposed. Eager to put us on the right track, he added:

“Your approach has been unsuccessful so far. If you had instead looked for ways of becoming agents of authentic fraternity, according to the example of the Divine Model of Love, you would have been victorious by now, spreading joy that would guard your souls against being so gloomy and turbulent.

“Charity, my dear friends – let me remind you – is the generous redeemer of those who have wandered from the pathway laid out by Providence! The wise Rabbi of Galilee knew how separated humans were from the Light, so he offered them the supreme lesson of charity as the easiest and quickest road to regeneration!

“It’s time for you to ponder the Divine Message brought by Jesus and saturate the depths of your being with a few drops of its immortal and incomparable essence!

“Bearing in mind the hasty gesture that cast you into the abyss, practice charity. You will be serving your own cause and the cause of others at the same time.

“At every social level on the earth and in the spirit world, there are dolorous problems to solve, abuses to mitigate. Infinite expressions of bitter misfortune afflict Humanity, requiring the fraternal assistance of every benevolent heart in order to be consoled and alleviated!

“In hospitals, prisons, ordinary homes and opulent palaces, there are minds darkened by incomprehension and despair everywhere, souls disheartened by the violent rhythm of the trials and unsolvable problems of the times! In every corner where disbelief lurks, where passion rules, and where misfortune and grief are mixed with rebelliousness and discouragement; where honor, morality, self-respect and respect for others are set aside; and lastly, where life has been made a source of animality and



selfishness, there is potential for a fall into the abysses of darkness where you yourselves trembled amid raging convulsions!

“Use every effort to find such places: they are right there, at each step! In the name of your own experience... warn wrongdoers to stop right where they are! Point out to them, as a balm for their sorrows, the balm that you yourselves scorned when living on the earth, but which you now recognize to be the only relief, the only power capable of lifting people out of misfortune and ennobling them in the marvelous light of acceptance in the dignifying struggles from which they will exit victorious, whatever may be the troubles that afflict them: God’s Love! Submission to the Irrevocable! Become consolers, agents of Beneficence, whispering encouraging and comforting suggestions to the hearts of afflicted mothers, to young people despairing over early disillusionment, to fallen women whose misfortunes rarely receive anyone’s compassion, women who suffer alone the thorns of their own wrongdoings, afraid of invoking God’s love, even though they have as much of a sacred right to it as anyone else! All these individuals at least need the diligence of well-intentioned, sensitive hearts, if not the luminous gift of a prayer! So offer it to them. Remember that you yourselves received it from kindly hearts when you were in the midst of cries of pain in the darkness after your tragedy! Tell them what happened to you and encourage them to be patient and brave – qualities you lacked – and to endure all the deplorable situations that depress them, so that they won’t have to go through the dreadful events that drove you mad beyond the borders of the physical life!

“...And when you find mediums whose vibrational energies can adapt to yours, do not concern yourselves with the laurels that used to decorate your names in the past. You were unable to honor such glory rightly and thus it plunged with you into the abyss! Avoid the vain pleasure of making your identities known in your oral or psychographed communications. Even if you state great truths, you are not who you used to be! Your names were praised with such remarkable popularity while you were alive that no one will believe that they have returned via the humble filter of unknown mediums!...

“Therefore, give preference to the sacred practice of discreet and hidden acts of Charity!... And along the pathways you will have to tread, you will soon discover the blossoming of sweet happiness.”

We listened with unbounded pleasure and interest. Even while his physical envelope was sleeping somewhere in Portugal, Fernando, in his astral body, seemed inspired by someone from our Colony who was interested

in our success. His lively, benevolent words contained the same paternal and kindly expressions of Teocrito, the far-off friend that had not forgotten us... Tears poured from our eyes as a deep longing came over our hearts...

The very next day we decided to visit hospitals and the sick in general, leaving other endeavors of assistance for later. There were thirty of us altogether, so we divided into three separate groups, as was the method in the spirit world.

We were pleasantly surprised to find that patients in their beds of suffering were not only able to perceive us but could actually hear us too due to the lethargy caused by fever, the severity of the illness, and the laxity of the fluidic ties that held them to their physical bodies. We did our best to take the balm of our solidarity to these anguished souls imprisoned in the flesh, either by infusing them with acceptance of the present and hope for the future, or by using every means available to diminish the moral causes of the many sorrows that aggravated their maladies.

Tuberculosis had driven Belarmino to desert the physical life, so he preferred to work with patients stricken by the same disease. He would whisper suggestions of patience, hope and courage to them as they paid for dolorous debts from past existences or for abuses committed in the present life. As for myself, who had been very poor; who had evaded the duty of living life to the very end on the unhappy roads of blindness; who had given in to the hellish lure of suicide, I was impelled by remorse, despite my will, to counsel not only those who were going blind in spite of being treated in hospitals, but also those on the streets and roads. As far as circumstances would allow, I would whisper to their minds the great consolation of the Radiant Morality that I had come to know via contact with the eminent friends that had assisted and comforted me in the hospital where the mercy of the Supreme Lord had given me shelter! Many times I could tell that I had been successful, that hearts stricken with discouragement and desperation were revitalized because of my sincere and ardent telepathic exhortations! Anguished and oppressed, Joao d'Azevedo, the wretch who had dishonored himself in the darkness of unspeakable spiritual consequences by enslaving himself to the vice of gambling; who had sacrificed everything – his wealth, health, dignity, honor, even life itself along with spiritual peace – to the abominable domination of poker and roulette, had returned to his former dens of iniquity to warn and offer prudent advice to those addicted to gambling, trying everything possible to keep at least one of those unfortunate beings

away from the abyss. He prayed for strength from the Higher Realms and for the assistance of mentors he knew were devoted to diverting from suicide the imprudent who let themselves be surrounded by a thousand disastrous possibilities.

However, poor Mario Sobral's trials were even worse!

Damaged by past habits, his mind drove him to houses of prostitution, despite his sincere repentance. It demanded bitter reparations from him, heroic deeds, which often caused him indescribable sufferings that prompted scalding tears! We watched him trying desperately to thwart irresponsible youths from the bad principles to which they were enslaving themselves, describing to them his own misfortune in improper places. But his attempts proved futile, because intuitions from beyond the grave are not felt in dens where perversion maintains its deadly domain. The excitement of the animalized senses, poisoned by toxic material and psychical elements of repulsive degradation, is a barrier that no spirit in Mario's condition can overcome in order to be heard!

We then extended our endeavors to include prisons, enjoying success in the somber silence of the cells, where remorse rose to the surface via the work of deep thought... And lastly, we entered private homes in search of sufferers who might be considering suicide, but who also might be open to our warnings against it through benevolent suggestions. There were cases where the only means available to us was to suggest the idea of prayer and of faith in the Supreme Powers, and to induce those we addressed – usually women – to devote themselves more to their faith. We suffered a lot because the work was hard, excessively demanding for our weaknesses as penitents whose only merit lay in our sincerity and willingness to carry out this labor of reparation!

We traveled throughout inland Brazil, doing our best to prevent the awful tendency that our Mentors were sad to observe in the impulsive Brazilian character, a tendency that showed disquieting statistics in the number of suicides!

Consequently, we became familiar with the desolate expanses of the inclement Northeast. We developed a real respect for its heroic backcountry folk who, in their arduous and incessant struggle against the penury of constant drought, never lost faith in God and the future. They always hoped for better days, a compensating Homeland, which, in reality, they would only find in the bosom of Immortality!

As members of the instructive caravans that visited the area, we learned profound lessons that resonated deeply in our hearts, illuminating our minds with new and fertile philosophical concepts. In addition to our mentors, representatives of Brazil's spiritual leadership, such as the benevolent Bezerra de Menezes and the magnificent poet of the Lord, Bittencourt Sampaio, taught us using examples taken from the daily lives of several Brazilians. Such stories made us weep with sorrow and repentance because they entailed misfortunes and sufferings that, compared to those that had brought us so much despair, made ours seem like the buffoonery of silly bohemians... However, the people of the Northeast, the Amazon region, and even the natives of the country's uncivilized heartland, endured everything with resignation – even the indifference of their more-fortunate compatriots – with the strong minds of those who know how to believe and to wait!

Meanwhile, we were sad to see that Mario Sobral was getting further away from the possibility of an immediate future other than the one he had chosen, the only one to which he felt driven: immediate reincarnation in order to expiate his wrongs in a family environment attuned to his mental state!

Mario often did not respond to the call of duty regarding the meetings and the instructional caravans led by the assistants. He skipped the charitable expeditions to visit the suffering. He neglected the sacred duties that would be in his best interest to fulfill for the sake of his own rehabilitation! It seemed that contact with earthly society caused him to become ensnared in the things that used to attract him. He seemed to forget about his vehement vows of obedience during his stay in the Hospital Sector. He felt drawn to the degrading haunts that he had enjoyed in the past, and under the pretext of trying to convert transgressors to moderate their habits, he compromised himself greatly before his Guides, displaying such an affinity with the past that we could already foresee the possibility of him reincarnating into the lowest realms of vice! He had been charitably warned several times by Alceste and Romeu, who tried to convince him of the dangers that such a predilection held for his labor of reparation.

Unfortunately, his passion for Eulina, a passion that had disgraced him on the earth and had continued to vex him in the spirit world, welded him to the presumptuous desire of trying, in memory of her, to prematurely lift from the mire of vice so many others that had fallen off of the pedestal of Duty!

Our stay on the earth served as a test for pursuing new pathways. We had relative freedom of action, meaning we were not left entirely to our own

devices.

Even though the rest of us were passing the test, Mario was focusing on causes that could lead to failure.

---

46 Mt. 25:40.

47 A reference to psychography. – Tr.

48 Brazil was colonized by Portugal after being discovered by the Portuguese Pedro Alvares Cabral in 1500. – Tr.

---

## New pathways

*Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many mansions.  
Jesus Christ – The New Testament <sup>49</sup>*

Two months had passed since we had come back from our internship on the earth. We had returned to the Mary of Nazareth Institute and were once again housed in the ward next to the Hospital, the ward that had been our home ever since being released from the infirmary. We had not yet had the opportunity to meet with Brother Teocrito to get his evaluation of our conduct while we enjoyed our relative freedom.

We were very concerned about Teocrito's opinion and the thoughts of the place's leadership about our future.

Where would we go?... What would become of us away from Teocrito, Roberto, Carlos, Joel, and the other Hospital staff?... Would we have to reincarnate immediately if we had not garnered enough merit for a longer stay for further learning in the spirit world?

On one of those days of anxious expectation, we were surprised by a visit from our old friend Jeronimo de Araujo Silveira.

He had arrived at the Indian Ward that morning accompanied by Assistant Ambrosio, to whom Jeronimo owed a lot for his kindness. He had already gone to the Hospital to say his farewells to Teocrito and his assistants, in whose hearts he had always found a solid affection. Now, he had come to meet with us in order to reciprocate our visits to him and also to say goodbye, since that very week he would be entering Seclusion in order to prepare for his upcoming reincarnation. His features were marked by anguish and an unmistakable despondency. Jeronimo had really never managed to resign himself to his situation! Ever since the Sinister Valley, he had been one of the

most unbalanced of our unbalanced group! Sorrowful, and measuring his torment against my own, I asked him:

“Why don’t you put off your return to the environment of your misfortune, Jeronimo?... Postpone it just a bit more. From what I’ve heard, returning is not obligatory in some cases... I myself plan to extend my stay here for as long as possible... unless I change my mind.”

The decisions he made after our last visit to the Isolation Ward must have been very serious and significant, because he answered vehemently:

“It is not in my best interests to put off fulfilling my duty... I mean... serving the sentence I pronounced against myself the very day I began to wander away from the Sovereign Law that rules the Universe! This is what I need at the moment and I have been amply prepared for it by my noble tutors Brother Santarem and Brother Ambrosio. After having given it a lot of thought, I have come to the conclusion that I need to recommence a new existence as soon as possible. My sins are grave, and my debts are extensive. Both weigh heavily on my restless conscience. They are forcing me to expunge the dishonor that darkens it, and I can do that only by returning to the environment where my wrongs were committed. There, I will attempt to complete – but honorably this time – what I ignobly belittled in the past, including my physical body!”

“You mean you are going to be reborn in Oporto?” we all asked at the same time.

“Yes, my friends. Praise the Lord!... I am going to be reborn in Oporto... I’m going to re-enter human existence in an affluent family!... Once more, I’m going to be wealthy. I’m going to manage my own and other people’s finances. I’m going to confront the temptations arising from pride, vanity and selfishness for a second time!... I’m going to win people’s respect and be looked at as an honorable and honest man... I’m going to be just as I was in the past!... The only difference is that they are not going to know me by the dishonored name of Jeronimo de Araujo Silveira, but by another that will hide me from the shame that follows in my steps... But all these experiences are going to be an expiation, the terrible expiation of possessing wealth, an expiation that is even riskier and more dreadful than poverty, an expiation that makes it so much more difficult for its holder to win merit!...

“This new journey from infancy to adulthood, paying for former wrongdoings, moves me to tears, because the paternal goodness of the

Omnipotent is granting me a return protected by forgetfulness, the disguise of a new body and a new name, so that my former dishonor will not be recognized and reviled by society. Confident and strengthened, I'll be enabled to attempt rehabilitation before myself and the Universal Law!... Rest assured, my dear friends: the shame of dishonor still taints my spiritual being as much as on that fatal day when I plunged headlong into suicide to rid myself of it!"

"Well, I'm impressed, Jeronimo! I'm happy to see that Brother Santarem and Brother Ambrosio's efforts have not been futile," said Joao d'Azevedo.

"Yes," I added, also impressed and interested in more details for my memoirs. "I can see that serious changes have miraculously affected your way of thinking... But into what family are you going to be born, Jeronimo?... We can recall several wealthy families in the area."

"Even if I did know, I couldn't tell you, dear Mr. Botelho! My tutors have explained that such minute details are taken care of in the sanctuary of impenetrable secrets because the Magnanimous Law does not allow any indiscretions that might upset things... According to Brother Ambrosio, the most we can know is the place to which we will be returning, at least until we enter Seclusion. Then everything will be disclosed."

"But I once saw an interview between two patients from the Mental Ward and their new parents... and I've heard some of our assistants being told that many such details can be furnished, even to incarnates," I replied, somewhat put off, recalling the visit to the Colony's Emergency Outpost with the expedition from the Reincarnation Department.

Brother Ambrosio interrupted to corroborate what the future financier of Oporto was saying:

"That's right! For group study or for personal explanations meant for salutary results, and also as a reward for sincerity of purpose and for devotion to the undertaking, certain revelations about it are permitted and even extended to lay persons! And a lot of information regarding the matter can be given to incarnates especially, in order to act as an incentive for progress and comfort during the harshness of their reparations. However, such details are never divulged for the sake of mere curiosity, either to spirits or to incarnates. Candidates for reincarnation are enlightened on useful and necessary matters after they are admitted to Seclusion.



“Besides, are you referring to what happened at the Emergency Outpost?... Well, who were those individuals?... What were their names?... Their addresses?... An island under a Portuguese flag, that was all!... And a certain locale in the immense expanse of Northeastern Brazil... You’ll have to admit, my friend, that the sacred secret was not fully revealed at all, was it?”

Disarmed, I bowed my head, while Belarmino queried our old friend Jeronimo:

“And are you confident about your rehabilitation?”

“I sure am! Even though I’m distraught at the idea of reproducing, act by act and under even worse circumstances, the existence in which I failed! But I believe I’m up to the task. If I weren’t, I wouldn’t have received my mentors’ blessings to pursue the only rehabilitating course open to me! As a matter of fact, my dear professor, I cannot make any more progress in the spirit world until I have victoriously expunged my enormous debt! I must accept the fact that I disgraced my own family! That I cast into the torrents of misery other families whose household heads entrusted me with their money and other sacred assets, which I embezzled, thanks to my gambling and dissolute madness! I also have to remember that I harmed the Motherland, a crime that any honorable man would abhor. And further, that I harmed civil servants who, out of kindness, did not turn me in; who in trying to help me and give me more time to change my ways, did not exercise their rights by filing writs of garnishment, forcing bankruptcy, etc.! All these awful things weigh on a conscience awakened by repentance, dear Belarmino! It constitutes a crime perpetrated under the inspiration of negligence, ill-will, disregard for customs, thoughtless behavior, and a lack of love for the Good! I became so enmeshed in the sinister cause behind my suicide that now I feel shackled to the past by these insidious links; and in order to accomplish anything in the spirit realm, I must return to the place of my crimes and break those shackles by redoing with dignity my past foolish acts!”

Since none of us dared interrupt him, our visitor continued, as a bitter sadness overcame over our hearts:

“I won’t be able to have children! By not looking after my family; by rejecting, half way through, the honorable responsibility of being head of the household in order to help me ascend in merit, I put myself in the wretched

position of not being granted the chance of building a family and being a father again in my next existence!

“However, in order to mitigate my ugly behavior toward Zulmira and my children, I have promised Mother Mary, the sublime mother of my Redeemer, whose maternal solicitude rehabilitated Margarida and Albino, to employ all my efforts to assist orphaned children, to somehow build shelters for them, and to become their guardian, as if they were my own! That will be the ideal purpose of my expiatory existence.”

“May Heaven allow you to build your shelters for disadvantaged children before financial ruin destroys your plans, dear Jeronimo!” I added, surprised at the courage that shone through his words.

“May Heaven allow it, indeed, my friend!... Because, before or after the financial ruin that awaits me during my expiatory existence, I shall have become the supporter of many, many orphans. The crying faces of my own forsaken children, thrown into disgrace and misery by my premature death, are indelibly imprinted on my conscience, demanding redemption of the same weight, no matter what the sacrifice may be!”

Brother Ambrosio interrupted with a word of caution:

“Yes, whether at the height or bottom of monetary power, may Heaven enable your will and mind not to wander off the rehabilitating pathway that you have decided to tread! At the moment, our penitent is animated by the best of intentions. However, being victorious in what he hopes to do will depend on his willpower and on holding firm to his plan. Once it is reincarnated, the spirit usually lets itself slip into the fallacious attractions of its environment. It forgets the praiseworthy promises it made in the spirit world, promises that would be in its best interests to fulfill due to their importance... But if the spirit’s will to triumph is strong enough to drive it forward, overcoming the deleterious influences of selfishness, it is sure to establish a harmonious telepathic connection with its invisible mentors, who will also strive to drive it forward with wholesome, albeit discreet, inspirations, assisting it according to the law of solidarity established to spread fraternity throughout the Universe.”

“Let’s say Jeronimo does go back on his promises once he is reincarnated... What will happen?” I asked, holding to the dour criteria of a pessimistic reporter.

“His conscience will trouble him no end. And when he finally returns to the spirit world, he’ll be ashamed of himself for not having honored his word. Moreover, he’ll know that he will have to honor it in another earthly migration... But we hope that that won’t happen. Jeronimo has the main ingredient for fulfilling his promises: goodwill and tenderness towards abandoned orphans.”

Suddenly, amid the sudden silence that ensued, Belarmino – whose caring sentiments the reader already has had occasion to appreciate – asked the future Oporto financier:

“What news might you give us about your daughter Margarida?... Did she ever go to Brazil?... And Albino, is he still in prison?... Did Her Majesty really take an interest in him?”

“Ah, yes!” answered the inconsolable suicide, as if waves of bitterness had reached the most sensitive depths of his heart. “I was just about to give you the good news!... I have never been able to visit them again because, due to my moral passion, I am capable of being very indiscreet... However, I’ve been told that when she arrived in Brazil, Margarida married a compatriot, an honest and decent man, who offered her an honorable name and loyal affection! God be praised! How good it is for my soul to be able to give you such news!... As for Albino, he is a humble merchant in Lourenço Marques<sup>50</sup>, and he corresponds assiduously with his friend Fernando, who has been counseling him most worthily after having employed every effort to find him an honest way to make a living. Moreover, he has been teaching him the Spiritist Doctrine, of which he is a faithful adherent. And a little over a year ago, Albino married a beautiful African-Portuguese woman... and is now the father of two beautiful newborn twin girls!”

“Even though you can’t visit them, you can surely see them, can’t you?” I asked, sharing in the longing that appeared on his face.

“Yes, dear Camilo, I can! That is permitted. I can see them by means of Brother Santarem’s equipment. It makes them seem so close that I could actually talk to them... As for Zulmira, the unfortunate accomplice of my folly, she is finishing up her disgraced life aided by the two older daughters. Thank God, they didn’t withhold their support when she came to them. She tried to keep Margarida from leaving for Brazil but wasn’t able to. Poor Zulmira! I loved her so very much! And I’m responsible for her downfall! I owe her reparations, which I will fulfill later, with the blessings of Heaven.”

Two days later, Roberto de Canalejas visited us again. He brought us an invitation from Brother Teocrito to attend that night's solemn activities at the Hospital Sector's headquarters. The purpose would be a farewell ceremony, he explained, during which we would be released from the wardship of that Sector and be considered capable of pursuing other pathways in search of reparations for our progress.

Former patients from the neighborhoods around the hospitals would be attending the ceremony, which was of profound interest to all. As one can imagine, the activity was intense that evening, when the various sectors of the large Sector would be sending forth contingents of spirits considered capable of or in need of the terrible struggles of expiatory reincarnation due to the crime of having committed the worst infraction human beings can commit before their Creator!

Entering for the first time the Sector headquarters where Brother Teocrito maintained his offices, we were amazed by their majestic interior, which like all the others, was of the classic Portuguese style, presenting a sobriety of lines and great beauty.

We were kindly led to a vast auditorium that was arranged in tiers like an amphitheater. The upper tiers would be occupied by the general public – in our case, the patients – and the lower tiers would be occupied by the directors. The magnificent place was illumined by a remarkable light that seemed to pour in from the outside, covering the ambient with mirific gradations of a bluish-white color.

Little by little the auditorium filled up. The seats reserved for the different sections were strictly separated by dividing lines, as if the seats had been arranged according to different social classes. Here, however, the differentiation was done not according to social class, but moral and vibrational status. The groups that occupied each section were composed of members that were satisfactorily attuned to one another; that is, they were at the same level on the scale of responsibilities, merits and demerits.

As the patients were being seated accordingly, those responsible for the different departments of the Sector sat down next to Brother Teocrito, who was sitting in the place of honor at floor level. Assistants and guards accompanied the patients in their tier, standing fraternally beside them like modest spectators.

Thus, among the former, we noticed Father Anselmo, instructor of the phalanx of suicide-obsessors held in the Tower; Brother Miguel de Santarem, the selfless counselor from the Isolation Ward; and Brother Joao, the venerable elder, patient and charitable guide from the sad Mental Ward. They all flanked the Sector director, who in turn was responsible for the entire Mary of Nazareth Hospital. Brother Teocrito's assistants sat with us, except for Romeu and Alceste. As initiates, they belonged to a higher level on the spirit hierarchy, in spite of being Teocrito's disciples.

In the golden light coming in through the majestic dome, we could see some of our old companions some distance away: Jeronimo, head bowed, lost in deep thought, and Agenor Penalva, the converted obsessor under the care of Father Anselmo and Olivier de Guzman. After thirty-eight years of patient efforts, his cold, hard features still seemed to convey distrust, anxious and somber expectation, and indefinable fear.

The ceremony took place in majestic simplicity. There were no idiosyncrasies or novelties – none of the outrageous sensationalism of earthly ceremonies. Someday, may the men and women responsible for addressing the grave problems that trouble humankind learn from the spirits the simplicity we had the opportunity to witness when they get together for celebrations or deliberations! This stately meeting, however, had to do with the destinies of hundreds of individuals that needed to right their wrongs in order to continue their progress towards God!

Teocrito stood up, his fine, almost translucent, features radiating a kind smile towards his wards as he greeted them fraternally. Then, he began his speech by instilling a new desire for life in our souls and renewal for the struggles of the future:

“We greet you, dear pupils! Dear brethren in Jesus Christ! It is in his sublime name that we wish you the glorious victory of Peace!”

The director's voice, or rather the vibrations of his benevolent thoughts towards us – which we understood as if they were his voice – reached our minds gently, almost confidentially. Even so, the audience heard him clearly, not a single word being lost. Afterwards, the Spanish members of the gathering said that he had spoken to them in their native language. They recognized common expressions used in the family and known to them since childhood. The Portuguese speakers from Portugal, however, replied that they had heard him speak the classic language of Coimbra, while the Brazilians

stated that they had heard the soft, tender language of their native land, with its own rhythm and accent that is disliked so much in Portugal.<sup>51</sup>

A sincere enchantment infused the whole assembly with compassionate emotions...

Teocrito continued:

“You all know the purpose of this meeting. It is your future that is being delineated here, the destiny that awaits you. It will be structured into a plan that you will not only be informed about, but draw up and approve!

“Ever since that day when, by orders from the Higher Realms the gates of this Correctional Colony were opened to receive and house you, you have been living according to the rules of a hospital-prison. It has been like that for your own good, so that your misery would not become worse; so that your responsibilities would not end up being more onerous because of the harmful consequences that would have fatally absorbed you completely over centuries of grave transgressions, were it not for the charitable intervention of the Immaculate Shepherd who went to look for you, anxious to bring you back to the fold! However, I am here this evening to inform you that, from this moment on, the same gates that closed behind you, imprisoning you under the imperative of strict protection and vigilance, are now wide open! You are free from the Hospital Sector’s wardship, my brothers! Everything these hospitals and prisons could do to assist you during the critical emergency in which you were entangled has been done! From here on out, you will encounter new experiences on your pathway; new endeavors and life-conditions will demand activities and energies for which we sincerely wish you courage and strength... for now you understand that you will never, ever die! You will never be able to escape from yourselves, Creation, or the Universe! This is because you are creatures that have sprung from the Eternal Fluid of the Divine Mind. In you resides the Life Eternal of the One who granted you the glory of having been created in His Image, which means that you shall be as he is: you shall live throughout all Eternity!

“Be mindful that, possessing Eternal Life, a glorious purpose demands your presence in the bosom of the Eternal Homeland, where the Sovereign Lord of the Universe expresses the magnitude of his Glory!

“So why rebel against your divine origin? Why lower yourselves in habitual disobedience to the immutable laws of Creation, if it is by fulfilling them that you will find true reasons for feeling worthy, as well as the

happiness, the peace and undying glory for which you long and sigh?... What was your suicide good for?... Only to demonstrate your inferiority and ignorance, in spite of the fact that you thought you had vast knowledge and learning; only to expand your anguish to latitudes immeasurable to your minds, when it would have been much easier – because it would have been meritorious – to accept the imperatives of the Law that permits daily tribulations as an incentive to the spirit for its progress and the development of its sublime faculties.

“May the bitter lesson of experience serve you well, my dear friends! May the tears shed by your souls, inconsolable in the presence of the reality you have been faced with, remain in the folds of your consciences as a salutary warning for the future when, for your rehabilitation, you go through the same experiences you failed at the last time!

“In proclaiming the freedom that is extended to you by law, we are referring to your right and responsibility to look after your own interests, to preside over your own destiny with your own mind! Yes! You are free to choose what seems best to you! You have learned enough to choose:

“Do you want to return to the earth immediately in a new physical body as the only therapy that will lead you to the final cure of the complexes that have kept you submerged in the irremediable mire of anguish?... You are free to choose this task because you have been well-prepared for it!

“Or... would you rather stay and work with us for some time, postponing, for a while, your inevitable return to the earth, learning to serve in our contingent of guards; developing your faculties of love in a fraternal learning experience involving instruction for the obsessor phalanxes that infest the earth and the lower Invisible; or helping out in our hospitals as healthcare givers, that is, lending your benevolent assistance in charity, fraternal consolation, watch-care, etc.?...

“You are authorized to choose!

“Our arena of activity is vast and intense, and into the ranks of our Colony we welcome the volunteer who, loving the Lord, respecting his laws, wanting to work and serve in order to evolve and, if inexperienced, submitting himself to our principles and direction, desires to take part in increasing the Good and Justice!

“Observe Joel, whom you are so fond of: he arrived here in the same condition as you. The love of Jesus, however, made him into a peaceable

being. And in spite of what he will yet have to go through on the earth because of his unfortunate act in the middle of the journey that he should have completed victoriously, how much love he extends to his suffering brothers, how many noble and meritorious gestures he distributes daily to those who are entrusted to him!

“Would you rather remain here and do nothing for yourselves, roaming from Sector to Sector, merely observing, trapped in a vicious circle of unproductive contemplation? Or would you like to live between the lower Invisible and the earth, risking dangerous temptations, inactive, idle, living as astral beggars, not doing anything meritorious, but not doing anything evil either, since you are not evil individuals?...

“We will not prohibit either one, although with all the strength of our soul and the sincere effort of our hearts, we advise you against it! It would result in harmful consequences; avoidable troubles would turn into an unsustainable state of cumulative painful disadvantages, uncertainties and responsibilities that would be in your best interests to avoid!

“Or, would you like to prolong your stay with us in order to be initiated into a higher knowledge of Life, dedicating yourselves to a preparatory program for True Initiation, which will only be possible after your Consciences have been redeemed?

“You are welcome to do so, my friends! Learn from the Master of masters the principles that you are lacking! Receive in His Name the elements needed to strengthen yourselves to carry out the ideals of Love, Justice and Truth!

“Many of you present at this assembly are ready for such a preparatory program. Others are not! Your consciences will whisper the pathway to follow without our having to reveal your names. And even those of you who are ready: nobody is forcing you to accept the invitation. You may accept it if you'd like, according to your free will.”

A discreet murmuring could be heard throughout the audience. We admired the charitable subtlety of his method. It kept us from feeling in any way favored since we could not evaluate each other's consciences. It also abolished completely the supposition of any favoritism on the part of the mentors. Teocrito continued:

“You will have thirty days to ponder what you have just heard. While you have been instructed and enlightened for some time now to choose for



yourselves what is most appropriate, forbearance dictates that we give you more time to consider your future.

“During that time you will be assisted daily by Sector headquarters in case you need more information or clarification regarding your particular situation... You will be able to open up freely to those who will be at your disposal for this task, because they will speak in the name of the Divine Shepherd, and also because they know you in all your particularities and subtleties, for they can read your soul like an open book! Furthermore, you are invited to participate in the meetings held in this auditorium. We will discuss everything that can help enlighten, instruct and encourage you for the future to which you will be propelled according to your personal affinities. Once the thirty-day period is over, you will let the department with which you are affiliated know of your decision, after which, under our supervision, it will send you down the pathway that you have *voluntarily* chosen for yourself!”

This simple yet significant speech was followed by the first exposition of our duties as repentant spirits eager for rehabilitation. It was the first of a series of lectures that we had been invited to attend, and Teocrito himself was the speaker once more. He spoke in a paternal, counseling tone of voice without passionate outbursts of oratory. He merely conveyed thoughts that penetrated the innermost folds of our soul regarding the weak points of each one of us. As a veritable expert on our individual complexes, his objective was to help us identify, measure and scrutinize them so that we could strive against them. We left the hall on that memorable night very comforted, strengthened by a benevolent hope.

We returned several more times to hear him address the loftiest concepts on Life, the Laws of the Universe, the moral magnificence of the fulfillment of one’s Duty, the observation of Justice, the practice of Love and Fraternity, obedience to Reason and Morality, and all the other principles of the Good!

At the end of the thirty-day period, there was a lot of activity in the otherwise placid ambient of the Hospital Sector and the Tower. Groups of patients and their mentors walked the snowy lanes of the parks in the direction of Sector headquarters in order to deliver to the highest authority their final decision, made after serious deliberation and analysis of their individual situation with the help of their dedicated counselors and instructors, and supervised by Teocrito himself.

Agenor Penalva went, as well as several other inmates from the Tower, suicide-obsessors who had sown disorder, tears and immeasurable misfortune in the past, either as incarnate men or afterwards as lower order spirits. Jeronimo de Araujo Silveira, Mario Sobral and others went also. They all desired immediate reincarnation because of their remorse and the anguishing perspectives of a past that tormented their minds with unbearable suffering, making it impossible for them to do anything else. They felt an urgency to expiate their wrongdoings so that they could have peace in the temporary forgetfulness of service on the planet, and then be able to envisage other endeavors more serenely. Others chose internships in Security, where they could learn something to strengthen themselves a bit more, because frail and indecisive, they still feared reincarnation, distrusting their own weaknesses. Spending time with the heroic caravans that assisted the wretches in the Sinister Valley, as well as those on the earth, would prepare them better for endless possibilities on the pathway of Fraternity! Belarmino, Joao d'Azevedo, I, and a few others that were attuned to us, all from the Mary of Nazareth Hospital, were thrilled by the magnificent lectures of the venerable Sector director. So, after extensive and careful self-examination, we presented ourselves to him, declaring that if we were deserving of his honorable mercy, then in spite of the unworthiness we still bore in our consciences, we would like to continue on the preparatory pathway towards Initiation because we were attracted to the perspective of the Knowledge that he had given us a glimpse of.

“Welcome, my friends!” was his answer. “Starting tomorrow you can set out on your new pathway... Why wait?... However, you will not continue under my responsibility... My mission at your side has ended. You will proceed under the care of new mentors... Even so, we will always be united by the sweet affection that has been established between our spirits during your time here.”

As we were certain that we would be leaving the Hospital Sector the very next day and that we would be without the benevolent friends that had consoled us so much in our misfortune, we were overcome with profound sorrow. However, we all had known that the stay in the hospital was temporary and usually very short.

We started saying our goodbyes at the Hospital itself, which was adjacent to our quarters. Embracing us with a smile during a short break in the

morning's many tasks due to the arrival of a new contingent of reprobates from the Valley in a few hours, Joel said, comforting us once more:

“Don't think you'll be separated from us for good... We'll see each other many times... Patience, my dear friends, patience...”

Carlos and Roberto, as always, offered to guide us during our farewell visits. We embraced all our noble mentors, those tireless friends to whom we owed all the enlightenment that we had had the honor to receive outside our Sector, and which would extend throughout time, solidifying lasting affections!

We were in the Reincarnation Department, accompanied by the kind sisters Rosalia and Celestina, when several candidates arrived to be admitted to Seclusion. It was painful to see them mulling over the reprehensible dramas that impelled them towards a bitter, redeeming future, so quickly! They looked like reprobates expelled from paradise due to their lack of affinity to inhabit it any longer, the sad exodus of those condemned to hell due to their grave disobedience to the Laws of the Lord of All Goodness and Mercy!

Indeed, it was all of that! It was a phalanx of the repentant that, amid the struggles and incomprehension of earthly trials, were on their way to cleanse their sin-tainted conscience, baptizing it in the redemptive fire of suffering, thus redeeming it from disgrace!

They walked in a long line, two by two, climbing the stairs of Sector headquarters and disappearing into it... Prisoners of their dreadful past, enslaved by the darkness of their mind and, because of their bitter remorse, unable to make any further evolutionary attempts until they had endured an expiatory reincarnation. They walked with their heads lowered, sad, ashamed, fearful, as if they were submitting to the harsh punishment because they had found no other way to restore their spiritual honor and peace-of-mind except this providential measure that the Magnanimous Law was offering them: to reincarnate once again! To renew themselves in the earthly struggle through rehabilitating exercises in the fulfillment of Duty!

A dismal feeling of dread jarred our most sensitive fibers at seeing this group, led by Brother Joao, the director of the Mental Ward! Incapable of thinking for themselves, they proceeded to reincarnation driven by the imperious need to get some relief and make a little progress. The few mitigating factors that might act in their favor, their obvious faults, and their lamentable vibrational state, would be the only things that would set the

conditions for their existence. Brother Joao, the benevolent Teocrito, the technicians in the Reincarnation Department, the Colony directors, and their Guardians – all conscientiously inspired by the Justice and Mercy of the Sovereign Laws of the Omnipotent Creator – were the ones who made up for the inability to freely choose their future, establishing, in council, what was best for them, after having received the consent of the Redeeming Master – Jesus!

We could not contain our tears when we saw Jeronimo and Mario, our poor companions since the bleak desperation of the Sinister Valley. The former, downtrodden, bowed his head on his chest like a prisoner on his way to the gallows. He was so absorbed in troubled thought that he did not even notice us! The latter, however, smiling and valiant, his hair unruly, looked just as he did on the very first day we met him: head held high, fearless, as if ready to confront the struggles of the future, bright eyes looking ahead like a dreamer foreseeing the honorable end to a venture painfully begun amid the sacrifices demanded by the Mind and the tears shed by the Heart, both activated by sincere repentance, which would have to be expunged! When he saw us he waved a warm, final goodbye. A shiver of indescribable horror struck our souls: Mario waved to us with two stumps without hands. His hands were detached, clasping his neck, as if recalling a violent death by strangulation, the same he had inflicted on Eulina!

“That one is sure to triumph,” Sister Celestina prophesized, thoughtfully. “His upcoming sojourn will be a bitter Calvary, proper for courageous souls that repent! From cradle to grave, he will know only tears and trouble! He will trudge forward without hope or reward, deformed, sickly, humiliated, ridiculed, betrayed by his own mother – she will reject him at birth – because he can only receive a body in the environment in which he wallowed in the past... But it must be so – dear Lord! – in order for him to reconcile himself with his conscience, and to harmonize again with the natural progress of every individual in search of God! He understood this so well that he himself wrote his own sentence and delivered it to Brother Teocrito to forward it to the direction of the Colony in order to receive the approval of its Highest Guardian: Mary, the head of our Legion... Mario has imposed a very harsh expiation on himself, like so many, many other brothers and sisters undergoing severe and decisive expiation!”

On the evening of the following day, we left the Hospital Sector.

A modest vehicle, the usual mode of transportation within the Colony, came to fetch us. Silent and thoughtful, we took our seats, comforted by the presence of Romeu and Alceste, who were going to accompany us to our new home. As the vehicle glided softly along, we realized that the melancholy snows had begun to taper off. The landscape took on beautiful tones of mother of pearl, and flowers appeared in polychromatic bursts of color on the edges of the carefully-tended roads... The first buildings of a magnificent Hindu center appeared before our astonished eyes, as if in a dream!

Praise God! So it was true, indeed: we had progressed!

---

49 Jn. 14:2-1.

50 Now Maputo, in Mozambique. – Tr.

51 Only very high order spirits can produce such telepathic phenomenon. – (Medium's note)

# III

---

## The University Sector

---

## A Place of Hope

We spent our first night in anxious expectation. Our rooms faced the garden and from their windows we could see the vast horizon of the metropolis, inlaid with graceful pavilions that seemed to be built of mother of pearl and charmingly adorned with pergolas that released delicate fragrances from a myriad of exuberant shrubs and flowers. Things were no longer as insipidly white as they had been in the Hospital Sector.

Everything indicated that, according to our affinities, we had gravitated to a University Sector, where new cycles of study and learning would be open to us according to our desires.

We went for a stroll and an amenable and fascinating landscape stretched out before us, with magnificent buildings finely crafted in an ideal style that might exemplify that of a civilization that would never come into existence on the earth, leading us to ponder the possibility of unknown mists iridescent with equally unknown hues and tones like those that artists use to portray enchanting domes, suggestive interlaced patterns, the picturesque charm of balconies, all of which invite the mind of the poet to profound reveries on the pathway to the Ideal! Broad avenues stretched through majestic wooded areas and alongside gently undulating lakes edged with fragrant flowering bushes. And all in a line, like an unforgettable vision of a fairytale city, were the Academies, where wretches who had trampled on the sacred opportunity of an earthly existence were to make themselves capable of decisive, indispensable reform so that later, after a new incarnation, in which they proved the qualities they had acquired, they would be admitted into true Initiation.

I will not even try to describe the enchantment that radiated from that borough where the domes and spires of the buildings looked like subtly scintillating filigrees, as if covered with dew, and upon which the sun's rays,

in combination with the vapors of sublimated gases, lent them tonalities whose beauty I have nothing to compare to!

Everything was designed with a stately superiority that suggested a grandeur unconceivable to incarnate human beings!

But this was not a privileged residence! In fact, it was just one step above our sad Hospital home!

Filled with emotion, we stopped in front of the Schools we would be attending. There, before us, stood inscriptions of the kinds of classes we would be taking:

Morality, Philosophy, Science, Psychology, Pedagogy, Cosmogony, and even a new language, one that would not be just another language to be used on the earth as an accoutrement of the wealthy, a frivolous ornament of those who had enough money to buy the privilege of learning it. No! The language we would be learning would become the *definitive language* that in the future would tighten communications between incarnates and spirits, making it easier for them to understand each other, and it would also tear down the barriers of misunderstanding among human beings, thereby contributing to the unity ideated by Jesus of Nazareth:

*“One language, one banner, one shepherd!”*

This language, whose absence among the Brazilian mediums made it impossible for me to dictate works as I would have liked, making the endeavor of my rehabilitation that much more difficult, had a name that allied itself to the sweet balsam that enlightened our minds. Just like our borough, it was called *Hope*<sup>52</sup>; and there, next to the others, was the majestic building where it, in addition to the fraternal reasons for which it had been created, was taught! It was in our best interests to learn it, so that when we reincarnated, taking it with us in the folds of our soul, we would remember to use it.

The wholesome morning breeze brought us a gentle fragrance that reminded us of the red carnations Portuguese women love to grow in their flowerbeds, of graceful wisterias that come alive with the dew of dawn. And birds, as if singing from afar, chirped tender melodies, completing the charm of the scenery.

We had arrived the day before, when the stars were starting to shine with their luminous radiance.



Romeu and Alceste introduced us to the directors of the new district and then bid us farewell. Their mission with us had come to an end. We were overcome with profound emotion as the kind young men, to whom we owed so much, readied to leave. We embraced them as they said to us with a smile:

“We are not really going to be separated. You have only changed locations within the same home. In fact, isn’t the whole Infinite Universe the home of God’s creatures?!”

Brother Sosthenes was the director of Hope City. Although we were not comfortable making eye contact with him, he said to us in his benevolent, discreet and serious manner:

“Welcome, my dear sons! May Jesus, the only true Master here, inspire your conduct in the new phase that is beginning for you today. Be trustful! Learn! Work! So that you can emerge triumphant! This city is your city, and you will be living in a home that is your home, where you will meet other brothers and sisters<sup>53</sup> like yourselves, all children of the Eternal One! Mary, with the consent of her August Son, ordered its creation to give you the opportunity to prepare yourselves honorably for your rehabilitation! You will find in her maternal love the sublime support you need to conquer the darkness of the wrongdoings that have distanced you from the footsteps of the Great Master to whom you owe love and obedience above all! Therefore, you must hasten your progress to make up for lost time! I hope you will be able to intelligently comprehend what it is that you need.”

We could not respond. Tears filled our eyes. We were like bashful little boys standing for the first time in front of an aged and revered professor that was still not well-understood. After this introduction, we were taken to the lodgings where we would spend the night, and from where we would take our first stroll in the morning.

Here and there, in the parks that adorned the sector, we encountered groups of students listening to their masters to the poetry of lush trees, attentive and enraptured as the disciples of Socrates and Plato must have been in earlier times under the rustling of the plantains of Athens; or the initiates of the great Pythagoras; or the down-and-outs of Galilee and Judea and the sufferers of Capernaum and Gennesaret, enraptured by the indescribable wonder of the Messianic message!

Women walked down the avenues accompanied by austere guardians such as Marie Nimiers, whom we would get to know very closely, or by

inscrutable guardians such as Vicencia de Guzman<sup>54</sup>, a young nun of the ancient Order of St. Francis and sister of our old benefactor, Count Ramiro de Guzman. Once we found out about the ties that linked her to that dedicated servant of the Department of Relations with Earth, we immediately extended our goodwill to her also.

We were absorbed in the scenery, letting our imagination take flight and allowing multiple impressions to palpitate in our minds, when I suddenly felt a tap on the shoulder, producing a gentle emotion like a child's caress, awakening me from a lengthy torpor. I turned around, as did my companions – now reduced to Joao and Belarmino, since the others were interned in Seclusion. Two women were standing there. They had come to invite us to a get-together planned for greeting the small group that had arrived the previous day. They told us that we would be introduced to our new mentors, those who would be in charge of our overall education. We would be entrusted to them as the true Guardians who would watch over us like fathers until the end of the course of the renewing experiences we would undertake in our next incarnation in the earthly realm.

The first of the two women, the one that had touched my shoulder, was a charming young blonde who looked to be about fifteen years old, radiating an irresistible gracefulness. However, she was oddly dressed: a white tunic cinched at the waist, a blue robe worn in the ancient Greek style, and a small garland of tiny roses decorating on her ivory brow. She looked like an angel lacking only the wings. At first I thought I was the victim of a new type of hallucination, that passing from the Valley of the Reprobates to Hope City, I had acquired the gift of creating the opposite of ugly, that is, pleasant and beautiful. The young woman had the poetic and imposing name Rita de Cassia de Forjaz Frazao, a name that would have put her in the circle of an aristocratic family in her last existence on the soil of Portugal. I was unable to contain my desire to find out about her interesting garments, and after a few days I noticed she was becoming increasingly bothered by my indiscretion. Finally, she answered my question:

“I was buried like this, that is, they dressed my corpse like this when I left it the last time I was incarnate. The return to the Invisible was so dear to my heart, in spite of the grief it meant for someone I had loved very much, that I have retained in my mind the remembrance of my last earthly ‘garb.’”

The second woman, tall and also blonde, must have left her body at around fifty years of age, because she still preserved the mental attitudes that

would allow for such an appraisal. Kind and attractive, she extended her right hand to me very genteelly, introducing herself to us in a charming way:

“I’m sure you must have heard about me... I’m Doris Mary Steel da Costa... and I have come from an earthly existence in which I very gladly served as mother for my poor Joel... your friend in the Hospital Sector.”

We were charmed. We did not have enough words to express the emotion that came over us. I respectfully kissed the hand that had been so democratically extended to me, doing it with profound sincerity, without the affectation that had been my habit before...

At the scheduled time, guardian sisters in charge of internal services took us to the assembly hall, located at the headquarters of our new Sector.

Our group consisted of around two hundred wrongdoers, and was one of the largest in the Sector at that time. We were surprised to see that it contained a large contingent of Brazilian women from a wide range of social classes. The numbers of female suicides in Brazil were much higher than in Portugal. Brother Sosthenes, the chief Guardian of the borough, presided over the meeting.

He began by exhorting us to mentally honor the Creator, which, moved with sincere reverence, we did as best we could with a silent prayer. On his right sat an elderly man whose white, pointed beard extended down to his waist, imprinting his character with an aspect of such venerability that we thought we were looking at one of those patriarchs depicted in the sacred scriptures, or an Indian faqir who had acquired virtue and knowledge through the most austere disciplines. On Sosthenes’ left, another initiate caught our attention with his classic Hindu profile, which greatly appealed to our sentiment. As venerable as the former, this man was younger, reflecting his maturity in the strength of his balanced mind, stamped clearly on his features. To the right of the elderly man with the beard sat a young adolescent who caught our immediate attention because he was occupying the place of a master and not that of an assistant. Handsome, almost angelic, his Hebrew profile radiated such an impressing gentleness that, were it not for the undisputable reality of everything that surrounded us, we might have thought we were looking at one of those apparitions that books of the East mention so frequently.

At a signal from Brother Sosthenes, the patients’ roll call started. Our names, listed in the thick registration book we had filled out upon our arrival,

were announced one by one by the powerful voice of one of the assistants, who, next to the podium, served as secretary for the meeting. We answered timidly like newcomers when we heard our names, which continued to resonate farther and farther away among the halls and galleries, through the distant parks and down the roads that extended amid flowers and large pavilions, and then to who knows where?... Maybe on out to Infinity and Eternity!...

Everyone accounted for, the director stood up to make his speech of greeting:

“At this moment, you are starting a new phase in your existence as delinquent spirits, my dear friends! Of all the patients that arrived with you at this Colony, you are the only ones capable of enduring the struggles of the spiritual learning experience that will provide you with a solid foundation for acquiring personal merits in the days ahead. You are being admitted into our schools because you have demonstrated the moral and mental growth necessary for acquiring knowledge that will enable you to undertake a rehabilitating reincarnation capable of furnishing you with the things you need in order to recover from the wrong to which you succumbed.

“As you must have been aware of for some time now, you are not the irredeemably condemned, to whom the Universal Law would apply extreme measures, relegating you forever to your present unevolved condition, abandoning you to your inconsolable anguishes, and excluding you from the harmony proper to every creature originated from Love Sempiternal! On the contrary, we are here to tell you that you have the right to expect much from the paternal goodness of the Omnipotent Creator, since the Law He established – and which you broke with the irreverent act of self-defeating rebelliousness – is giving all of you the chance to recommence the lifetimes you cut short via suicide, and thus an opportunity for sure rehabilitation.

“However, because you know nothing about Spiritual Life, it is urgent that you be enlightened about it. Till now, your stay in the spirit world has been lived in the lower zones, where you have learned very little, morally speaking, due to the armor of animality that envelops your mental vibrations, strongly tied to the realm of sensations. But after nearly one century, the time has come to apply stricter discipline to your continued follies, to awaken you from the vicious circle in which you have been stuck, and to lead you to the dawn of redemption in Jesus, which will take you to the true goal that you must reach as God’s creatures!

“Many of you, the learned of the earth, bright minds acknowledged by earthly society, are still ignorant of the most rudimentary spiritual principles, even taking your impudence to the extreme of negating and combating them whenever you saw them adorning the character of your neighbor. For that very reason, you must start a course of moral-mental-spiritual reeducation, for that is what you are lacking. Your predisposition to such a lofty endeavor is the answer to your desperate pleas to be delivered from your suffering!

“Had it not been for your reckless impulsive act, affronting the immutable laws that you were as yet unaware of, you would be praised today for your magnificent triumph; you would be rewarded for having fulfilled your Duty, and you would be ready for new cycles of learning. However, your suicide, which did not bring you death after all, because death is a fiction in this living Universe ruled by eternal laws originating from the wisdom of an Eternal Creator; which brought you neither repose nor oblivion, because it struck the physical body only and not the spirit body where your true and eternal being resides; your suicide, we repeat, robbed you of any possible merit you might have had and plunged you into a calamitous situation you will not get out of until complete restoration is made. And I must warn you, my friends, in the struggles you will undertake to achieve such a task, more than one century will see the tears you shed because of your execrable act of irreverence towards yourselves and towards God!

“However, what we teach you here will greatly influence the victory you must have over yourselves! You will not leave this place to ascend to more rewarding spiritual spheres until you have received, either from our Institute or from your own Conscience, the certificates of rehabilitation that will grant you entrance to the normal habitations of the evolutionary hierarchy. And these certificates, my friends, will only be given to you after the reincarnation you will have to embrace once you have finished the course you’re about to begin.”

A brief pause ensued, which gave us the impression that new attitudes were beginning to stir within the fibers of our soul. Turning to the three figures that flanked him, Brother Sosthenes continued, as we paid even closer attention to him:

“These are your instructors. They are like guardian angels that will follow your destinies and support you on the difficult journey ahead! From now on, they will accompany you every day of your life, and will only consider their noble mission with you accomplished when, glorified by

obedience to the Law you broke, you return from the earth to this Institute. That is when you will receive something akin to a passport to another spiritual sphere, where you will pick up again the normal thread of the evolutionary pathway interrupted by your suicide.

“The credentials of the masters, to whom you are being entrusted from this moment on in the name of the Heavenly Shepherd, go back in virtue and merit to a very remote past, many times tested by means of sanctified trials.

“On my right is Epaminondas de Vigo, who in a brilliant ascent from ancient Egypt to the somber days of the Middle Ages in Spain, always served the Truth and praised the name of God. His triumph has not diminished one bit in the spirit realms. In apostolic times, when as a disciple of Simon Peter he glorified the Divine Master, he had the supreme honor of being martyred in the circus of Domitius Nero. In Spain, under the empire of darkness that enveloped the laws imposed by the so-called Holy Office of the Inquisition, he shone like a saving star, showing sublime pathways to the persecuted, as well as to many other hearts longing for the divine ideal, bearing the torch of knowledge sublimated in love and reverence for the Gospel of the Immaculate Lamb, knowledge he had obtained in past pilgrimages devoted to the sacred wisdom of ancient India, the learned repository of immortal truths on the earth! But it was exactly because he did shine in the darkness that he was martyred once more, not by having his physical body thrown to the lions, but by having it burned at the stake, where he once more proved his unflinching devotion to Jesus of Nazareth!

“On my left is Souria-Omar, an ancient master of initiation in Alexandria, and then a philosopher in Greece, right after the coming of Socrates, when undying torchlights began to be lit for the people, until then deprived of the sublime knowledge, which was kept secret and available only for learning and use by sages and scholars. Like the eminent precursor<sup>55</sup> of the Great Master, he taught the Secret Doctrine to disciples coming from the humblest social classes, to the disinherited and the unfortunate. In the benevolent shade of stately oak trees or the poetic amenity of the plantains, he enabled them to absorb teachings filled with divine magnificence, transporting them to lofty thoughts about the Eternal God, Creator of all things, that unknown God whose image was absent from the collection of deities on the stone altars of ancient Hellas... Later, he reincarnated in Judea, attracted by the figure of the incomparable Master of masters, practicing benevolent, humble acts as he followed the luminous footsteps of the

Heavenly Shepherd! In old age, he witnessed the Jerusalem persecutions right after the stoning of Stephen.<sup>56</sup> Stoic, strengthened by an unbreakable faith, he suffered a long martyrdom in the sinister darkness of an ancient dungeon; afflicted by blindness, he had been considered to be a learned person, and therefore dangerous to Pharisaic interests. Tortured with beatings and dreadful mutilations, he succumbed, ignored by society and unacknowledged by his own family, but glorified by the Sublime Master, for whose love he endured everything with humility, love and gratitude. Souria-Omar, like Epaminondas, focused his thoughts on the highest expressions of spirituality for many centuries, his soul fervently baptized on the sacred pyre of the Divine Science and love for God! Now, if he is active in this region of anguish, materialized to the point of being seen by you as he looked in his last incarnation, it is not because he lacks the enlightenment and merit to ascend to realms that are in harmony with his virtues, but because both he and Epaminondas, faithful to the principles of Christian initiation – which they observe above all other norms – would rather extend their love and attention to the discouraged and unfortunate, devoting themselves to leading them towards redemption inspired by the examples of the Heavenly Master, who left his kingdom of glory to give himself in ongoing sacrifice on behalf of his lost sheep...

“And then there is Anibal, my dear children! This young man knew Jesus of Nazareth during his unforgettably ministry in woeful Judea! Anibal, son of Silas, was one of the children welcomed by Jesus when, demonstrating his unmistakable tenderness once more amid the vacillating followers, he said:

*“Let the little children come to me, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs...”*

“Anibal will instruct you about Christian teachings in the exact same way he learned them from the Rabbi, whom he has loved fervently ever since his remote childhood in the East!

“He says that when the Lord preached his gentle Doctrine of Love, marvelously precise, elucidating images appeared unexpectedly before the eyes of the listeners of goodwill, enlightening them in an unmistakable manner and imprinting never to be forgotten illustrations on the folds of their being! That is why the great Envoy, preaching in unshakable serenity, could hold the attention of famished multitudes for hours on end, control turbulent mobs, enrapture listeners, and convince hearts that would either prostrate

themselves, fearful and dazed, when he passed by, or adhere, faithful and enchanted, to His Doctrine. The impious, however, those whose rebellious minds were in disaccord with the divine vibrations, perceived nothing. They only heard things whose loftiness they were unable to grasp because their souls were replete with the deadly virus of ill-will! One of these images, certainly the most beautiful of all those the Beloved Master ever created to instruct his wayward sheep – the image that depicted him in his glory as the Only Begotten Son of the Most High – was enough for Saul of Tarsus to be transformed into an ardent pillar of the Redemptive Doctrine with which Jesus had blessed the world!

“Anibal grew up and became a man, always feeling enveloped by the Divine Shepherd’s undying radiations, which were never erased from in his memories. He toiled for the Cause, repeating what he heard from the Lord or his Apostles either in person or from the Beyond. But he preferred to instruct children and young people, recalling the unsurpassable tenderness with which Jesus had treated children. He traveled and suffered persecution, insult, affronts and injustice at a time when it was socially acceptable to criticize, offend, persecute and kill the followers of the Nazarene! And when he finally arrived in Rome, he was glorified with martyrdom for his love for the Heavenly Envoy, when at thirty-seven years of age his physical body was incinerated on one of those poles used to illuminate festivities in the infamous gardens of Nero! But amid the torture of the resinous flames and the terror of being entangled in the web of the ultimate testimony, Anibal, who considered himself very simple and unworthy of such a lofty honor, saw once more the shores of Tiberias – the lovely lake of Gennesaret – the humble and quaint villages of Galilee, and Jesus gently preaching the heavenly Good News with those enrapturing images, which in his final hour, seemed even more beautiful and fascinating to his humble and ardent soul, while Jesus’ sweet voice repeated, like a kiss of extreme unction blessing his soul and destining it to the glory of Immortality:

*‘Come to me, blessed of my Father, and sit at my right hand...’*

“A sincere lover of the Good News of the Immaculate Lamb, the Good News is what he will teach you, because to him you are little children who know nothing about it... And he will teach you in the same way he himself learned it from the Unforgettable Master: in demonstrative images that will present to you, in the most accurate way possible, the enchantment that seized and bound him to Jesus forever!



“In order to become specialized in such a sublime type of mental confabulation, the devoted Anibal had to live many existences of renunciation, toil and sacrifice on the pathway of progress, for that is the only way to develop such a precious aptitude in the faculties of the soul. But he succeeded, because his heart never lacked the will to succeed, and he never forgot the glorious days of the Messianic preaching, the sempiternal moment in his spirit when he felt the Heavenly Envoy’s right hand on his fragile head as a child, and the unforgettable invitation:

*‘Let the little children come to me...’*

“The truth is that Anibal had been prepared for this since remotest times!

“He had lived in the times of Elijah, revering the name of the true God! And later on, he was initiated into the mysteries of the ancient school of the Egyptians. His reverence for and devotion to the true God, and his unshakable faith in the liberating advent of the Divine Messiah, illuminated his mind from then on, amid beams of virtues that would never fade.

“However, in spite of his death in Rome, a tireless worker, he continued to reincarnate on the planet, driven by a powerful and unstoppable will to follow in the footsteps of the Master in obedience to his divine appeals. Thus, he suffered persecution once more during the reign of Hadrian, and then exulted in the victory of Constantine!

“From then on, he dedicated himself particularly to the support and education of children and youths. As a Catholic priest in the Middle Ages, more than once he became the guardian angel of poor abandoned children, forgotten by the despotism of the lords of that era, helping them to become useful, productive men and honest women devoted to Duty and Family! And so much did Anibal concern himself with children and youths, so deeply did he focus his mental energies on those graceful and sweet faces, that his mind imprinted his perispirit with the ageless features of a kindly adolescent, as you can see. He still looks like the lad the Nazarene Master embraced in Judea almost two thousand years ago!

“And then one day, in praise for his spirit as a faithful and loving servant, a direct order came down from the higher spheres of light as a gift for so many centuries of devotion and love: ‘Go, Anibal... and devote your work to my Mother’s Legion! Use my teachings, which you love so much, to help those most in need of light and strength... Concentrate, preferably, on those whose minds have succumbed under the punishment of having committed

suicide... For a long time now I have commended them to my Mother, for only maternal inspiration is sufficiently charitable to uplift them towards God! Teach them my words! Awaken them, reminding them of the examples I left behind! Use my teachings to instruct them to love, to serve, to dominate their passions by overcoming them with the power of knowledge, to find the pathways I traced out for redemption in the fulfillment of Duty, and to suffer patiently, because suffering is the prelude to glory, the powerful lever of progress... Open to them the book of your memories! Remember when you heard me preach in Judea... and illuminate them with the light of my Gospel, because that is all that they lack.'

"And here he is, my dear children, modest, looking young as an adolescent, but touched by the immortal flame of inspiration that links him to the limitless goodness of the Sublime Master... I entrust you to him!"

Intense emotion come over our souls, with the deepest sentiments of admiration for those three figures who had been introduced to us and who would so closely be linked to our destinies for an amount of time we could not yet foretell. Also, the figure of the Nazarene had been singularly presented to us. Until then, he had seemed to us more like a sublime ideal incomprehensible to human minds than a real person capable of being understood and emulated by the ordinary man and woman. Our three masters, however, had lived when he had lived. They had known him. They had heard him speak. They had even talked to him, for the Divine Master never refused to speak to anyone who sought him! One of the three had even felt the gentle caress of his hand on his head. This Jesus Christ, thus known, thus seen, thus loved, grabbed our full attention.

Many of the patients had bowed their heads. Others shed silent and discreet tears that fell like dew upon their souls in a grateful and fervent baptism! The silence continued for a few moments, after which Sosthenes continued:

"As it is never advisable to waste time, since time wasted in the blessed endeavor of progress can result in problems that are very hard to repair in the future, we will start to implement measures for your benefit this very day. You will once more be divided into homogeneous groups of ten, and as was the rule at the Hospital, men and women will be separated. Only during classes, or on certain days scheduled for recreational activities, will you be able to mingle and exchange ideas. This is because you still bear painful vestiges of physical matter, troubling mental tendencies that you must

educate. Your thoughts must become accustomed to a wholesome discipline; they must be turned as quickly as possible towards the good expressions of the spirit, towards thoughts whose focus lies in the idea of God! You will practice with us the mental exercise of uplifting your soul towards the Infinite! But in order to reach that state, you have to leave subaltern concerns behind. The idea of sex is one of the most troublesome obstacles to mental conquests! Sexual tendencies oppress the will, disturb the energies of the soul, dulling its faculties and drawing it towards heavy, inferior vibrations that delay the true state of spirituality. Therefore, while you are not yet sufficiently advanced, such isolation is only prudent. It is a wise counselor that will enable you to forget that you were men and women in a not too distant past, and it will remind you that you are now to seek spiritual love with an unfading fraternal sentiment, a divine inclination appropriate for the rapture of the spirit. Nevertheless, spirits already educated concerning the true affinities of the soul, spirits that animated female bodies on the earth, will accompany you on your educative, as well as personal, mission. Chosen from the Security sector, they will be your tutors. They will help you adapt fully to the spirit world, which, actually, you still do not know, because your stay in the Invisible so far has been limited to its lowest levels, which is not the same thing... They will listen to your confidences; they will console you with their counsels and experiences when fatigue or longing threaten your disposition; they will hear your requests and transmit them to the directors of this Sector. Thus, the sweet and sacred sentiments of Family will surround your hearts, keeping you from forgetting them due to a long separation. You mustn't forget the sentiments of family as they are experienced on the earth, because you will still reincarnate many times on its stage, rebuilding homes that you were not always able to honor, and testifying to the teachings that you will have learned in the spirit world with your masters, the agents of Jesus. In your company here, they will play the role of maternal solicitude, of fraternal interest and dedication!

“As you can see, all the help the Law allows in your deplorable state will be extended to you by the magnanimous direction of this Correctional Colony, whose statutes, based on the Sublime Doctrine of Love and Fraternity, aim to educate you in order to elevate and redeem you!

“So press on, my dear friends, my brothers and sisters! Be courageous and decisive in the struggle that will deliver you from the grave consequences you created for yourselves in an unfortunate and reckless moment!”

\* \* \*

We met the Women from Security in an antechamber of the assembly hall. They were a noble group of legionaries being trained for future endeavors to be carried out on the earth as women. They were preparing themselves with us, their suffering brothers bereft of illumination and consolation. There they were, waiting for their wards in order to be introduced to them. The group consisted of Belarmino de Queiroz e Sousa, Joao d’Azevedo and myself, in addition to other Portuguese men and some Brazilians. We received as our “good genii” the two women that had taken us to the meeting we had just left, that is, Doris Mary and Rita de Cassia. We were thrilled by this because we already felt irresistibly drawn to them, and we conveyed the happiness we felt by kissing the hand they graciously extended to us.

Without further ado, we were taken to a stately building where classes on Morality and Philosophy were taught, one of the magnificent palaces located on the lovely Academy Avenue.

When we entered the area where the classes were held, a soft emotion stirred the wounded fibers of our being. It was a large room constructed in a semicircle, whose comfortable rows of seats followed the same design. A large, luminous screen in the center of the far wall called the visitor’s attention, and in front of it was the podium for the instructor of the course we were about to start. The equipment was familiar to us. We had seen it several times in the Hospital Sector. However, the equipment here seemed to be more advanced, lighter and with different dimensions. Soft bluish-white tones projected the suggestive enchantment of a sanctuary. We had never felt the insignificance of our persona as deeply as when we entered that marvelous classroom, where the first detail to catch our eye was the sublime invitation of the Lord of Nazareth, written in gleaming characters on the screen:

*“Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”<sup>57</sup>*

The tinkling of a bell called our attention. The master appeared. It was Anibal de Silas, whom we had been introduced to a little earlier. He was accompanied by two assistants, Pedro and Salustio, two kindly, handsome adolescents like himself. They immediately began preparing for the upcoming

lesson. Thoughts swirled in the folds of my conscience, letting endearing memories from my childhood reach my heart... I saw myself as a little boy, excited yet fearful at facing for the first time the old teacher that taught me the letters of the alphabet...

The assistants connected imperceptible but luminous wires to the chair where Anibal had taken a seat, and they prepared a headband similar to that we had seen in the Tower for the elucidation of Agenor Penalva. The silence was religious. There was complete homogeneity in the assembly because harmony was imperative, creating a sense of indefinable well-being in all of us. Although we were all afflicted and anguished sufferers, we silenced our complaints and personal concerns in anticipation of what was about to take place!

Another six initiates ascended the platform. They sat in chairs arranged in a semicircle, with Anibal in the middle, as Pedro and Salustio exited.

Anibal stood up. It seemed like maternal caresses stroked our darkened souls. Waves of hope whispered to our hearts obliterated by long despair, and sighs alleviated abominable oppressions. We heard the distant and harmonious sounds of a moving melody, like a sacred hymn, which prepared our spirits by ridding the environment of any vestige of lingering subaltern concerns. Instinctively, we felt held by a profound and singular reverence. Mysterious shivers pervaded and warmed our psychical makeup, while a strange bubbling up of tears refreshed our eyes scalded by the blistering weeping of misfortune! Evidently, the sounds of that marvelous hymn contained magnetic waves to prepare us for the moment, waves that united our minds in the gentleness of the irresistible chords, inducing us to vibrate in a harmonious state of concentration of thoughts and wills.

In the midst of the absolute silence, from which not even the discomfort of our maladies could distract us, Anibal's voice, grave and tender at the same time, resonated in the hall with the moving invitation:

“Let us pray, my dear brothers and sisters! Before any endeavors of a lofty nature, we have the honorable duty to present ourselves to God Almighty through the mental power of our spirit, praising him with our reverence and asking for his divine blessings.”

His sparkling eyes, denoting the radiance of his intelligence, penetrated the depths of our hearts, as if lifting our thoughts from the darkest, innermost folds of our being in order to illumine them. We had the perfect impression

that his fulgurate gaze was a living torch that illuminated our fearful, desolate souls one by one. We bowed our miserable heads, frightened in the presence of the superior psychological power that was visiting the folds of our soul!

Benevolently, he continued as if it were a harmonious prelude:

“Prayer, my dear brothers and sisters, is the strong bastion capable of keeping your thoughts serene in the face of the torments originating from the experiences and renewals that are indispensable for your progress. By learning to uplift your mind to the Infinite in the soft and simple words of a heartfelt and mindful prayer, you will be in possession of a golden key that will reveal the secret of good inspirations. As you pray, presenting yourselves with trust and reverence to the Supreme Father – as is the duty of each of us – you will receive from Him the blessed influx of unknown forces, which will grant you enough courage for the daily tasks intrinsic to those who wish to advance on the pathway of progress and light! Driven by a deeply felt and understood prayer, you will learn to progressively submerge your mind in the regions visited by the celestial clarities, and you will return enlightened for the accomplishment of the most arduous tasks!

“It is with the purpose of starting you out on that beneficial pathway that I invite you to expand your thought towards the Infinite, accompanying my own... It does not matter that burning memories of past wrongdoings weigh on your consciences, and that for this reason you find it difficult to expand your minds for this endeavor. What is necessary, what is urgent and unpostponable, is your will to start, to give a vigorous impulse, animated by the courage you are able to summon from the depths of your being, to your journey through the rewarding channels of prayer... because unless you prepare yourselves for this initiative course of mental connection with the superior planes, how will you reach them in order to grow spiritually?!”

Anibal prayed, guiding our miserable thoughts to those gentle pathways strewn with consoling balsams and renewing energies! As he prayed, a phosphorescent beam of iridescent light spread over him, and expanding towards the assembly, enveloped everyone in a marvelous circle of blessing. The hymn softly accompanied Anibal’s faith-anointed words... and warm feelings alleviated the still painful contusions of the past...

Anibal de Silas sat back down in the center of the semicircle. Pedro and Salustio placed the headband of light on his forehead, connecting it to the mirroring screen with the luminous wires. A grave moment of meditation and

mental focus came over the group of masters, concentrating and harmonizing their wills. Then Anibal began the exposition.

Due to the magnitude of what followed during those unforgettable classes, not only on that day but also on subsequent ones, and because of the vital influence it had on our destinies, our moral and mental development, as well as the importance of the completely new pedagogic method, we will dedicate a special chapter to describing it, conscious of the fact, however, that in spite of all our efforts and goodwill, we will be able to convey to the reader only a very pale portrayal of what we experienced.

---

52 A reference to Esperanto: An artificial language invented by the Polish physician L.L. Zamenhof in 1887 for international use, based on word roots common to the major European languages, and meaning, literally, *the hoping one*. (Webster's College Dictionary). Described more fully in the final chapter of this book. – Tr.

53 Unlike the circumstances in Part Two, men and women both inhabit this new sector. – Tr.

54 Characters included in the notes of the true author of these pages during twenty-years of mediumistic endeavors, but which were omitted in the present book by the compiler, who decided to reserve them for another literary essay in Spiritist format.

55 Socrates – Tr.

56 The story of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and St. Paul is narrated in *Paul and Stephen*, written by the spirit Emmanuel through the mediumship of Francisco Candido Xavier; published by the Brazilian Spiritist Federation, 2017. – Tr.

57 Mt. 15:28-30.

---

## “Come unto me”

Anibal began to lecture on the urgency for all of us, as well as all humanity, whether on the earthly physical plane or the lower and intermediate Invisible, to reeducate ourselves under the guidance of the fertile Christian norms. In a succinct analysis, contrary to the idea harbored by most of us, he stated that there was neither superstitious mysticism nor miraculous, abnormal phenomena in the magnificent epic of Christianity, an epic that was not limited to the nativity in Bethlehem and the tragedy of Calvary, but which extended perennially from the Spheres of Light down to the darkness of the earth, and which only the blindness of ignorance cannot appreciate fully. Contrary to mysticism and miracles, Christianity was a universal doctrine that had its origin in the Sempiternal Laws. Thus, its foundations were practical to the utmost for promoting the moral healing of humans and the societies in which they were called to live on their long evolutionary career, with a view to the exaltation of humankind before the Wise Laws of the Creator. He reminded us that human beings had cast a pall of darkness over the Sublime Master’s teachings, enveloping them in calamitous complexities by tainting the brilliance of their initial essence with innovations and trappings characteristic of humanity’s unevolved condition, thereby disfiguring the truth of which those teachings are the utmost exponent. He affirmed with impressive forcefulness, which we did not think an adolescent was capable of, that only the lofty and altruistic teachings of the educational doctrines expounded by the Sublime Teacher Jesus of Nazareth could give us, as well as all humankind, the opportunity for the rehabilitation required of us, and prepare us to acquire a new and lofty Morality, a wholesomeness of actions capable of awakening broad horizons in our despondent hearts, a personal and collective renaissance, true progress on the ladder of ascent towards the abundant Life of Immortality! That even if we were gifted, learned and erudite, such illustrious assets were of no use whatsoever if we remained



ignorant of the norms of the Morality of God's Christ, norms in whose application resides the glory of eternal bliss, since Knowledge without Love and Fraternity can only find false glory amongst earthly societies...

He then explained that this first class would consist of introducing himself to us, his disciples; that we needed to know him in depth so that his examples could encourage us on the thorn-covered path we would have to tread to pay our heavy debts; that it was always good pedagogy for a mentor to present his own examples to his students; and that we needed to learn to love and trust him, becoming his friends, and considering him sufficiently worthy of being heard and followed; that we needed first to observe in him the lasting effects of a character that had been rebuilt by the Love of the Good Shepherd and redeemed using the very principles that we, on our part, had to learn so we could lift ourselves from the darkness of the Godlessness in which we were immersed, because the truth was that we did not fully understand the Christianity the Nazarene Master had bequeathed us; that we were not Christians but enemies of Christ, rebellious sheep that did not really know their Shepherd!

Next, Anibal proceeded to tell us about his life! Not only his last existence on the soil of Italy during the ominous days of the Middle Ages, but the many earthly journeys of his evolutionary cycle, his wrongdoings as a spirit-in-progress, his struggles for redemption through sacrifice and tears of reparation, as well as his efforts for the Good, the ever increasing, tireless toil that earned him merit as true repentance for the time he had wasted, in addition to his learning experiences in the spirit world, his endeavors and missions on both the Astral and Material planes in order to test the effectiveness of his progress and his devotion to Jesus of Nazareth, to whom he was bound by a fervent love that nothing could ever darken or diminish!

We were astonished to see Anibal's words translated into images and scenes that were reflected on the miraculous screen. As he spoke, the images of his earthly migrations were reproduced on it with such sharpness that we could easily imagine being co-participants in the times brought up from the secret repositories of his mind. The lofty suggestions we experienced dominated our faculties, connecting them to the will of our mentor and his assistants, causing us to forget that we were nothing but mere pupils being introduced to their first class! It was positively more real, more complete and more suggestive than the cinema of our days, more convincing than the theatrical scenes that enrapture and involve the spectator so much, because it

was life itself, natural, human, and lived in actuality. The retrospect of Anibal's thought flashed in separate scenes on the screen, which we were no longer aware of as we focused only on the breathtaking events that would become embossed in our minds as incentives for our future incarnations! When the dramatic series ended, the handsome young instructor had become a beloved being from whom we never wanted to be separated! As a result of his exposition, there was a merger – so to speak – of our souls with his. The most vivid endearment had been established, thus fulfilling his noble and fraternal desire.

However, in observing our confusion due to the phenomenon, for which we had no explanation because of the insufficient knowledge we had acquired up to that date, Anibal enlightened us, after which he ended the class for the day:

“This screen, upon which I let my own soul be reflected, is a sort of mirror. The scenes you've just seen flashing on it were my memories, dear disciples, awakened intact and living from the deepest folds of my Conscience!

“As they live their lives on the earth and in the spirit world, all of the children of the Almighty imprint on the folds of their soul, in the deep layers of their Conscience, the entire epic of their journey – their actions, their deeds and even their thoughts! Their long, tumultuous history is recorded within them, just as the history of our planet is archived not only in the geological strata but eternally reproduced, photographed, and archived in the luminous waves of the ether throughout the Infinity of Time! In its turn, the astral body, the envelope we presently display as spirits free of the material body, this highly subtle and faithful apparatus, whose marvelous constitution you are still not capable of comprehending, registers, in identical detail, the same things that the Conscience has stored down through time. It stores them, reflects them, or expands them according to the necessity of the moment – as I have just done – depending only on the action of an educated will! If you had educated the faculties of your soul, if when attending the universities on the earth, enlightening your minds as the men and women you were, you would have also educated the priceless aptitudes of the spirit by acquiring the sublime knowledge of the Psychical Sciences. Consequently, you would not have given in to the defeat of suicide, for you would have set yourselves on planes far above those of the passions and follies that caused it. You would now be in a position to grasp my mental expressions without the material – so

to speak – aid of this device that photographed and gave life to my thoughts and memories, reproducing them exactly as they have been stored in the secret books of my spirit!

“What you have just seen is a very painstaking operation! It demands sacrifice on the part of the one who performs it. My colleagues here with me, in addition to my disciples, supplied me with the magnetic fluids needed to materialize the images and reproduce the sounds, so that the effort would not be too demanding on me. And enveloped in an ambient filled with special waves of a high level of magnetism – which is our main tool – you yourselves suggested to yourselves the conviction that you had lived my lives along with me, when actually you were only watching the past that is stored in my being... Let me assure you that someday you will be able to do the same thing. You will be able to extract from your own being the past that still lies dormant, because, due to the shocking repercussions of your condition as suicides, you are stifling certain soul aptitudes that in spirits in normal conditions easily awaken once they re-enter the spirit world... But it is not my job to guide you on that dolorous look back...

“The knowledge you have acquired by witnessing this phenomenon, which is common, even typical, in the spirit realm – will someday, for humanity’s advancement, enrich the earth’s intellectual and scientific acquisitions by means of Transcendental Psychic Science. Until then, human beings must moralize themselves and develop still unknown, invaluable faculties of the spirit that will render them worthy of such a sublime achievement. Otherwise, they might use such a divine gift as an instrument for their crimes and passions, as has happened with the other sacred assets they received!

“On the earth itself, this gift, whose indescribable value is still unknown to ordinary intelligences, was used for the lofty purpose of educating the first masses that became Christian. It would have been difficult to make the sublime scope of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God understood by simple and illiterate beings by using only the ardor of oratory and the magic of words. As he expounded his beautiful lessons, the Nazarene – compassionate and loving, and possessing incalculable psychical powers and the strongest mental powers that have ever been imagined – created and materialized scenes that conveyed to his enraptured listeners the splendor of his inner visions, which his fertile, powerful mind never tired of disclosing. It is true that not everyone who heard him understood him. Not even all those chosen

to assist in his redemptive ministry were able to comprehend him. But others, those for whom he represented the incorruptible light of Truth, the simple, the suffering, thirsty for justice and hope, persons of good will, devoid of the pride and selfishness of the times and vibrating more or less in tandem with him... these followed the creative waves of his luminous thought and absorbed the teachings he exemplified in every way possible. When his disciples spoke of him, they too unconsciously projected memories and thoughts. These were then collected by the spirits in charge of assisting them, who immediately materialized them in powerful suggestions for sincere, good-willed listeners. They not only heard a narration, but saw it as if they were actually present during the sublime events involving the Unforgettable Master.

“Dear disciples, we will be using the same means to teach the Doctrine left by the Divine Instructor. The directors of this Colony were highly inspired in adopting such a method for the instruction of its wards. It is a method that will make it impossible to create personal interpretations, erroneous concepts, sophisms or interpolations!

\* \* \*

From that day onward, we attended Anibal’s classes on a regular basis. Thus began our moral preparation in the light of the lofty teachings expounded by the unsurpassable words of the Divine Messiah.

The instructor started by explaining the causes behind Jesus’ coming to the earth. A sweeping parade of civilizations gradually passed by on the magic screen, demonstrating to our astonished eyes the amplest exposition of human necessities, many of which we had never had the opportunity to perceive! Without the Messianic message, earthly societies back then seemed to be exactly as Anibal de Silas had so ably described them: a world without the warming light of the sun, a heart devoid of the driving force of Hope! As the instructor spoke, his narratives, his masterly expositions, his more than convincing, truly irresistible examples, his enthusiastic and ardent words, pulled images and scenes, real pictures, individual and collective examples, from the dusty turmoil of bygone centuries, vanished epochs and even contemporary times. Under the magnetic influence of his superior will, combined with that of his assistants, the narratives materialized right there in front of us, leading us to examine and study them under the enlightening criteria of his instructions.

We also started an advanced course in Philosophy and Comparative Analysis. It was breathtaking, beautiful and moving to join with our instructor in resurrecting from the silence of the centuries, the societies that succeeded each other down through time, their customs, their failures, their heroism and victories! In a wondrous study impossible to conceive of and the most fruitful elucidation that our minds could grasp, we were shown the life of humans on the earth from the very beginning; the magnificent history of the growth of the societies that struggled on the earth, the peoples that started out on its soil, being born and reborn many, many times as they evolved morally and mentally, and then leaving for a higher cycle of evolution on other worlds of the Universe, thus making way for their brothers and sisters – other peoples and other humanities – so that they too could struggle through reincarnations as they toiled continuously in search of the same progress, enamored of the same goal: Perfection!

However, during the course of these examinations, there was so much misery to study, so much suffering, so many oppressing situations, unsolvable problems and bewildering complexes caused by selfishness in its multiple, passionate aspects, and so great were the struggles of a humanity unaware of its purpose, that it became impossible to remain indifferent to them, like a detached observer merely studying a lifeless corpse. Being part of that human society, of that miserable, Godless and suffering humanity that does not know God because it prefers its passions, we became sympathetic to its tribulations, for they were our tribulations as well. An oppressive anguish infiltrated the intricacies of our spirits, awakening inexpressible anxieties, maddening mental states inconceivable to human thought, as a sacred longing for something that would free us from the darkness that had engulfed us...

Until, during a certain class on an amenable and harmonious day, in which our hearts beat with vague longings of hope, like blessed promises that became alleluias for our souls, Anibal introduced us to the unmistakable, unforgettable figure of the Gentle Rabbi of Galilee by means of remembrances reproduced on the magnetic screen with the living and captivating colors of reality! The august epic of Christianity, starting with the humble manger of Bethlehem transformed into a celestial cradle, was masterfully shown to us in fertile lessons for our understanding, which then, and only then, began to grasp the sacred message of redemption! The scenes described by the instructor, who had known so well the times of the advent of the Good News of the Kingdom of God, displayed with impressive clarity the Divine Messenger's unforgettable sermons. His suggestive narrations were

animated by the living color of the scenes he recalled, the resplendent lessons of the highest and purest morality, cast into the atmosphere of humble and oppressed Judea, but echoing throughout the remotest corners of the world as a perennial invitation to regenerate customs for the implementation of the kingdom of the true Good, as a loving appeal for personal and social fraternity in order to achieve an ideal Homeland on the earth, whose rules of government Jesus offered through his impeccable oratory, his exemplification in daily life, as well as through the everlasting light of that golden Doctrine whose goal was the moral education of humanity, and whose purpose was its elevation for the glory of a life without sunsets, of Life Eternal in union with God! The captivating image of the Celestial Envoy became indelibly imprinted – so to speak – on our minds, making our hearts sincerely enamored with Christianity and predisposed to moral acquisitions under its beneficial inspiration, because, as Anibal narrated the events, remembering endearing passages while his words vibrated in resounding waves of fertile commentaries extracting the essence of crucial teachings for our illumination, we saw the scenery that served as the backdrop for the magnificent actions of the Great Master as he carried out his sublime ministry! We had the overwhelming impression that we were actually listening to Jesus as he preached the Sermon on the Mount while the fragrant breezes on top of the hill lightly fluttered his robe and gently disheveled his hair... At other times it was on the banks of Lake Tiberias, or Gennesaret, or in the towns of Judea, or the poor villages of Galilee that we felt we were following him as part of the throng eager for his consoling words, his kind gestures!... And everywhere, in conversation with followers, friends or disciples; in the Temple, explaining to the exegetes of those days the golden rules of the Good News he was bringing; or healing, blessing, protecting, consoling, praising, educating, teaching or redeeming, Anibal enabled us to hear him and learn from him the pathway to our urgent rehabilitation! Anibal did all of this patiently, weaving explanations together like an emeritus professor conscious of the theses he was expounding, making sure his pupils were grasping what he was saying...

Thus, we learned that not only the earth had received the Good News through Jesus' words of goodness and redemption, but the lower astral realm too, because he had had power enough to go anywhere and make himself visible according to his wishes. And since misfortune and calamities of a moral nature are incontestably more intense and profound in the lower realms than on the earth per se, Jesus would also go there to convert spirits that had remained for centuries in the darkness of ignorance or on the slope of

ostracism, and in the same way that he was converting men and women on the earth, he extended his fraternal and redemptive hand to these also! Anibal explained that the earth has not understood most of Jesus' teachings because many aspects of the Divine Truth he expounded were destroyed, rejected by ill-will or presumptuous human ignorance! However, the time had come for his Lofty Doctrine to be duly disseminated at all social levels! The Third Revelation<sup>58</sup> from God was now being given to humankind in the name of the Redeemer... And we, the spirits, were being invited to take part in that magnificent movement headed by the Master. We were to strive to communicate with incarnates in order to reveal all these things, for the Third Revelation was nothing more than an in-depth, ostensive exchange of ideas between spirits and humans under the dictates of Universal Science, as well as the Morality of the Christ of God himself!

After the tragedy on Calvary had ended, we witnessed the fervent struggles of the disciples as they strove to spread the regenerating Testament of the Master, the suffering of the humble and selfless Christians inspired by the immanent power of faith, and the consequent reform of individuals who submitted themselves to those renewing and instructive principles! We studied, we analyzed, we investigated everything our minds could grasp regarding the Doctrine of Jesus the Nazarene. I would have to write many complex and detailed tomes to give the reader an account of the depth and extent of that incomparable Doctrine, whose origin lies in the Divine Mind itself. And because it is the very Law instituted by the Creator of All Things, someday it will envelop every sector of the spirit and material worlds in its imperishable fulgurations!

We felt enraptured, captivated. Only then could we understand the reason for the sudden transformation of Mary Magdalene, so wonderfully described in the Gospel of the Lord; of Saul of Tarsus, the vessel chosen by the Heavenly Messiah; all the things that we had regarded as myths and legends dreamed up by mystical Orientals were presented to our minds as logical and irrefutable facts that could not have happened any other way, as narrated by tradition! Presented to our reason in that way, simply and naturally, disentangled from the mysteries with which humankind continues to cloud over his grandeur, the Celestial Envoy truly imposed himself on our convictions as the Master par excellence, the Incomparable Guide, devoted to the superior ideal of human regeneration through Love, Justice and Labor! We started to love and understand him enough to fill us with Faith and Hope,

indispensable qualities for spirits to make progress, but which for centuries had been lacking in our hearts!

This wonderful course required from our goodwill and efforts, and from the selflessness of our spiritual instructor, long years of dedication and tireless study combined with exemplification and practice, for the Messianic Doctrine is based ultimately on practice, confirmed invariably in the daily lives of each adherent. This was Christian initiation rigorously administered, so as not to leave us any excuses or opportunities for future wrongdoings on the fields of Morality!

The pathway, however, seemed too arduous and too long for many of our companions, who were daunted by the difficult, unending endeavor ahead of us, an endeavor that we absolutely had to persevere at. The truth was that we had arrived at a time in our lives as spirits in which it was no longer possible to stagnate, weighed down by discouragement. We fought against threats of weakness, the dreadful anguish surrounding us, understanding that it was imperative that we continue, in spite of the endless struggles that awaited us in the folds of the future, while the watchful voice of our Conscience informed us that from the Magnificent Master of Nazareth we would acquire the appropriate resources for the journey that was being delineated to our fearful comprehension as repentant delinquents!

*“Come unto me, you who suffer, and I will give you rest...”*

We responded to the irresistible and gentle call and forged ahead... and pressed on. Jesus Christ, the Divine Redeemer of fragile and rebellious souls, was fulfilling his promise: he drew us to him with his sublime teachings, accepted us into his sheepfold, and convinced us to persevere under his guidance, proving to us every day, through the miraculous transformation that was taking place within us, his charitable concern of leading us away from misery and towards redemption!

Motivated by that fascinating course, which had brought us such relief, we forgot about our pain-filled dramas, the imbalanced passions that had brought us so much misery. We forgot about the earth and only remembered it thanks to other classes that we had to attend alternately in our preparation to be effective. As already stated, we also took classes where we would prove the effectiveness of the theoretical lessons before the real tests of a new incarnation would grant us the stamp of rehabilitation.



During those classes, of which we have just given a pallid idea, we would often receive visits from other ancient masters of initiation who, introduced by our instructor, explained concepts and opinions regarding Christian teachings and norms with sublime and captivating fervor! We would then acquire new reasons for learning, although never any less beautiful and pleasant than those we received daily. True, we did live a reclusive life. We were still not allowed to leave the Colony except in guarded study groups. However, it was also true that we lived amid a select group, in the social environment of a plethora of instructors and intellectuals whose elevation of principles surpassed anything we could have ever conceived of! And because we understood that this seclusion was a magnanimous divine gift to aid our progress, we submitted to it with patience and goodwill.

Every day, at sunset, we were allowed to go to the University's large park. There, we would form homogeneous groups and talk about our lives and present situation. Our kind preceptors, the guardians of each group, usually took part in these conversations, as did our sisters from the Women's Department, which allowed us to greatly augment the numbers of our friends. At the end of ten years of residence in the Institute of Hope City, it would be hard to recognize in us the fearsome, tragic figures of the Sinister Valley, those absurd, deranged individuals who reproduced at every moment the malefic act of suicide and its diabolical impressions! Filled with Hope, alleviated by the enveloping magic of the Love of Jesus, under whose teachings we would attempt new pathways, we were entities that might actually be called normal, were it not for the awareness of our own inferiority as derelicts of Duty, something that afflicted and shamed us, making us unworthy in our own minds to merit the assistance with which we were surrounded.

Often, the hour of the Angelus found us still in the park. The nighttime darkness would settle over our City and a dominating nostalgia would envelop our sentiments. From the Temple, situated in the Place of Harmony, a region where the Colony's directors and instructors frequently stayed, would come the invitation to render homage to the Guardian of the Legion to which we all belonged – Mary of Nazareth. Throughout the darkest corners of the Colony resonated the sweet chords of the soft melodies sung by the female guardians. It was the moment when the leadership rendered thanks to the Eternal Father for his grace to all those who lived under the benevolent watch-care of that correctional institute, blessing the tireless solicitude of the

Good Shepherd for his rebellious sheep, sheltered by the Legion of his loving and pious Mother. It was also the time when orders came from the Higher Realms, guiding the intense labor taking place under the responsibility of the Legion's dedicated servants. But we were not obliged to pray. We would only pray if we wanted to. In Hope City, however, we had never heard of any pupil or patient who, amid tears of sincere gratitude, had refused to thank the Nazarene Master or his kindhearted Mother for the blessings of their sublime support!

The gentleness of that prayer, whose simplicity was equal to its sublimity, awakened in our minds the most tender, endearing memories: we would see the sweet days of our childhood, the caring figures of our mothers teaching us the salutation of the Archangel to the Virgin of Nazareth, and the unforgettable words of Gabriel, anointed with veneration and reverence, would resonate in the depths of our being with longing for our mothers' devotion, which on the earth we had never appreciated as we should have. We would weep! A pungent longing for Family and homeland, the home we had despised and covered in mourning, the dear loved ones and friends we had hurt with our escape from life, would overcome our souls, predisposing us to awful sentimental anguish, as new phases of dolorous remorse. We would pray, right then and there, in the enveloping quietness of the park, or somewhere else. Every day, we would pray feeling the blessing of beneficent comfort reviving our souls, as if charitable balsams were cooling our consciences from the oppressive heat that had singed our being, ripped by the dreadful claws of suicide! As a consequence of this comfort, we felt the imperative need to make ourselves worthy of such mercy, the need to show God our immense grief by acknowledging the fact that we were grave offenders of his Magnificent Laws!

---

## “Man, know thyself!”

No less important for our reeducation, we took other courses in addition to the one on Morality instituted by the renowned Nazarene Master. Two years after having begun the course on Christian Morality, we began one that dealt with the fundamentals of Universal Science by means of profound studies and analyses that were as painful as they were sublime! These analyses included the need to study ourselves, learning to know ourselves intimately! Meticulous personal examinations were done in terrifying detail to confront our pride and vanity, the harmful passions that had contributed to our fall into the abyss. Since these classes were co-ed, we had the double opportunity to dissect not only the character, conscience and soul of our brothers, but those of our sisters in misfortune as well, which gave us an invaluable knowledge of the human soul!

The professor for this magnificent course was the venerable Epaminondas de Vigo, a spirit whose rigor of conduct, unassailable virtues and inexhaustible energy infused us not only with reverence but a feeling of true fear! In his presence, we felt stripped of the disguises of any mitigating factors invented by conciliatory sophisms, the shameful weight of our inferiority, and the humiliation of the uncomfortable situation of being responsible for our degrading wrongdoings. We were thoroughly aware of the fact that we were but rebels whose folly obligated selfless workers of the Spirit World to make constant sacrifices in order to lift us out of the darkness into which we had plunged headlong. Thus, the shame that flogged us in the presence of Epaminondas was a completely new and unexpected torture of an absolute moral nature – a massive feeling that showed up in this second phase of our condition as suicides preparing for reparative endeavors in the future.

The professor emeritus helped us examine our conscience, leading it to unfold itself to remotest memories of our past series of earthly migrations!

When he scrutinized our soul, piercing it with a scintillating gaze of psychic forces that felt like assaults by irresistible energies, profound upheavals shook the folds of our being, and afflictive desires to flee both him and our own selves maddened our senses! Whereas Anibal de Silas, with the consoling tenderness of the Gospel, lit within us beneficent beams of trust in the future, illuminating our lives with the welcome possibilities of redemption, Epaminondas evoked tears from our hearts and renewed our anguish at having to study the immense book of the Soul, dragging us down into states of suffering whose intensity and terrifying complexity, absolutely inconceivable to human understanding, took us to the very edge of madness! For that reason we feared him, and we were dominated by a strong sense of dread, along with an irrepressible anguish, as we climbed the stairs of the Academy each day to learn the rudiments of the awesome discipline that had also been demanded of the ancient initiates of the Schools of Philosophy and Science in Egypt and India: the realization of one's personal unworthiness of the method of moral elevation through self-education!

However, such classes were as necessary for our psychological development as those taught by Anibal! In fact they were their continuation, as we will explain later.

There was yet a third course, which involved the practical application in daily life of the values acquired during the studies and observations of the other two courses. However, instead of giving us instructions for "professional practice," as one might say on the earth, the instructor for this third course, geared towards the observance of the Laws of Providence, which we had been breaking for centuries, was Souria-Omar. It was usually held outside the sanctuary, that is, outside the premises of the School, preferably on the earth itself or in the lower realms of our Institute.

On Sundays we rested. We were still individuals whose spiritual faculties, shaken by the vibrational trauma of suicide, did not allow for unceasing work, unlike our devoted instructors, who were never idle. Thus, we rested and even entertained ourselves by taking part in fraternal meetings organized by our guardians, or by traveling to other Colony Sectors that were less advanced than ours, in order to visit old friends and former masters like Teocrito. Consequently, we brought solidarity and comfort to souls that were even more unfortunate than we were, and who were interned in those premises well known to all of us. So one can see that our activities never actually stopped: we were always learning! Our knowledge continued to

expand, as during such gatherings we were able to garner notions of Transcendental Classical Art, of which not only our masters were worthy exponents, but others who charitably visited us, and even our guardians, who used such notions as a means of serving God and Creation, that is, utilizing the Beautiful!... We must emphasize the fact that, besides being scientists, our masters were also esthetes, enamored of the Supreme Beauty that originates in the Sempiternal Artist!

We shall describe what comprised the terrifying yet important classes of the eminent instructor Epaminondas de Vigo, who, as we know, had been a master of initiation in the ancient Schools of the Secret Doctrine in India and Egypt.

\* \* \*

In one of the enchanting palaces on Academic Avenue was the School of Sciences of Hope City University.

Majestic and austere in its architectural lines, when we entered the palace we had the impression that God was venerated there with all the powers of Reason, Logic and Knowledge! Whispers of indefinable convictions stirred the powers of our soul, giving us an idea of our own smallness in the light of Wisdom, while strong emotions infused us with a singular reverence for the Unknown we would be facing there, taking us to the edge of terror! At such times we would think of Anibal. Remembering him would elicit the endearing image of the Master of Nazareth, who was known throughout the Colony as the Master of Masters, the Magnificent Rector of Spirituality! We would then feel encouraged, certain that we were effectively sheltered in his sheepfold, loved and protected by him.

Identical to the Sanctuary where the Science of the Gospel was taught, this new Sacred Place differed only by the famous Greek tenet glowing in adamantine scintillations on the screen, indispensable in every classroom for the reception of thought vibrations:

*“Man! Know Thyself!”*

This phrase was preceded by a no less famous Christian dictate whose profundity and sublimity is yet to revolutionize the earth and its societies, a sort of authorization of the Divine Word for the endeavors that would be undertaken under the invocation of its Laws:

*“No one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he be born again.”*

It was obvious that the educators who supervised us subordinated their methods to the norms instituted by Jesus of Nazareth, who they venerated unequivocally as the overseer and leader of the movement he established not only for us, but all Humanity. We had absolutely no doubt that they were Christian initiates of the highest moral standing. And if they were philosophers, scientists, researchers, sociologists, and pedagogues emeriti, as we found out later, it was also beyond a doubt that it was in the sublime School of Morality and Fraternity, established by the Christ of God, that they had learned the models and methods for exercising their lofty aptitudes among incarnate humans and spirits in transit.

Amazed by everything we observed, we were sometimes stricken by vertigo at thinking about the reality of our lives beyond the grave, when we used to think that nothing existed after the last layer of earth had hidden our lifeless bodies from human sight!

We realized right from the start that important events regarding ourselves would take place. The discreet and suggestive tinkling of a bell elicited our attention. A reverent silence dominated the room. It was as if everyone's thoughts were woven together in a fraternal gathering of homogeneous sentiments, while harmonious fluidic waves from the Higher Realms descended in outpourings of illuminating blessings, protecting and inspiring the sacred endeavors that would follow.

Epaminondas de Vigo stood up.

For the first time, we actually "heard" his voice!

Energetic, positive, intrepid and commanding, the words of the new master, who in the past had been burned at the stake because of his love for the lofty principles of Truth, expanded throughout the immense hall, vibrating under the domes above, imprinting themselves on the folds of our soul, and awakening our faculties for new moral, mental, intellectual and spiritual conquests!

Slender, modest, venerable with his long beard, which displayed the immaculate whiteness of transcendental luminosities, that elder, who had been introduced to us two years ago, and whom we had imagined would display the unsteadiness of decrepitude, now appeared before our astonished eyes with a vigorous posture, as a giant of oratory, expounding the foundations of a Renewing Doctrine until then unknown to us, and whose principles were based on the Universal Science!

He began by explaining that it had been necessary for us to first learn the moral teachings contained in the Gospel of the Redeemer so that, in the enchantment of his redemptive words, we could acquire sufficient criteria to obtain further knowledge later. Without this moral reeducation, further enlightenment would be fruitless, maybe even harmful! The divine morality of Jesus Christ, however, had somehow in those two years cleansed our mind and therefore our character from so much vileness congesting our faculties, and had predisposed our “self” so that we could now proceed with the course that would qualify us for decisive moral uplifting! That was why only now were we able to come into contact with him, Epaminondas. That under his guidance we would take a light, brief, introductory – so to speak – course on Universal Science, in ancient times called the Secret Doctrine, and only taught to very strong and enlightened minds that were thus enabled by the virtues they demonstrated to grasp the mysteries of a divine order, which are invariably hidden to ordinary, idle or presumptuous minds! That in remote times, before the advent of the Heavenly Messiah, the secret teachings were only ministered to individuals who for at least ten years demonstrated the most demanding proofs of moral and mental health, and who for that length of time also unequivocally demonstrated their inner reform, that is, that they had dominated their passions, instincts, desires in general, and emotions by means of an illuminated Will with sacred aspirations for the Good and testimonies to the Virtues. But that, with the descent of the Kindly Master from the Spheres of Light to the darkness of the earth and its lower zones, the secret teachings had been popularized, because once this Doctrine entered human hearts, it would make them capable of extensive flights into the scientific-psychic realm! That furthermore, the Messianic Doctrine brought other knowledge to humankind, wherein the Master expressed the immortal principles of the Psychic Science, but it was rejected! That since then the divine decrees had dictated that the secret teachings were to be extended to all humans, as well as to the spirits in transit in the lower astral regions that surround the planet, because the Supreme Father, pitying the human suffering caused by ignorance, wanted all his children to be illuminated by the sun of the Eternal Truths! That from then on, the messengers of the light had been engaged in a fierce battle with the promulgators of the lower passions, a constant and bitter struggle that had been going on for almost two thousand years, and that the Messiah’s workers were using every means available in order to teach the rebels the Heavenly Truths, which they continued to reject! That for that very reason, new decrees had come down from the Higher

Realms that the teachings were to be taught more ostensibly, with all possible effectiveness and clarity, not just to a few willing individuals, but to all humankind and all willing spirits in the spirit world, whether righteous or sinner. That it was urgent to assist with the regeneration of humankind because, among the incarnates and discarnates of the earth, a rigorous selection process was imminent on the part of Divine Providence, for the planet was nearing its time of transition, and those who had been persistently incorrigible for the last two thousand years would be exiled to more-primitive worlds. That the earth would be home only to the *meek and the peacemakers*,<sup>59</sup> those of goodwill, so that the age of progress proclaimed by the Master of Galilee, presided over by the fraternal socialism instituted in the golden codes of his Doctrine, would be established not only on the planet but in its astral realms as well! That for that very reason, we too were to learn enough of the rudiments of the Secret Teachings – only the *rudiments* – to effectively strengthen us for the reparations we owed the Law, because we were still too fragile, our minds traumatized by the violence of the act that had broken the Law of Nature, our characters corrupted by the abuse of century upon century immersed in the unworthiness of materiality! That the teachings would be conveyed gradually, according to our abilities, and that was why we were separated into homogeneous groups. That the Secret Doctrine in all its fullness was known only by the Lord Jesus of Nazareth, who was One with God the Father, and by his Archangels, the phalanx of auxiliaries or ministers who were One with Him! That this Teaching had been initiated on the earth in small installments for human beings immersed in the darkness from the Beginning, and was ascending progressively without limits up to the Infinity of the Divine Bosom! That for this reason, this Knowledge is called the Universal Science, and that we, as wretched suicides, the lowest citizens in God's universe, the pariahs of the societies of the Spirit World, and for whom it was necessary to create sheltering colonies, were being invited to partake in the luminous assembly of the Truth, for it had been the very lack of this knowledge that had taken us from failure to failure to the calamitous situation of the utmost failure of suicide! And that he, Epaminondas, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, to whom we owed the uplifting of our souls towards redemption, and in the name of Mary, his Mother, to whom we owed the assistance we had received till then, was encouraging us to undertake the rigors of preparing for serious initiation into the mysteries later on, because our future successes would depend on our goodwill and bravery in applying ourselves to this experiment!



Vibrant and fecund to the point of being almost overwhelming – as the reader can see – this oration captured our deepest interest, and it was with authentic wonder that we inwardly applauded the professor after his magnificent exordium. Expressing himself in classical Portuguese, resplendent to both the Portuguese and the Brazilian listeners, and in a pure traditional Spanish for the Spanish-speaking ones, Epaminondas de Vigo voiced his words in soft and melodious inflexions, or in vibrant and strong ones like a literary hymn that could have been set to music if he had so desired, delighting our hearing and sensibility. Enchanted, Belarmino, Joao and I, along with the Brazilian friends Raul and Amadeu, who had been incorporated into our group when we arrived in Hope City, were immediately taken with the new instructor and the lessons that were to follow. We knew this sentiment was shared by the other participants, because we saw smiles of approval and a genuine interest floating around the assembly.

This scientific learning experience followed the normal course of being alternated with the other, in addition to the practical knowledge applied in the classes led by the imminent Souria-Omar.

Thus it was that the venerable elder ministered to us the enchantment of seeing the slow and resplendent birth and progression of the terrestrial globe itself! What we had already known superficially (allow me to express myself this way due to the magnificence of what was then granted to me to appreciate) from the principles of earthly science, that is, Geology, Archeology, Geography, and Topography, the illustrious instructor pulled from the movie reels of the millennia to show us in living scenes, in real activity, as if we were actually participating in the birth and growth of the generous globe in the solar system that would be our home someday, watching over our ascent towards the Infinite, and aiding us as we strove to perfect the divine seed within all human beings as well as the planet itself! We saw it all: the effervescent spark, the darkness of the chaos, the terrifying rains and floods, the great cataclysms for the formation of the rivers and oceans, the marvelous advent of the continents with the upheaval of majestic mountains, granitic ranges as old as the globe itself and so well-known and loved by those who have made their cycle of progress on the earth; the stately Alps, like powerful monarchs defying the ages, the graceful Pyrenees, the venerable Himalayas and Tibet, the somber and majestic Mantiqueiras – all of them appeared before our bedazzled eyes at their creation in different epochs, drawing tears from our soul, which timidly prostrated itself before such grandeur, beauty and majesty! But before all that, in a magical procession of

wonders, the struggle of the elements in turmoil for the formation of the small continent in the heavens, the ocean amid terrifying convulsions, shaking the nascent world immersed in solitude, the cataclysm of the winds and storms, of which nothing can furnish an approximate idea to the human being... We saw the first signs of movement and life on the immense bed of the convulsing waters; the vegetation, fantastic and funereal in its gigantic proportions; the monstrous dinosaurs, the lizards of a form and power inconceivable to the delicate human body; the mastodons... Prehistory!

It was an astounding book, immense, magnificent, the Divine Epic of Creation, playing a few chords of its Immortal Symphony through the Infinity of Time, the Eternity of Things! In that book we learned the ABCs of Initiation, gradually and patiently, at times enraptured to elation, while at others, bathed in fearful tears, but always avid and enchanted, eager for more knowledge, and lamenting more than ever our diminutive capacity as suicides, which did not allow us to see even a third of the sublime plan offered by Nature!

An indescribable parade of the periods of infant creation passed before our eyes. This daily elucidative and salutary analysis promoted in our spirits the reverence and veneration for that Supreme Being and Creator, whom we had denied before, in whom we had not believed as the centuries unfolded, but to whom we now rendered our gratitude, terrified and small as we felt before his Grandeur, while at the same time elated at realizing that we were his children, heirs of his eternal glory!

Here, we saw the flora and fauna, immense in their variety of species; there, the geology, rich in attractions and enchantments, populating the globe with the multiplicity of its marvelous minerals; everywhere, the endless laboratory of the planet, the ocean with its prodigious infusoria, its infinite deposits of life, creation, species, all of a richness incontestably divine, and all at the disposal of humankind, all created for it. But humans have neglected getting to know it, living as they have, engulfed in the darkness of animality throughout the millennia, and thus incapable of taking possession of that paradise that the Lord ideated and created with all the affability of his infinite Fatherly Love, with all the might of his omnipotent mind as the Supreme Creator!

...And thus appeared, in a series of aptly structured lessons, the epic of Humankind, the division of the races, the supreme glory of the planet finally

sheltering the divine spark that will reflect the image and likeness of its Creator someday!

We studied that astonishing book every day for years. Its intensity and magnificence often brought on vertigo, causing us to become sick and in need of recouping our mental energies by visiting the clinicians in charge of our care. In fact, Epaminondas himself was one of those most dedicated to our recovery... Even today, before we once more study the stage of that earth that we had come to know from its very birth, we can only say that we have not yet really learned much, that we have barely spelled out the first letters of the earthly material plane!

But how were Epaminondas and his assistants able to teach such classes, making visible in the present what the millennia had devoured in the past?... How were they able to reproduce so powerfully, to the point of frightening us, the primitive ages of the planet, the eras devastated by Time?!...

They were able to because we all live in Eternity, we are citizens of the Infinite, and for Eternity what exists is the present moment, without sunsets, without lapses! Eternity lives within the present because that is exactly what it is!

Epaminondas extracted the magnificent matter for the classes from the luminous waves of the invisible ether, that is, from the archives of the Infinite and the sacred storehouses of Eternity. Eternalized images were taken from the vibrational waves of the luminous ether; the reproduction of what had happened on the earth since its creation had been stored, photographed and impressed on the vibrations of Light, like the backdrop of a fragile soap bubble. These images were selected by the mages of the Transcendental Science, captured and brought back for our knowledge by means of processes and devices whose sensitivity and magnetic power humans are not completely unaware of nowadays. If he were conversing with one of his equals, Epaminondas would be able to call up the past without using any such devices. However, our group could not do without them unless, in order to make himself understood, our selfless instructor were to reduce his own powers even more while increasing ours; but that would torture us dreadfully, something that could not be allowed. Consequently, a team of mages who specialized in this sort of work, who were artists of words and suggestion, would use their powers of scientific-transcendental attraction to scrutinize the ether for what was needed and would then display it on the sensitive screen via a power-filled suggestion, and with such perfection that we felt like we

were actually witnessing the events ourselves! A very common process in the Invisible, this form of receiving images and events will be possible for humankind someday, as will the knowledge of the realms of the intermediate Astral! Only one thing will hasten such a conquest of Science for Humankind: the reign of Morality among its societies, the empire of Righteousness!

I cannot fail to mention the sublime spectacle of the harmonious evolution of the heavenly bodies, which was part of our studies. This time, however, our classes were no longer restricted to the classroom. They entailed excursions into outer space, traveling throughout the Infinite like students on a field trip. Our very limited abilities, however, did not allow us the fantastic contemplation of the stellar worlds in all their astonishing grandeur. Solely for the purposes of stimulation, we were allowed to experience a more or less approximate vision of that resplendent grandeur by means of devices that were adequate for the insights of Astronomy, of which we had but a pallid idea. However, our studies and observations did not go beyond knowledge having to do with our brothers and sisters in the rest of the solar system. We were allowed the most beautiful acquisitions that we could aspire to in our present state, which delighted and pleased us immensely... And then we began the study of ourselves, jewels that we all are; souls of the sidereal realm; future ornaments for the Universal Court imprinted with the sacred seal of the Supreme Mind, and for whom everything – everything – was designed and created by the Loving Father, who desires nothing except that we love one another!

The master lectured on the three-fold human nature, proving his thesis with analyses of ourselves and others, and which were often hard on our prejudices and deep-seated pride. We had seen this type of study in the Hospital Sector, where patients touched on the rudiments of their own nature as spirits, but it never involved the details that unfolded to us in Hope City.

He expounded on the fact of successive lives, their laws, their beneficial consequences, their sublime, majestic purpose, and their inalienable necessity for the glorious evolution of the soul! He lectured on the difficult journey of the spirit on its sublime ascent to God, a journey subject to the toils of rebirth and renewal in physical bodies, to stays in the spirit world, and to unceasing work in both realms! At times, in shocking astonishment we saw the various levels of Spirit Life, which only then did we start to understand rightly. Its realities, often very bitter, toppled old philosophical convictions, destroyed deep rooted religious prejudices, and modified scientific concepts that

tradition and the old blind pride of materialist fanaticism had taught us to preserve and honor!

In order to become familiar with certain particularities of the human personality, we went with our masters on field trips. Souria-Omar was the instructor for this new modality, accompanied by lucid and equally knowledgeable assistants. We visited hospitals, and like medical students, we observed the constitution of the astral bodies of our brothers and sisters still detained in their physical bodies. We were also assisted by Teocrito as well as our friends Roberto and Carlos de Canalejas. For many years, we periodically went down to the earth to spend a few hours in hospitals and healthcare facilities, studying the phenomena of emancipation of the soul. We were always assisted by eminent individuals from the Spirit Homeland. We also visited private homes and even prisons, waiting for those sentenced to death, because we had to enrich our minds by analyzing all forms of the phenomenon of the separation of the spirit from its temporary physical envelope, from the fetus expelled willingly or not from its mother's womb, to those condemned by human justice to death on the scaffold. Each character, each personality, each type of infirmity, as well as the nature of death, were new acquisitions of knowledge via detailed and sublime studies! Of course, we never actually witnessed any murder or catastrophe. We always arrived afterwards, just in time to learn what we needed to know. Quite often, we were obligated with the painful task of following the dolorous disengagement of the soul from the body amid labors of terrifying repercussions, within the walls of a Christian cemetery! It was on such occasions that Souria-Omar taught his majestic lessons, a genial professor worthy of being heard by revering disciples! And under the rustling of branches where graceful birds roosted at night dreaming about the arrival of dawn, or beneath majestic cypresses on nights filled with blazing stars, the old Alexandrian master taught us about the magnificent phenomenon of the Soul that rids itself of the armor that had imprisoned it, in order to return to the freedom of the spirit realms! At times, we were unable to avoid the living impressions of suffering during such august events! These studies entailed observing the suffering of others, their extreme torment, their indescribable anguish, their misery and desperation, before which our tears rolled down, our chests felt heavy, and our hearts were pierced! But we needed these events to learn to control our emotions, to impose serenity on our minds and sentiments, and to try to reflect on the matter in order to make an effort to help and remedy the situation, without wasting precious time on pointless lamentations and

unproductive tears. These experiences reached their peak when we had to observe the premature separation of souls from their physical bodies as a result of suicide! Then, the madness that had stricken us long ago emerged from the depths of our soul and burst out against our will, afflicting us with the ghost of a past that transmuted into the present! The abominable tone of our past rage increased in the furor of those malefic reminiscences, disorienting us and driving us to a collective madness! That was when all the energy, charity and wise assistance of our Guardians would come into action, imposing silence on our emotions, forcefully repelling our hallucinatory outbursts, and using their beneficent fluids to whip the mental excitation arising from our memories, bringing us back to the present!

Thus, faithful to the sublime teachings, we would join the caravans of assistance and return to the Sinister Valley. There, weeping over the wretchedness we ourselves had suffered, we had the chance to help brothers and sisters immersed in the same calamitous situation that we had known so well, examining them with our masters to determine if they were in any shape to be taken to the appropriate Sector in our Colony. Compassionately, we would try to converse with them, encouraging and consoling them; but we were not heard; we were nameless passers-by... Hence, we discovered that during our stay there long ago, we too had been benevolently assisted without ever even suspecting it...

From all the knowledge we gradually acquired, we had to present our own conclusions, to create theses that would truly ennoble earthly institutions if they could use them to enlighten and moralize their own pupils; to extract analyses, and everything that might be profitable for our psychical initiation. We were furnished with wonderful albums, notebooks, books glistening like stardust. We were even taught how to use complex devices in order to project to others our own exemplifications or analyses taken from examples furnished by our masters during our practical classes on the earth or in other parts of our Colony. Hence the creation of my novels and the desire to dictate them to mediums, because during our practical classes we had permission to do such things, provided the works were approved by our supervisors. And hence my nearly thirty-year effort to write something that would at the same time testify to God my acknowledgement for everything he had done for me, and my desire to narrate to my brothers and sisters in misfortune, imprisoned amid their earthly sufferings, what was waiting for them in the Afterlife. We did not have to be writers to undertake such endeavors, since the learning from

our mentors educated our sentiments, balancing our mind in such a way as to be able to serve the Truth that surrounded us!

These transcendental studies demanded diligence and devotion because their fields of observation were as vast and grand as the purposes we faced every day.

Following are the thrilling subjects we studied and examined as far as our mental power would allow:

- The Planetary Genesis or Cosmogony - Prehistory
- The Evolution of the Being
- The Immortality of the Soul
- The Three-Fold Human Nature
- The Faculties of the Soul
- The Law of Successive Existences in Physical Bodies, or Reincarnation
- Psychical Medicine
- Magnetism - Notions of Transcendental Magnetism
- Christian Morality
- Psychology - Earthly Civilizations

These classes were alternated with classes on the Gospel and were closely related to them, which enabled us to better understand and venerate the sublime personality of Jesus of Nazareth, whom we began to acknowledge – as our instructors already did – as the supreme head of Initiation. Actually, in every science text we consulted, we found lessons, clear teachings, acts and examples of that Great Master as the ultimate standard of wisdom and truth, appealing models, compasses that urged us to continue in order to reach our goal without the detours arising from deceit and wrongful interpretations.

As we have explained more than once, our studies were enriched with practical application. This particular detail, however, implied commitments that we would have to make in the future, when we would undergo renewal in a physical body, and this fact did not always bring happiness to our hearts. On the contrary, it often brought about great anguish and bitter tears. Awful

moments of despair would overcome us to the point of making us sick. As will be seen, critical situations and humiliations piled up around us, and we were unable to avoid their dreadful results, because it was all a consequence of the bad moral baggage we had taken with us to the spirit world.

On the very first day of class, after his resplendent introductory speech, the venerable Epaminondas de Vigo gave us a warning that would never be erased from our minds:

“No attempt at moral elevation will ever be effective if we remain prisoners of self-ignorance! It is absolutely crucial for us to first find out who we are, where we have come from, and where we are going, in order to convince ourselves of the worth of our own personality and thus devote ourselves to its moral elevation, devoting all consideration and the utmost esteem to ourselves. Till now, my dear disciples (contrary to Anibal, who addressed us with the endearing terms ‘brothers and sisters,’ Epaminondas only allowed us the formality of a disciplinary treatment), you have walked blindly through the stages of your earthly migrations and your stays in the spirit world, going round and round in a vicious circle, with no knowledge or virtues that would induce you to progress. Engulfed in the impure desires of matter, passive to the blind impulses of the most harmful passions, or bound to the primitive yoke of the instincts, you have willfully ignored, thanks to your ill-will or self-absorbed criminal indifference, your divine Being, which the Almighty endowed with his divine essence, and which we must cultivate under the blessings of progress until it flourishes in the fullness of the victory for which we have been destined!”

As he said this, he asked one of the penitents from the seats closest to him to enter the circle where his chair stood and where his assistants sat silent and focused.

Either by chance or due to the instructor’s clairvoyance, the choice fell to our companion Amadeu Ferrari, a Brazilian of Roman descent, from the state of Sao Paulo. As we found out right then and there, he had committed suicide at age thirty-seven, imagining it would be possible to escape the shame of going to prison due to certain imprudent acts, as well as the cancer that had begun to invade his glottic area. Epaminondas had him stand in front of him and questioned him with authority:

“What is your name, my dear disciple?”



A sudden uneasiness came over the assembly, warning it that something very grave had just stricken it. We wanted to get out of there, to avoid the awful responsibility associated with that particular course, which suddenly seemed too big and too personal for us to devote ourselves to it! We had the intuition that irremediable things would be taking place that would mark a new era for our destinies, and we were scared out of our minds! Epaminondas de Vigo was like an unbending judge about to sentence us, dragging us before the fearsome tribunal of our own consciences; consequently, his venerable presence filled us with profound terror. The jovial and charming figure of Anibal de Silas, with his hope-filled lectures on the Good News that had been so consoling, came to our minds, and we sorely missed the gentle words with which he endearingly remembered the Kindly Nazarene. This elder, on the other hand, forcefully admonished us, surprising us with his knowledge of the impressions caused in our minds:

“Remember that the Lord, Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are now invoking, is the Great Master that inspires us, and it is under his auspices that we are ministering the Sacred Teachings that will elevate your spirits for the acquisition of future merits, for he is the supreme head of our School and the dispenser of our Science!”

He turned to the expectant patient and repeated:

“Your name?”

“Amadeu Ferrari.”

“Where did you live before coming here?”

“In the city of XXX... in Brazil.”

“Why did you try to evade your destiny, whose purpose is unity with Jesus our Redeemer, by trusting the delusion of suicide?... Did you not know that you were committing a crime against God our Father and against your own self, since it is true that we all have the divine spark of the Creator within us?... Did you actually think you could annihilate the elements of Life that exist within you, that Life which is eternal because you received it from the Eternal Creator?”

Visibly shaken, Amadeu dodged the question with a sophism, the only recourse he could think of in the delicate situation:

“Luckily, sir, it was only a nightmare... a passing madness... I wasn’t able to kill myself, although that was my desire. I’m alive!... Alive!... Alive!

Praise God, I'm alive!"

But the wise elder, with a disconcerting serenity that would have unnerved us if we had not been sincerely disposed to let him teach us, insisted:

"I will ask you again, Amadeu Ferrari: why did you want to vanish from yourself and others, when the hymn of the Universe was singing all around you the sacred duty of commitment and the sublime beauty of human existence, which will render the Soul worthy of the Kingdom of Immortality?"

"Sir, actually... I got depressed... I... well... But do I have to answer in front of all these people?... Is this a courtroom or something?"

"Yes, indeed, there is a courtroom and you all have to face it: it is your own conscience, which has begun to awaken from the long lethargy that has kept it bound to the most deplorable thoughtlessness for centuries! And authorized by the highest powers of our Redeemer, it is crucial that I guide you, so that by examining it you may learn to rid yourselves of the pride that has been blinding you for so long, preventing you from knowing yourselves, and thus the sovereignty of the Laws that rule the destinies of Humanity!"

"Sir, poverty, illness, discouragement... were the cause... I committed a grave wrong when faced with such dolorous circumstances... I had no other recourse but to do what I did... Prison... my illness..."

"And did that act – suicide – wash away the blemish that had contaminated you?... Do you consider yourself to be free of guilt, honest and honorable after committing it?"

"Oh, no! I was unable to avoid responsibility for the crimes I committed! I feel disgraced for having embezzled funds that had been entrusted to me... although I did use them to try to get my health back. The dreadful threat of cancer shook me just as I was about to get married, a union that was my very reason for being... It was a lot of money... I was a bank employee... It was either prison or death... The cancer, the theft, yes it was theft... The dreams of love destroyed! I preferred suicide!... I know they were terrible crimes... But I'm still confused, despite having been enlightened of late... Why? Oh, why was I put in such miserable circumstances?... The confusion is still wreaking havoc in my mind... Dreadful intuitions whisper about a fearsome past... Oh, Jesus of Nazareth! Have mercy!... I'm trembling and reeling...I just don't get it."

“You will ‘get it,’ Amadeu Ferrari! It is imperative that you do!”

He motioned to two assistants. They had the patient sit in front of another one of those mirrored screens and then put a diadem on his head identical to the one used by the master for his classes.

A sincere religious emotion came over the assembly. We knew that a grand, sacred mystery was about to be revealed. Contrite and fearful, we waited, while benevolent vibrations enveloped the sacred moment.

Epaminondas turned to the assembly and urged us:

“Pay close attention! Your brother’s story is your story! His failures are the failures of all humanity in its daily struggles with its passions! For that very reason, you are not to comment on what you are about to see. Just observe the example of the lesson, extract the necessary meaning and apply it to yourselves... Remember that you are all fallen souls, and this initiation into lofty, redemptive moral principles is an effort to lead you to the porticos of Duty!”

He stretched his arms toward the Infinite in an attitude of fervent prayer and concentration. The assistants came closer to him, as if mentally aiding his intent. A powerful fluidic current was established, enveloping the attentive and respectful assembly of wrongdoers. Suddenly, a singular order resonated in an energetic tone that allowed no misinterpretation!

Epaminondas de Vigo commanded Amadeu Ferrari to return to the past, that is, to a detailed examination of his conscience by reviewing the deeds of his past earthly migrations in order to fully understand the reason for the dolorous circumstances that he had been put in, circumstances he had not resigned himself to. In order to resolve them, he had jeopardized himself even more by committing an act of dishonesty and then suicide!

Going backward in time, from his suicide to the beginning of his existence, we saw him in very different conditions! In a past reincarnation lay the reason for the poverty that had defied all his efforts to remedy it in the last one, in spite of his hard work and will power; for the cancer that tormented him with invincible claws, slowly destroying his tongue and throat; and for the spurned love, which absorbed all the strength he had left, finally depriving him of his will to live!

The curtain of the present was drawn... The first veil of his Conscience was lifted so that the huge tragedy of a past existence could be revealed, a

tragedy that struck not just one or two individuals, but a whole collectivity, an entire heroic and suffering race!

Amadeu appeared to us, depicted by his own mind, in the year 1840 as a trafficker of black slaves from Angola to Brazil... He was from Portugal, which explained our affinity for him. By means of a series of voyages, he enriched himself with the abominable trade, not sparing any efforts in his vile ambition of returning to Portugal as a millionaire. He inflicted indescribable torment on the wretches as he rounded them up in their free homeland to make slaves of them and handed them over to other ignoble accomplices sharing the same deranged ambitions! In the truculence of inhumane conduct, he excelled in the mistreatment of his captives, ordering them to be flogged for the most insignificant wrong, or even for no wrong at all. He inflicted them with punishments whose ferociousness cried to the heavens: starvation, thirst, torture, and the separation of families, as he sold the children here, the mother there, and the father somewhere else... Slaves that would not see each other again till later on, in the spirit world. Many died stricken by homesickness and the longing for their loved ones! Once, on one of his plantations, he raped a black slave who was little more than a child. Her poor father was an elderly slave sixty-years of age. In a moment of supreme suffering before the body of his child, who had chosen death to hide her shame, he had condemned Amadeu's vile act, accusing him of his daughter's suicide. In retaliation, Amadeu ordered cruel farmhands to burn the old slave's tongue with a red-hot iron until he collapsed in convulsions of agony...

As we followed the majestic lesson, the subject recognized himself exactly as he was: the bearer of inferior passions, multiple wrongs and a mountain of debts. In the midst of it all, he floundered violently, overcome by indescribable convulsions, cowering before the whipping his conscience was inflicting on him, disoriented in the torment of remorse.

"Have pity on me, O Lord!" he cried out in expressions of pain and repentance, repeating in front of the vast assembly the vehement plea that had been the cause of the expiatory existence that he had criminally interrupted, enmeshed in disconcerting complexes: "I am a disgrace and a wretch. Allow me to return to the human form and see my tongue, mouth and throat waste away under the corrosion of some malady. Let them be reduced to the point to which I reduced those of the unfortunate slave Felicio... And grant me poverty, O Lord! May I suffer the torment of hunger and thirst, and may I not

utter a single a word of complaint! May everybody flee in disgust from my presence, leaving me all alone to expunge this criminal stain that belittles me before my own self!”

The noble instructor, however, imposed silence on the sinner, calming him with peaceful fluids. He then explained:

“It is certain, unavoidable that you must reincarnate to expiate your wrongs, Amadeu Ferrari, for reincarnation is a blessed opportunity for the guilty to redeem themselves! You must endure poverty, cancer, and perjury... but they will be even worse due to the indefinable evils accumulated by your having committed suicide because you did not want to submit to them... But don’t kid yourself: it will take more than just one expiatory reincarnation to redeem the wrongs we are recalling here.”

The lesson resumed, its ending astonishing us even more.

The years rolled by after the death of the old slave...

His master and everybody else had forgotten him, absorbed by the winds of good fortune... The master had returned to Europe, content and rich, thanks to “honest work,” esteemed and highly regarded for the wealth he had amassed in *Terra de Santa Cruz*<sup>60</sup>...

But one day, death came calling: a stately funeral, heartrending hymns, mourning, tears and many flowers... dirty money was able to buy all of it!

And now he finds himself in the Great Beyond! It is the sacred moment of reality, the fulfillment of Justice Incorruptible! We see him floundering about, lost in the middle of the African outback, attacked by a hideous horde of black ghosts thirsting for vengeance, demanding an accounting on behalf of their compatriots enslaved and lost forever, far from their native land! They are fathers who had lost their children...They are mothers robbed of their little ones, sold by him like miserable merchandise! They are daughters taken from their parents to be raped and abused. They are sons that had received the merciless flogging of a master instead of the caresses of a mother! All of them demanding an accounting for the torments they suffered at his hands! They imprison his spirit in a dreadful jungle – it is their turn to do the torturing! They terrify him by reproducing the evils he had committed against them! The silence of the jungle is interrupted only by fearsome manifestations. The unalterable darkness, the roar of animals, the constant accusations of remorse, the hatred and howling of the ghosts along with all the other horrors plunge

him into madness. Finally, they leave him to himself, completely helpless, a captive of the evils he had sown against his defenseless brothers and sisters, like him children of the same Father and Creator, bearers of the same Immortal Essence! Hunger, thirst, a thousand other needs are added to torment him even more, as he is still shackled to the animality of the inferior instincts and appetites... He roams around in desperation, imprisoned by the most absurd hallucinations, flogged by his own mind, which had been nourished only with evil! His every plea is answered by the terrifying weeping of the slaves and their longing, separated from their loved ones! If a cry for mercy escapes from the uncertainty of his madness, he hears the whip on the bare backs of the slaves on his plantation, and he sees the poor female slaves lovingly nursing his children while their own are relegated to hunger and mistreatment! At a cry of remorse, he hears the grief of someone succumbing, tied to the whipping post... and oh! the final screams of those who, innocent and suffering, throw themselves into the reservoirs and rivers, driven by the terror of their abuse!...

He runs like a madman through the jungle, immersed in the most bewildering spiritual insanity! However, no matter which way he turns amid majestic centuries-old trees, slimy swamps or thorn-covered thickets, he runs into his victims, weeping in their agonizing desperation...

Until one night when, feeling utterly exhausted after having lived in terror for many years... on a certain pathway that suddenly opens up before him, he sees the old slave Felicio walking towards him holding a lighted torch, enabling him to see where he is... Felicio walks slowly, stately and serene, no longer tormented by the hot iron, but compassionately extending his right hand to him to pull him up:

“Come, master, get up... let’s leave this place.”

He follows Felicio... And to conclude the drama, we realize that the old slave had forgiven his tormenter and had interceded for him before the Divine Mercy... He had gone to free him from the claws of those who had not pardoned him...

We follow all these events intensely, as if we had been present, thanks to the gift – still unknown to humankind – of the profound abilities inherent to the spirit free of the flesh, abilities that enable it to suffer, feel, understand, be moved, be happy, etc. to such a high degree that they would dazzle incarnates if they were capable of experiencing them. As the drama unfolded, the

instructor offered his opinions, explaining the psychology of the individuals involved, and thus lecturing with wisdom in light of the Sacred Science into which we were being initiated! And he added, sternly, in the vibrant, severe tone that translated so well the unbreakable character that had been burned at the stake for its love of the Truth, concluding the series of brief remarks that Amadeu's spiritual past had elicited:

“Brazilian society, my dear pupils, currently suffers and will continue to suffer for an amount of time that will depend on it itself to increase or decrease the consequences of the iniquities that, in this Christian age, it allowed to be committed in its midst. As you well know, I am referring to the enslavement of human beings, treating them with more ruthlessness than animals to pile up wealth and material possessions that would allow for a reign of pleasure and passion! Since it was not just an individual crime but a collective one, it is the collectivity that will have to expiate and repair its huge disgrace, the enormous torment it inflicted on those in need of the fraternal support of a Christian civilization so that, in their turn, they could glorify themselves by receiving the Good News of the Kingdom of God! Under the sky marked by the august symbol of Initiation and Christianity – the Cross<sup>61</sup> – the anguishing cries of thousands of tormented hearts, which, as the decades unfolded, wept at the infamy that victimized them, can still be heard in the Spirit World! Still resonating in the subtle waves of the ether, where the spheres of protection of the human societies are located, are the tragic sounds of the whips of the diabolical overseers flogging defenseless men and women, whose tears, collected one by one by the Incorruptible Justice of the Almighty, were, by law, immediately thereafter poured out on that criminal collectivity, so that it in turn would absorb them in subsequent struggles, purifying itself from the evils and infamy it had committed! That is why that great South American country is dealing with such complex problems, its societies fighting one another, victimized by an accumulation of aggravating factors, with those who were oppressed in the past occupying higher positions in the present, those who were bent over by the weight of their collective afflictions and relegated to the indifference of the favored, prideful and imprudent classes of the past who did not follow the examples of the Heavenly Envoy, denying the kindness of fraternity towards their fellow beings, the care of sowing love in order to receive mercy on the day of Supreme Judgment! And thus they will proceed until the Celestial Voice of the Missionaries of the Lord leads them towards a peaceable goal, in the sublime endeavor of individual reconciliation due to their love for the Christ

of God! And you who have just witnessed these dramas – old and new – lived by Amadeu Ferrari! You who have just seen his past and present, ended by suicide, for which he will also have to give an account to the Lord of Life and all Things! Be informed that among the slaves that wept under the sky of the land of the Sublime Cross, bent over by excessive toil, hungry, ragged, sick, sad, desperate in their oppression, fatigue and abuse, not all harbored the inner characteristics of primitiveness! Many, many illustrious Romans from the empire of the Caesars; proud patricians, haughty warriors, authorities of the armies of Diocletian, Hadrian and Maxentius, deeply repentant for the monstrous abuses they committed in the name of Strength and Power against the peaceable followers of the Immaculate Lamb, asked for reincarnation on the desolate soil of Africa in order to expiate their wrongs, thereby flogging the unbearable pride that the Romans had acquired with the deceitful glories of exterminating the dignity and rights of others! Still courageous and strong, they begged for new conquests! But this time it would entail the struggle against themselves in the battle against the nefarious pride that had defeated them! They begged for the physical disguise of black bodies to serve as their redemptive armor, in which their ability to fight back would be restricted so that the white flag of peace, the august flag given to them for the reparation of their evils, would be hoisted in their consciences! And thus it was that the enslavers of so many peoples and generations; the inhumane masters of the world, who laughed while the oppressed wept; who relished the martyrdom and the innocent blood of the early Christians, expunged the stain on their spirits as African captives!

“Hence the gentle, even sublime, resignation of that dignified African people worthy of all our admiration and respect; hence the heroic passivity, which was not always due to the ignorance and incapacity of a lesser-evolved state, but due to the sublime, burning desire for spiritual rehabilitation! And be informed further that the slave Felicio, whom you have just seen as a symbol for all the others, redeemed of a number of calamitous crimes like so many others when he exercised his authority under the orders of Hadrian, returned to Rome in spirit once his commitment as a member of the African race had ended, and rejoined his former phalanx of Romans and...”

An irrepressible murmur of disconcerting astonishment stirred the terrified audience of wrongdoers as Amadeu fell on his knees, letting out a cry of surprise, horror, joy, shame, or some other indefinable sentiment experienced only by spirits in his deplorable condition, while violent weeping shook him in indescribable convulsions.



At a signal from Epaminondas, a side door had silently opened and Felicio appeared, serene and grave, and walked towards his former master... Now in possession of his entire past, Amadeu looked at him in terror... Slowly and imperceptibly, Felicio transformed himself using the power of his will – which easily changes the configuration of the astral body – and let himself be seen in his role as Romulo Ferrari, Amadeu’s father!

After Felicio had rejoined his former Romans, he reincarnated in order to proceed on his pilgrimage of full redemption under the auspices of the Gentle Nazarene, whose followers he had persecuted at the time of Hadrian! He had then undergone a new phase of progress under another name. While still a young man, he moved to *Terra de Santa Cruz*, led by an indefinable sentiment of affinity. There, he raised a family and compassionately agreed to serve as a father to his former persecutor...

And now, he would continue to help him expunge from his conscience a new infraction – suicide!

When, pensive and silent, we left the Sanctuary, where such a sublime mystery had been unveiled to us in our first lesson, this profound and indescribable feeling resonated in the folds of our Soul:

“O God of Mercy! May you be praised for having granted us the Law of Reincarnation!”

---

<sup>59</sup> Mt. 5:5. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>60</sup> *Terra de Santa Cruz* was the name given to Brazil by the Portuguese after it was discovered by Pedro Alvares Cabral. – Tr.

<sup>61</sup> A reference to the Southern Cross constellation. – Tr.

---

## The “old man”<sup>62</sup>

Since the beginning of the year 1906, we had returned to the earth several times to live amongst its societies for a while. Multiple duties called us there. It was a vast field of experimentation for us because, being slated to live there many times in the future, it was highly useful for us to apply, among our brothers and sisters in humanity, the knowledge we were gradually acquiring via our work in the spirit world. Thus, under the supervision of Anibal de Silas, but with the practical assistance of Souria-Omar’s vast secular experience, we increased the deeds of charity that we had begun under Teocrito’s care. We multiplied our efforts to serve suffering hearts with the sweet inspirations of the Messianic teachings, whether they were still bound to the physical body or were struggling in the Invisible. We served at the Colony’s emergency outposts, as well as at the Mary of Nazareth Hospital and its auxiliaries. We joined caravans to aid suicides lost in the loneliness of the lower Invisible, as well as those in earthly abysses, persecuted by phalanxes of obsessors. We followed our masters from Security closely and learned how to find the leaders of frightful, deceitful phalanxes, persecutors of miserable mortals, whom they often induced to commit suicide. We frequently visited meetings organized by the disciples of Kardec, collaborating with them as much as they let us. We assisted many sufferers who did not believe in Spiritist ideas, but who were in need of help, nevertheless. We visited prisons and hospitals. We went to desolate regions of Brazil and Africa to encourage and give material assistance to prisoners coming from a bad spiritual past who were now facing expiatory hardships in physical bodies disfigured by leprosy, disparaged by mental impairment or marked by deformation. We even dared to go to the homes of the earth’s high and mighty, places often teeming with dreadful suffering and the potential for suicide, despite the factitious glories that surrounded them! And wherever there were tears to be dried, weary hearts to be encouraged, faltering and

dismayed souls to be consoled, Anibal would take us there in order to guide us in the teachings of the Master of masters, from which we, in turn, learned to exercise the sublime apostolate of Fraternity!

Ostensible by means of mediumistic collaboration structured for lofty purposes, inconspicuous in their many manifestations and impossible to be narrated in their entirety to the reader, we carried out our activities for many years in the diverse areas of Charity. And if more than once rebellious afflictions overcame us when in touch with the suffering of others, also more than once we received sweet consolation knowing that our goodwill had contributed to drying a few tears, to silencing some unfortunate brother or sister's anxiety with the sacred suggestions of Hope, or to warming a few hearts with the sacred fire of the Love and Faith that we too were learning to conceptualize!

Each lesson of the Gospel of the Lord, explained by the youthful instructor; each example of the Unforgettable Master, would be followed by our putting what we had learned into practice among incarnate and discarnate sufferers. Then afterwards, we would give a report to the examiners, who would check our understanding and implementation of the subject matter. Thus, we often presented essays, based on lofty topics inspired by the Gospel and Morality, as well as by Science, novels, poems, news reports, etc. Once they were approved, we could dictate or reveal these works to incarnates, because they were enlightening and educational, and therefore helpful for their regeneration. We accomplished this through mediums who adhered to some particular philosophy, or through suggestions and inspirations offered to any serious mind capable of grasping our ideas about moralizing or instructional issues. Whenever we failed, we had to repeat the experience until it was entirely in tandem with the Truth we espoused, as well as the expressions of Art, which we could not disregard.

The days dedicated to these examinations were festive ones for all of Hope City. Authentic examples of a Sacred Art – that of the Good – the enchantment derived from such gatherings surpassed any concepts of beauty that we might have had before! The guardians would put up decorations entailing transcendental light effects indescribable in human language, while luminaries of the Colony, such as Teocrito, Ramiro de Guzman, and Anibal de Silas would display their superior artistic gifts in literature, music or descriptive oratory, that is, a mental exposition using images of their own production. Fraternal caravans would come down from neighboring spheres

to lend an artistic and consoling shine to our presentations. Names that are recalled on the earth with reverence and admiration would come to encourage our progress, activating in our humble hearts the desire to continue our promising struggles. These would even include figures like Victor Hugo and Frederic Chopin – the latter considered a suicide in the spirit world due to his disregard for his physical health. Both of them, as well as other names that would surprise the reader, would express the magic of their thoughts, expanded by their acquisitions during their long stay in the spirit world, in creations beyond description in human words! Thus, we were able to listen to the great composer who had incarnated more than once, always dedicating his best mental energies to Art or the Belles Lettres as he translated his music via images and narrations in a stunning myriad of themes, while the spirit of Victor Hugo used invaluable lessons of beauty and tutoring to display the mental reality of his literary creations! The creative power of this spirit, whom the earth has not forgotten, and who will return to it in the service of Truth under surprising personae – a true artistic mission to serve the One who is Beauty Supreme – would amaze us to tears, causing us to worship the Divine Being with the same fervor and feeling that Anibal de Silas and Epaminondas de Vigo had displayed in their teachings based on Science and the Gospel of Redemption. This meant that Victor Hugo was also taking part in our reeducation through his thought brought alive by the action of reality, materialized in a way that we could follow the precious nuances of his emotive vibrations transubstantiated in enchanting topics of the epic of the Spirit through earthly migrations and stays in the Invisible. We were surprised to find out that Hugo's genius had manifested on the earth over the course of many centuries, starting in ancient Greece and then Italy and France, always leaving behind a luminous vestige of superior enlightenment and Art. So, his spirit has been venerated in many ages by many generations, making him absolutely deserving of the praise he enjoys in intellectual circles. As for Chopin – an unhappy soul who now realizes that it is only in the humble carpenter of Nazareth that he will find the secret of the sublime ideals that will make him happy – he presented us with the dramatic poem of his earthly migrations in fabulous expressions of his enrapturing music, transported from the magic of sounds into the wonder of real expressions. One of his incarnations took place before the advent of the Great Emissary, when he was already serving the Arts, cultivating the Belles Lettres as an unforgettable poet that lived in the very midst of the empire of power, the Rome of the Caesars!

As for us, the pupils, our essays also had to translate our mental creations into images and scenes, as our mentors did in their lessons and the visitors in their kindness. The help of technicians was used for this complex task, a team of eminent scientists who knew how to collect and transfer thoughts to the transcendental equipment referred to in our previous descriptions. A number of mediums trusted by our Institute were brought to these gatherings under the auspices of their Guardians, and were able to glimpse with difficulty what we saw in all its splendor! It was meant to be an incentive for the mediumistic work they had committed to before reincarnating, a learning experience inherent to the reeducation plan needed for their progress as interpreters of the Invisible, and a less difficult way to prepare them for tasks like the ones we harbored in our own thoughts. We would then be stirred by a sacred enthusiasm because we thought that the task of communicating to incarnates the things that were revealed to us would be easy, certain as we were that our efforts would be immediately accepted. But we did not bear in mind one disconcerting obstacle: mediums have little desire to actually practice authentic Christian principles. They may think they are abiding by them, but in reality they are incapable of self-denial; they are averse to the lofty studies essential for all those who deem themselves to be initiates; they are lazy regarding the work of their own redemption and that of their neighbors, to whom they owe the sacred duty of defense against ignorance about spiritual matters, since they themselves are gifted with faculties proper for such endeavors. Furthermore, there are occasions when, in disharmony with themselves and the illuminating spheres, they emit mental effects, i.e. personal ideas, convinced that they are communicating the thoughts of spirits when they have actually done nothing – not even the moralization of their own minds – to merit such a lofty mandate! And it is with the most profound sadness that we disclose in these pages, written in the most fervent desire to serve, the disappointment of those in the spirit world who, interested in the evolution of humanity, observe the lack of vigilance on the part of mediums in general, their lack of desire to detach themselves from the frivolities and idleness of the material world, circumventing the urgent duty of ridding themselves of many attitudes that are harmful to the sublime mandate of mediumship, and which the gentle voice of the Good Shepherd has not yet been able to remove from them! Therefore, we are making this digression to point out the fact that, unfortunately, mediums themselves hamper the action of the planet's spirit instructors, as many mediums that are in an excellent physical-psychical condition fall into ostracism and the non-productivity of

serious things. This happens while the Lord's work keeps piling up all around due to a lack of good workers on the physical plane as people flounder around in the darkness, in spite of living in a time of enlightenment. They are misguided due to a lack of spiritual nourishment, hungering for the light of Knowledge, thirsting for the Living Water that would soothe their soul, disconsolate and saddened by the accumulation of misfortunes!

Two highly significant events completely changed certain aspects of a situation that seemed indecisive and indefinable, although they were two years apart.

The first event was on one of those festive days open to visitations.

The day before, interns were told that they would receive visits from their "dead" loved ones, that is, discarnate family members. But since we were not directly connected with this activity, we thought that it pertained only to those who had been participating in the Institute's classes longer than we had. Consequently, we just thought that someday in the future we too would be able to see our own loved ones again.

Kind and charitable, like all women whose moral education is inspired by the divine ideal, the female guardians prepared the parks for the next day's grand reception. They artfully and skillfully utilized all their abilities to create enthralling meeting spots that spoke to our most treasured childhood memories, when the despairs of existence had not yet handed us the deadly chalice of bitterness. And after creating them, they presented them to us as delightful surprises where we could receive our relatives and friends as they arrived. Created in the open air, that is, spread amongst the parks and gardens – of which there were plenty in the City – or on the edge of the placid lakes, or on the graceful hillsides that seemed to be softly illuminated under the indefinable reflections of multi-colored rays, these arrangements were not permanent. They would last only as long as our need for comprehension and consolation lasted. Many reflected the childhood home, the sacred location where we grew up and experienced our first hopes and expectations about life, the one place so ardently remembered by those who had found only darkness and despair beyond the grave. Other areas recalled scenarios built upon the delights of conjugal love: the corner of a living room, a flower-covered porch. Still other sites displayed certain landscapes of native homelands: a bucolic bridge, a suggestive stretch of beach, a familiar boulevard, where we walked under our mothers' protecting arms...

Thus it was, in the exact scenario of the house where I was born, that I had the ineffable joy of seeing my dear mother, whom I had lost in infancy and had seen buried, of being able to kiss her hands like before, while at the same time flinging myself into the protecting arms of my old father, relieving me of a longing that had never left my heart, always tormented by incomprehension and a thousand conflicts!

I saw my wife again, whom death had whisked away in the middle of my dream of a happy marriage, and whom I could have met again a long time ago in the Invisible, had it not been for the rebelliousness of my heinous act! From all of them I received loving warnings, invaluable advice and testimonies of their everlasting love. Not one of them asked for an explanation for the ruin that misfortune and the passions had made of my life! I received them as if we were in our old home: the same furniture, the same arrangements that I knew so well... Rita de Cassia and Doris Mary had prepared everything to perpetuate the sacred feelings of family ties in my heart! Later on, they told us that, without even perceiving it, we ourselves had furnished the elements for the arrangements, that our masters, in addition to being instructors and educators, were also sublime agents of Charity. Thus, by probing our thoughts and mental impressions for the things most dear to us, our instructors had been able to tell what would encourage us the most. Then, they transmitted the information to the guardians by means of drawings and equivalent visions so that the reproduction could be as consoling as possible, for we would need full serenity, the highest state of mental tranquility, to profit from the lessons ahead! To our surprise, our beloved visitors added that they had not been able to do anything for us due to the complex situation we had created with our suicide, a situation much like that of prisoners on whom the country's laws have imposed a life apart from other citizens. I wept many tears then, hiding my shame-covered face in the lap of my compassionate mother, whose salutary counsels gave me new strength and revived in my being the hope of less bitter days for my conscience! We were all together again, under the scented foliage of the trees that reminded me of the orchards and courtyard of the old place where I grew up. Lulled by the loving care of my unforgettable parents, I lingered in the company of several of my family members, who, like me, were all discarnate! My companions in misfortune had the same rights, as there were no special privileges or predilections, but only strict justice based on the laws of attraction and affinity.

Consequently, Belarmino de Queiroz e Sousa was finally able to see his mother again, whom he had loved with all his heart, and whose unexpected

visit he received that same afternoon. She told him that a profound and inconsolable pain had stricken her when she saw that he had succumbed to suicide. It had had an irreversible effect on her health and she disincarnated six months later, unable to resign herself to losing him so tragically! She had encountered the most anguishing disillusionment after her death, because having thought that she would find final oblivion in the bosom of Nature, she instead found herself alive and filled with awful bitterness because she did not have any mental or spiritual capacities that could recommend her to the happy or consoling regions of the Invisible. She had looked for him in vain in the dark regions where she roamed, flogged by dreadful confusion, struggling between the astounding effects of the pride and selfishness that had marked her personality, and repentance for having traded the sweet outpouring of God's love for the exclusive realm of materialistic science. Her conscience had told her that she was largely responsible for the tragedy that had befallen her son, since it had been her, a mother who disbelieved the divine principles, an imprudent and proud mother whose aspirations gravitated towards worldly passion and pleasures, who had molded his character and had nourished him on the mental virus that had dragged them down into such a deplorable moral state! But having finally come to her senses, thanks to the pain that educates, she had toiled, struggled, and suffered with resignation in the spirit world for many years. She had repented, sincerely converted to the truth of the idea of God and his Laws, and thus, due to her ardent desire to change and evolve, she had received the concession to see her son, a merciful gift from the Supreme Being, whom she now believed in with reverence and compunction!

Doris Mary and Rita de Cassia furnished mother and son with the sweet comfort of a fond scene: the old library of the Queiroz e Souza mansion, with the fireplace happily crackling away; the mother's rocking chair and Belarmino's little chair beside it, just as it had been when he was a child...

Although it happened two years after the first, the second event that was a turning point for my spirit was the understanding I acquired of myself as I sought out, in the great compendium of my soul, the memories of my past, which had lain in cowardly dormancy for so long due my conscience's refusal to examine them wholly and meticulously. Hence, a few days after Epaminondas de Vigo's first science class, it was my turn to extract from the depths of my being the memory of my spirit's past incarnations in its struggle to evolve, memories that my pride rejected because it dreaded what it might discover. Incisive and strict, Epaminondas allowed me no excuses when my time came. So I sat in that chair, which seemed like the venerable tribunal of



Supreme Justice in those awful moments when we faced the instructor. As usual, the room was engulfed in total silence. Only Epaminondas's mental vibrations, translated into impeccable words, filled the reverent atmosphere where sacred mysteries of the Heavenly Science were revealed to illuminate our spirits submerged in the darkness of ignorance. The participants were aware of the kind of person I had been in my last lifetime in Portugal, when I was enveloped in a pride that had corrupted my character. I continued to exhibit that ruinous characteristic, in spite of the humble condition to which I had been reduced. But something that nobody did know, perhaps – because that same pride rarely allowed me to reveal it – was that I had been very poor and had had to struggle bitterly against the adversity of poverty, which not only did not give me any pause, but also confounded all my efforts to mitigate it. And that, in order to flee the calamity of the blindness that extended a thick veil of darkness over my eyes, reducing me to the most compassionless indigence that in my opinion one could ever experience, I had plunged into the diabolical adventure whose dolorous consequences had condemned me to the circumstances known by all.

The assistants carefully prepared me as a defendant about to face the courtroom of his own Conscience, cross-examining and judging himself without the accommodative mitigating factors of human concepts and subterfuges. What the defendant sees is what he himself left registered in the vibrational archives of his soul as the result of each of his acts as a spirit, incarnate or not.

The masters surrounded me, pouring out powerful fluidic resources on my inferiorized being with the charitable intent of helping me. It was as if they were surgeons operating on my soul, unveiling its anatomy so that I myself could examine it and discover the origin of the dreadful evils that persecuted me, without making accusations against Providence!

Intuitions of anguish made me desperate. If I had still been in my physical body, I certainly would have been drenched in a cold sweat. The painful sensation of sheer terror made me try to resist because I could foresee the shameful situation that was waiting for me in front of that audience. Shedding unstoppable tears, I begged in a whisper to be heard only by Epaminondas:

“Mercy, sir! Have mercy on me!”

“Do not hesitate!” he responded in that imperious tone peculiar to him, while his words resonated in the auditorium, to be heard by all. “In order to operate the inner reform that will lead our souls to redemption, we need to support ourselves with the utmost courage! Without determination, without heroism, without valor we will be unable to evolve, to progress towards glory! Remember that cowards are punished by their own weakness, by the shame that envelops them! Remember that rehabilitation is being imposed on you every time pain comes your way, every time suffering strikes the fibers of your being! Be strong, for the Supreme Creator rewards valorous souls with the joy of Victory!”

I resigned myself to the influx of that powerful mind, quietly invoking the maternal assistance of Mary of Nazareth, whom I had venerated ever since having arrived at the charitable Institute, remembering that it was under her loving care that we had found a home there.

Harmonizing my own will with that of the mentors who guided me, I cannot recall exactly what happened next! I saw Epaminondas and his assistants envelop me in strange rays of light. An invincible swoon numbed my brain, as if exceptional repercussions were rising from the sacred powers of my “self,” lifting from the repository of my soul and materializing the whole lengthy series of planetary lives I had lived under my responsibility and free will! Of course, my stays in the Invisible between one incarnation and the next followed the dramas lived on the earth, because these stages are inseparable from the consequences of the acts practiced in the physical world. I had the magnificent and extraordinary impression of facing my “self,” or that of my double – if I can put it like that – as if I were looking into a mirror to witness what was unfolding in my own memory! The overpowering and commanding words of the instructor resonated like a clarion inside my compliant spirit and invaded all the folds of my conscience like an eruption of water breaking through a dam, inundating a defenseless region in an unstoppable wave:

“I command you, Soul created for the glory of life in the Divine Bosom: Return to the starting point and examine in the book that you carry within yourself the lessons that your lives have given you! Learn from yourself to fulfill Duty and to honor the Law of the One who created you! Then, draw up appropriate plans of expiation and edification so that you will owe to your own self the glory of taking redemptive flight towards the Eternal Bosom whence you came!”

Slowly, I felt overcome by a singular torpor, as if everything around me had begun to spin vertiginously... Thick darkness, like threatening clouds, surrounded my head... My thought left the auditorium, Hope City, the Correctional Colony... I no longer saw Epaminondas; I did not even know him, nor did I remember any of my companions of misfortune... Nevertheless, I had not fallen asleep! I was lucid and rational; I was thinking; I was acting, all of which indicated that I was in full possession of myself... in spite of going back into the past to reach memories accumulated for centuries!... Thus, I lost the memory of the Present as my conscience dove into the Past...

I went back to the year 33 A.D! However, I was not only remembering it: I was actually living in that time period, exactly as before!

The old holy city of the Jews – Jerusalem – was experiencing feverish events on that hot, sunny morning. I felt possessed by a diabolical happiness as I walked through the streets packed with foreigners, inciting riots, encouraging fights, spreading disquieting gossip, promoting disorder. It was the great day of Calvary, and it was known that a certain revolutionary named Jesus of Nazareth had been condemned by the authorities of Rome to die on the cross, along with two other criminals. I ran to the Praetorium, knowing that the condemned man that the Jews scorned so much would leave there to be taken to the cross. I was a wretched person, poor and evil. I owed a lot of favors to many of the Jews in Jerusalem. I ate the crumbs from their tables. I dressed myself in the rags they gave me. Consequently, in front of the Praetorium I clapped frantically for the release of the hirsute and vile Barabbas, whereas at the proconsul Pontius Pilate's final attempt to free the Nazarene carpenter, I cried out for his execution in diabolical fury. I loved to see tragedies, to get drunk on the spilling of the blood of others, to follow the misfortune that struck the innocent and defenseless, whom I despised as cowards... And to see that meek young man, as comely as he was humble, patiently climbing the rocky hill under the inclement burning of the sun, the heavy cross on his shoulders, stricken by the flogging of the cruel Roman soldiers upset at having to make such a difficult climb in the midday heat, was a spectacle suitable to my evil nature and one that I could not fail to follow!...

However, as I saw myself back in that past, the same conscience that had stored the event began to regret it and accuse itself violently. A sweat of terror and agony beaded on my forehead maddened by remorse, and deranged, I cried out, sensing my voice echo through all the folds of my spirit:

“Ah! Jesus of Nazareth! My Savior and Master! That was not me, Lord! I was mad! I was completely mad! I no longer see myself as your enemy! Forgive me! Forgive me, Jesus!”

Scalding tears burned within my soul and I resisted, recoiling from the bitter memory of the past. But the illustrious, ever watchful instructor, eager for his ward’s progress, commanded:

“Continue, O Soul, divine creation! Proceed and do not falter, for it is necessary that you emerge from this examination converted to serving the Master whom you cast stones at in the past!”

I could not escape the vibrational impulse that compelled me to assess my remote past; right there beside me were Epaminondas and his assistants with their collective wills compassionately focused on my behalf. And thus I proceeded with the disheartening recapitulation:

I am still in a hostile mood in front of the Praetorium. There is no insult that my ferocious words do not utter against the Nazarene. Fierce in my obstinacy, I follow him on his dolorous climb, yelling offenses and vile scorn; and I must confess that the only reason I do not strike him with stones or with the violence of my murderous arm is because he is so closely guarded by the Roman soldiers. The truth is that I have always felt myself to be inferior and belittled everywhere I go. I feel envy and hatred towards everything that actually is, or that I believe to be, superior to me! Ugly, disheveled, ignoble, deformed – I had only one arm – degraded, ambitious, the stuff of pure evil dripped from my heart. I cursed and maltreated everything, everything that I saw as beautiful and noble, conscious that it was impossible for me to ever be that way myself!

As part of the long cortege, I begin to disrespectfully hurl vile insults and sarcasms at his suffering and humble Mother, the guiding angel of indescribable tenderness for men and women exiled in earthly sufferings; the same Mary, compassionate and consoling, who now sheltered me with heavenly solicitude! After it is all finished, in a sinister and terrifying sequence, I continue my abominable role as tormenter: denouncing Christians to the Sanhedrin, persecuting, spying, imposing as much affliction as I can on my own; taking part in the hateful, brutal mob that stones Stephen,<sup>63</sup> betraying the “saints of the Lord” simply for the pleasure of doing evil, since I did not share in the sentiments that impelled the Jewish people to believe that they were defending their national patrimony by trying to wipe out the

Christians. In fact, I was not even a son of Israel! I had come from far away, an adventurer and disbeliever, from distant Gaul. I had fled my own tribe, where I had been condemned to death for the double crime of murder and treason to my homeland, having arrived in Judea by chance in the last months of the Lord's ministry!

Thus, a supreme opportunity for regeneration had been offered to me, but I had rejected it, rebelling against the "Light that shone in the darkness..."

I continued over the course of time, facing constant struggles. Reincarnation followed reincarnation down through the centuries... But I remained immersed in darkness... And during the intervals between each one, I continued to take pleasure in the lower circles of animality!... I received reiterated invitations for the work of regeneration on whatever planes my existences impelled me to be, either as an incarnate in the physical body or as a spirit outside of it, for the tenderness of the Gospel also echoes in the lower zones of the spirit world, pointing to the sublime figure of the Crucified One as the benevolent model to emulate! But I made myself deaf to its message, blinded by the ill-will of the instincts, as is the case with so many others... I can state that I did not even clearly perceive the difference between being incarnate on the earth and discarnate in the spirit world, because I remained as I always had been: immersed in animality! Today, I know that the immanent law of Progress, like a wise and irresistible magnet, impelled me to new possibilities in physical bodies under the supervision of devoted workers of the Lord, enabling me to be reborn as a man so that the impact of expiation and the incessant struggles inherent to the living conditions on the earth, the unavoidable sufferings originating from the state of the planet's imperfection as well as its humanity's, would slowly start to develop the potentialities of my soul, still brutish in its inferiority. At the time, however, I did not perceive anything of the sort, and human existence, as well as the intervals in the spirit world, seemed to be one and the same thing!

Down through the centuries, I continued to experience great misfortune.

An impenitent criminal, hanging on to the nefarious practice of evil, of course I suffered the return of my actions, whose effects were reflected in my own being. Sometimes, I would climb very high on the ladder of earthly society, a fact that does not imply the possession of virtues, since I was driven by unlimited, vile and degrading ambition, which caused resounding downfalls that immersed me more and more in the swamp of moral debt, creating terrifying responsibilities for my conscience!

Interestingly, I always reincarnated in Christian civilizations. In the disciplined and ordered structures of the Invisible, everything indicates that spirits are registered in groups or colonies, and under their auspices they educate themselves and evolve. They do not get out from under their supervision until they have completed the normal evolutionary cycle, that is, until they have acquired the virtues that promote transmutations that are productive and useful to themselves and to others. What is certain, however, is that I have never left the regions of Gaul or Iberia.

The idea of regeneration started to slowly insinuate itself into my cogitations. It was the result of having perceived it whispered in my ears with the passing of time, whether I was on the earth in a physical body or submerged in the darkness of the lower zones of the spirit world that were proper for beings of my category. I accepted it calculatedly and selfishly, and started looking for means to resolve the awful adversities that had hounded me down through the centuries. I sought such means in the Christian doctrine, which, I was told, brought many benefits to those who entrusted themselves to its wardship. Absorbed in my own inferior being, however, what I did not grasp was the lofty moral and philosophical reach of the counsels and invitations that were continually repeated all around me in the earthly or astral regions to where life led me... Consequently, I expected from the Great Doctrine only personal advantages, mysterious or superstitious powers that would enable me to satisfy a thousand whims and passions...

Even so, whenever I heard mention of that Nazarene Master whose virtues were a model for the regeneration of humanity, a sudden malaise would come over me, as if troublesome repercussions were vibrating within me. A hostile state would permeate my conscience, which seemed to fear the examination of such a sensitive issue. So it was obvious that while my mind and intellectual knowledge – even my ambitions – became more robust in the struggles of life and misfortune under the powerful impulse of my efforts, my heart remained inactive and cold, my soul remained hardened against the generous manifestations of the Good, Morality and Justice!

The first half of the seventeenth century found me in a deplorable state of confusion in the darkness of an earthly prison, despite the fact that I was an inhabitant of the spirit world. What hateful string of crimes had caused such a bitter repression of the dignity of a spirit free of the shackles of a physical body?... What abominable reasons had I given the law of attraction and

affinity for my mind and conscience to be attuned only to the darkness of a vile, torturous dungeon?...

Let me tell you what I did, dear reader...

---

62 Ephesians 4:22: “That you put off, as concerning your former way of life, the old man, that grows corrupt after the lusts of deceit.” – Tr.

63 Saint Stephen, (died 36 C.E., Jerusalem), Christian deacon in Jerusalem and the first Christian martyr, whose apology before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7) points to a distinct strand of belief in primitive Christianity. His defense enraged his hearers, and he was taken out of the city and stoned to death. [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com).

Read more about Stephen in *Paul and Stephen* (Brazilian Spiritist Federation, 2017) By the Spirit Emmanuel through the mediumship of Francisco Candido Xavier. – Tr.

## The cause of my blindness in the 19th Century

The first decades of the 17th century were well underway when I reincarnated on the outskirts of the ancient capital of the Visigoths, Toledo, bordered by the rippling waters of the Tagus River like a tireless sentinel...

I had reincarnated on that craggy stage once more for a much needed learning experience that would free my badly confused spirit, and which would help pay down the debts of my conscience before the Incorruptible Law. The trials of resignation to poverty, of passive and regenerative humility, of devotion to the institution of Family were imperative, in addition to the rectifying of the debt of a broken oath of love.

I was born into an old family of bankrupt nobles, who, at the time, were besieged by insurmountable adversities, such as political and religious rivalries, as well as disagreements with the Crown.

In my early youth I was illiterate, fraught by hard toil in the fields. I tended sheep and tilled the soil like a wretched serf, dividing myself amongst multiple tasks under the severe eye of my father, a cruel, provincial nobleman whose unrestrained religious pride, inspired by the ideas of the Reformation, had disgraced him before the king. He was suspected of being unfaithful to the Catholic Faith, and was thus watched very closely. He was strict with his family and servants. The harsh duties of my farming responsibilities only added to the poignant longing that afflicted me, since in the folds of my soul boiled vertiginous ambitions that were out of place for a young man in my miserable situation. I dreamed of leaving that life, of rebelling against my father's tyranny, of becoming a cultured and useful man like my cousins who lived in Madrid. A number of them were highly decorated military men. Others were members of the powerful Society of Jesus, erudite



representatives of the Church I considered to be the only just and true one, contrary to my father's beliefs, which I rejected. I envied those wealthy, powerful relatives and felt that I was ready to make any sacrifice necessary to reach the same social position.

One day I told my mother about my desire, which grew stronger as I grew older, making me unhappy and unsatisfied. The poor woman who, together with her children and the servants, also felt the oppression of our domestic tyrant, advised me prudently, as if inspired by heaven, to put a damper on my wishes by being obedient to the principles of the Family I was born into, because my presence was indispensable. The fields would not be productive without the experienced hand of the firstborn and future owner. But I insisted and she finally agreed to intercede with my father to encourage him to allow me to receive some education. Her request, however, earned me nothing but inconceivable mistreatment and punishment! Consequently, I was resentful and my desire only increased to the point of becoming an obsession that my impetuous and rebellious character contained only with a lot of effort.

I finally decided to go to the parish priest, whom I knew to be a helpful, erudite man. I told him how miserable I was and informed him of my desire to read and to educate myself as much as possible. He kindly acquiesced and proceeded to teach me everything he knew. And because he was so well-educated and intellectually advanced, I absorbed with all my soul the lessons he so charitably taught me. Since I was an eager and willing student, my worthy teacher was able to excel in his task, enchanted with the intellectual potential he identified in his pupil. Understanding my reasons, in a high spirit of collaboration based on the evidence, he agreed not to tell my family. My visits to the parish were seen as nothing more than helping with the tilling of its land, a favor my father did not dare to deny because he was fearful of reprisals and denunciations.

One day, after a long period of mental torment as I searched for a solution to what I considered my misfortune, I was struck with the unfortunate idea of becoming a priest as a way to satisfy my ambitions. I thought it would be a secure and easy way to fulfill the purposes that captivated me... It certainly was not an honorable awakening of a divine calling to serve the causes of the Good and Justice through a proficient ministry. My manifestations of religiosity, as well as my mother's, entailed neither true belief in God nor due respect for his Laws! I conveyed to the parish priest, my old teacher, the "praiseworthy" intent of my conceited

ambitions! To my surprise, he kindly advised me not to commit the sacrilege of using the sacred shroud of the Divine Lamb to serve the personal passions that were troubling my heart and clouding my judgment... He knew my character and was thus well aware of the fact that there was no true inclination on my part to the sublime ministry.

“The Gospel of the Lord, my son,” he concluded after one of the wise discourses in which he used to expound the grave responsibilities that weigh on the conscience of a priest, “must be served with a fervent love for the Good and endless self-denial, in which we often must die to the world and its passions, and even to ourselves. It requires devoted, active, renewing, tireless work on behalf of others and the glory of Truth. It must be highlighted by authentic honesty and a spirit of independence and cooperation, without any personal gain. The servant of Jesus must hand himself over unconditionally to the Cause, ridding himself of his own will and opinions, which cannot have any worth before the statutes and norms of the Lord’s teachings! It is a difficult pathway, covered with heather, mishaps and constant trials, upon which the pilgrim will shed many tears and suffer greatly from harrowing disappointments! He will gather the flowers only later, when he can offer the Sublime Lord of the Vineyard the precious talents entrusted to his care as a helpful and obedient servant...

*“If you would come after me – Jesus said it himself – deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me!*

“Apart from that, my dear son, the only thing the priest will serve will be personal ambition, distancing himself from the Lord with reproachable actions while pretending to serve him!

“Not inclined to the selflessness needed for such an honorable calling?... Then serve your neighbor and family with goodwill and as best you can...

“Not really submissive to the command of the One that gave himself in sacrifice on the arms of a cross?... Then don’t rush to burden yourself with responsibilities that are so vast and heavy that they could compromise your spiritual future! Go back to your obligations as a citizen, fulfill your daily duties, living a decent life every step of the way... Return to your village, take care of your livestock, pay no heed to impetuous ambitions. Doing so will be more meritorious than betraying a ministry for which you are not ready... Carefully till the friendly earth, happily tending the soil on which you were born... and by sowing the tiny, fertile seeds in it, you will quickly

understand that God is with you. You will see his blessings continuously renewed in the delicious fruits of your orchards, in the golden sprigs of wheat that feed your entire family, in the milk that strengthens the bodies of your children... Start a home! Teach your children to revere God and Justice, and to love their neighbor! Be a friend to everyone around you, caring for the fields, animals and servants that serve you, for all of this is a sublime ministry and is sacred service to the Lord of the Vineyard.”

\* \* \*

The idea of marriage quickly replaced my old aspirations. The advice of the good servant of the Gospel had made a strong impression on me. Hasty and passionate, I surrendered to the noble objective with my whole heart, gladly preparing myself for its realization. I fell desperately in love, but due to the delicate situation of being out of harmony with my father’s character, in addition to the disconcerting poverty that limited my actions, I kept my marriage plans secret.

From the numerous girls that beautified our village with their personal charm and moral virtues, I had chosen one of my mother’s nieces, a girl I greatly admired; but I did not dare to display even to myself the ardor that burned in my chest at seeing and speaking to her.

Her name was Maria Magda. She was slender and beautiful, and had black, fragrant, waist-length, braided hair, along with languid and seductive eyes. Like me, she was the daughter of bankrupt nobles, but thanks to her parents’ thoughtfulness, she had the advantage of having acquired a good domestic and social education.

I started courting her ardently. I was very much in love right from the beginning of the romance, as would suit a violent and rebellious character such as mine. I thought that she felt the same way. I was unaware of the fact that only the loneliness of a village lacking gallant young men and isolated on the sad outskirts of Toledo had created the opportunity considered irresistible in my dreams! I loved the young Maria with indomitable fervor and put my entire destiny in her hands. I would have willingly given myself forever to the life of an honorably built home, putting into practice the advice of the benevolent priest. Adversity, however, haunted my steps. As part of the trials I was to endure, I met with strong temptations and was unable to resist them due to my unhappy nature, the insubordination of my wounded pride, and my rebelliousness when faced with a disappointment or a minor setback!

I had secretly made plans for a marriage to be announced at the proper time, but Maria left me for a young man from Madrid, one of my father's cousins, a secret adherent of the Reformation, who had visited our humble home and stayed for the entire summer! He was a handsome twenty-five year old soldier, whose long hair and groomed mustache suited him well in his Royal Guard uniform: the sword with its hilt gleaming like gold, the deerskin gloves, and the fluttering, scented cape, all gave him the air of a hero! His name was Jacinto de Ornelas y Ruiz and he believed himself to be, or maybe really was, a provincial count, heir of good lands and good wealth. Choosing between his elegant figure and financial advantages and my rustic appearance as a poor calloused farmer was not difficult for a young woman not yet twenty-years old!

Jacinto de Ornelas did not return to his mansion in Madrid alone!

Maria Magda agreed to link her life to his by the sacred ties of matrimony, leaving the village behind, smiling and happy, distancing herself from me forever. For the betrayal she inflicted on my sentiments of dignity, she took advantage of the fact that our parents were not aware of our plans. Humiliated, my heart bleeding with unbearable moral torment, from that moment on my future was irremediably compromised. I would fail in the purposes for which I had reincarnated, forgetting the advice and warnings of selfless friends due to the inconformity and rebelliousness that were the nature of my personality!

I swore eternal hatred for both of them. Rancorous and spiteful, I wished all sorts of misfortune on them. Plans for revenge inclined my mind to the usual suggestions of evil, making my life a living hell without any relief, a desert without any hope! The village became loathsome to me! Everywhere I went I saw the graceful figure of Maria with her long black braids swaying side to side... An inconsolable longing tormented me, humiliating me profoundly! I felt ashamed because of the betrayal that had victimized me! I believed my friends were ridiculing me, that my name bore the brunt of their jokes, since several of them had discovered my secret. I completely lost the will to work. The fields were intolerable to me, as they humiliated me with the memory of the handsome appearance of my rival, who had stolen my dreams of marriage! In vain, compassionate friends advised me to find another woman to share my life with, telling me that the event that had stricken me so deeply would have been an ordinary instance in the life of any other man less rigorous and irascible. However, too ardent and overly

sentimental, I banned marriage from my aspirations, encasing in my rebellious heart the longing for the short romance that had brought me so much unhappiness.

My old thoughts about entering the priesthood began whispering in my mind again. I gave them shelter with all my might, ready to dismiss any opposition. I found great peace-of-mind and comfort in the thought of serving the Church to lift me out of my humble social condition. It certainly would not be difficult: if I lacked the financial resources, I had a respected name and well-known relatives that would not refuse to help for the accomplishment of such a great endeavor. Moreover, I sustained myself with the impetuous hope of success, of becoming someone, of climbing the social ladder using every means available, as long as I could surpass Jacinto in status and power, making him bow before me while at the same time humiliating Maria Magda in any way possible, obliging her to care about me, even if it was just to hate me!

The death of my aged father simplified the realization of my plans. I dismissed my mother's wishes for me to manage the farm in my father's stead. My life was overcome with an uncontrollable restlessness. Foreboding ideas kept my mind in a constant state of agitation and anguish, establishing a condition in my being that would be nearly impossible to resolve in only one lifetime!

Prey to hallucinatory nightmares, I dreamed night after night that my old father, as well as other deceased friends, had returned from the grave to advise me to give up on my plans for the future; instead, I should marry one of my childhood friends, a decision that would be the surest path to peace-of-mind and true happiness. But my resentment toward Maria prevented any new attempts at romance and rapidly obliterated any efforts on my behalf by the venerable spirit friends who wanted to keep me from committing new and deplorable wrongs before the Law of Providence.

Instead, I became a priest without any difficulty!

The Society of Jesus, known both for the power it exerted in all areas of society ruled by Roman Catholic law and for endeavors and accomplishments that did not always display obedience and respect for the teachings of its sublime patron – whose name it used and abused – furnished me with inestimable aid and truly invaluable advantages! I got a brilliant and rapid education under its auspices, something I had dreamed of since childhood! I

eagerly absorbed the teachings that the instructors of the Society offered me. They were well aware of my fervent ambitions and the fact that I would be an instrument that was easy to mold in the iron grip of its claws! It seemed as if my mind was easily remembering what I needed to learn, such was the power of my intellectual faculties' ability to assimilate! My gratitude, in turn, was without limit! I surrendered to the Society with all the might my ardent soul was capable of. I obeyed my superiors with fervent zeal, satisfying their every desire! I learned to serve the interests of the Church, as well as those of the Society's clergy, above any others, whatever they might be, as was proper for a true Jesuit!

I will not mention the divine cause. I did not espouse it, nor did I even consider it in order to educate my soul with the light of Justice and Duty. I did not learn to love God or to serve the Redeeming Master in the community I had affiliated myself with.

Of course, within the Society of Jesus there were eminent servants, whose examples of Christian behavior could be compared to those of the early workers of the Messianic apostolate. However, theirs was not the company I sought. I did not get to know them and their lives did not interest me. The only thing I wanted from the powerful Society was the social status it could bestow on me, compensating me for the lowliness of my birth with things such as worldly pleasures, mad satisfactions of pride, vile ambitions, and vanities, for the desire to harm my ex-fiancée had put an end to any honest plans I might have had!

In order to accomplish all these detestable purposes, I served the laws of the Inquisition with frenetic zeal! I persecuted, arrested, slandered, lied, condemned, tortured and killed! I would have turned in my own father; such was the madness that took hold of me. I would have dragged him before the tribunal as an agent of the Reformation if he had not surrendered his soul to the Creator, thanks to the mercy of heaven! However, I did not do all of that to give vent to my own evilness: my intent was only to serve my superiors, to exalt the Jesuit cause, to prove the unending dedication and unconditional gratitude my passionate soul could muster for all the support they had given me! I myself became a victim of that very institution, because in recognizing my submission for the favors I had received, my superiors took advantage of my sentiments and induced me to commit abominable crimes, certain as they were that I would be incapable of betrayal. If, instead of the Jesuits, I had opted for a Franciscan community, I would certainly have received an

education that would have transformed me into the soul of a believer incapable of such harmful acts. At the very least, I would have become accustomed to acting honorably, to revere the name of the Creator and to show an interest in alleviating the suffering of others. However, despite the sacred name it used as inspiration, the Society of Jesus made me into a reprobate, because I belonged to its social-political branch, the one that has committed so much abuse in human societies in the name of religion!

For a long time, I forgot about the two that had betrayed me. I did not go looking for them, nor was I interested in their fate. They had moved to Holland, where Jacinto de Ornelas was responsible for a military operation. However, one day chance brought us together again! Fifteen long years had passed since his execrated visit to my parents' farm had turned my sentimental heart into a furnace of hatred! The professional duties that had taken him away from his homeland brought him back with great honors that went up even to the royal antechambers, thus enabling him to enjoy an enviable social position. Upon seeing him and being obliged to shake his hand at a certain religious ceremony, I greeted him as if he was a complete stranger. But my heart was beating wildly in my chest, while the old rivalry, the painful anguish of the past, seethed in turmoil at the sight of him, indicating that if my love for Maria had disappeared, suffocated in the shame of ignoble betrayal, the open wound, to the contrary, was still bleeding, clamoring for revenge and reprisals!

I decided to keep an eye on the life of that hated man: his steps as an adherent of the Reformation, his past and his present, what he did, what he intended to do, how he lived, the level of harmony in his house, and even the particularities of his existence, thanks to the expert team of spies under my orders as an upstanding agent of the Holy Office. Jacinto de Ornelas and his wife loved each other tenderly and faithfully. They had children whom they strove to educate within the precepts of good morality. Maria, a beautiful and courtly woman, known in society for her impeccable virtues, carried the lofty and dignified beauty of her thirty-three years very well. But when I, misguided, deranged by a thousand despicable and degrading plans, saw her for the first time after so many years, I realized that I had not forgotten her as I thought I had, that I still loved her, unfortunately for all of us!

The old passion, suppressed with difficulty by the passing of time, flared up even more ardently once I started to see her again every week while officiating at one of the churches of our diocese. She wanted to come across

as a good Catholic in order to hide the secret reformist inclinations of her family.

I wanted to attract her and receive the amorous attention that she had denied me before, and under the pressure of such intent I visited her, offering her my services and outdoing myself with kindness toward her. But I was unable to influence her, in spite of my many visits. Once I realized I had been completely forgotten, the sentimental fury in my heart broke out again like the sudden and unexpected eruption of a volcano that had been dormant for centuries! I tried to win her over with tenderness through a thousand obsequious, passionate and humiliating attitudes. She resisted me with dignity, displaying total disinterest in the love I laid at her feet, as well as the social advantages that I could extend to her. I attempted to entice her by conveying all the power I possessed in the Society all over the world, the favors I could do for her and her husband, even the guarantee to exercise their religious faith – for which I could protect them against the repressions of the law – if she would only acquiesce to my ardent advances! But she rejected me without compassion or fear, shielded by the most sanctifying spousal faithfulness I had ever seen, leaving me convinced that more than ever I had widened the abyss that separated our destinies, which I had wanted so much to see united forever!

Now Jacinto was well aware of the passion that had made my life miserable, and when he saw me frequenting his home with an amiable attitude, he quickly grasped the nature of my intentions. Actually, I did not even try to hide them. I made them known, since a Jesuit, and even more, an official of the Holy Office, was sacrosanct to a layman! When his wife sought his strength and counsel in order to resist my insidious advances, he became fearful because of his family's religious ties. He arrived at an understanding with his superiors and prepared to leave Madrid, seeking refuge abroad for himself and his family.

However, I found out about his plans! To live without Maria was a torment that I just could not endure! I was willing to be miserable, even scorned by her with utter contempt; I was willing to be hated by her with all her heart, as long as I could feast my eyes on her often and know that she was near, even if we could never actually be together!

Therefore, desperate, wanting the unattainable at any cost, I handed Jacinto over to the Tribunal of the Holy Office as a Huguenot, meaning to get rid of him and take possession of his wife! I proved the accusation with



evidence: heretical books regarding the Virgin Mary, which had always been terrible weapons in the hands of accusers to condemn the victims of their persecutions even though they were usually fabricated, false proofs; a large amount of compromising correspondence with Lutherans in Germany; information from Protestants scattered throughout Spain and France; his ongoing absence from confession; even the names of his children, which recalled Germany and England, but not Spain, and whose baptismal records he was unable to produce because he said that the children had been baptized in Holland! I presented all this proof not out of zeal for my religion, but out of revenge for Maria's contempt for me by loving Jacinto!

After being indicted and imprisoned, Jacinto was handed back over to me by orders from my superiors. This was my first request of this nature and they did not refuse because of the good work I had always done for them.

I confined him to the secrecy of a vile dungeon, where the poor man was submitted to a long string of torturous privations, indescribable afflictions and sufferings inconceivable to the modern mind educated under the auspices of democratic systems which, although still imperfect, cannot really understand the enforcement of the cruel, absurd laws of the past! He received the full brunt of the hatred that pierced my heart for his being the one preferred by the woman I loved! My inconsolable spite and the horrible jealousy that had driven me mad for so many years inspired the most atrocious tortures, which I executed with diabolical pleasure while remembering Maria's rosy face – a face that I had never ever kissed; her swaying braids, whose fragrance I had never smelled; and her lovely and affectionate arms, which had pulled not me, but him, tenderly close to her heart! Criminally and diabolically, I used the torture chambers of the tribunal of the Inquisition in Madrid to make Jacinto pay for all he had stolen from me, the kisses and caresses from the woman I loved in total desperation and madness!

I had his fingernails and teeth yanked out; his fingers and wrists disjointed; the soles of his feet slowly, patiently burned with red-hot blades. I had him flogged until his flesh shredded, and all of it under the pretext of saving him from hell, for having apostatized, forcing him to make confessions of supposed conspiracies against the Church, under whose name I took shelter for such vile acts!

Prey to maddening worries, Maria came to see me...

Covered in tears, she begged for peace and compassion! She reminded me that she was a close relative, and that Jacinto was too; the wonderful bygone days of our childhood in the fields and the happiness of our homes, both of us protected by our brother-sister-like relationship...

Cynical and cruel, I asked her if she and Jacinto had thought about all those ineffable details of our youth as they plotted the abominable betrayal she had inflicted on me...

She told me about her children, that they would be left at the mercy of awful consequences resulting from their father having been condemned by the Holy Office; and even worse, if he died due to his prolonged imprisonment. She ended by begging in tears for the life and freedom of her husband, as well as for my protection so they could seek refuge in England...

Seeing her at my mercy, I gave her my answer after throwing in her face all the hatred that poured from my soul:

“You shall have your husband back, Maria Magda... But under one condition, from which I shall never release you; not ever: Surrender to me! Be mine! Agree to unite your life with mine, even if it has to be in secrecy... and I will return him to you and never bother him again!”

The poor woman resisted for a few days. Amid tears and pleas, and hoping to change my ignoble demands, my ex-fiancée presented to my soulless and unscrupulous rage all the motives that a virtuous woman, faithful to her conscience and duties, could come up with to avoid the situation. But I was unmovable, cold, just as she had been when, desperate at seeing her leave me for Jacinto, I had begged her to have pity on me, that she not betray my love! That woman, whom I had loved so much, who could have turned me into a faithful and humble husband, had instead turned me into this ferocious being with her deceit and choice of someone else! At that point, from the depths of my psychical being emerged the malefic tendencies that in Jerusalem in the year 33 had compelled me to condemn Jesus of Nazareth and favor the freedom of the criminal Barabbas! In addition, much caprice and pride led me to desire Maria's ruin. And while the wretched couple suffered the bitter drama that modern individuals cannot comprehend except through the colors of legend, I was jubilant with glee at seeing my victory over her, at rending the happiness that had wounded my pride so much!

A few days after our talk, when the unfortunate betrothed of my youth went down into the torture chambers and saw the condition that her once-

handsome husband had been reduced to, she no longer hesitated to give in to my ignoble desires! I had taken her there on purpose, under the pretense of checking up on him, because it appeared she might prolong her resistance!

In order to mitigate her husband's suffering and end his daily torture sessions; in order to save the life that was more precious to her than anything else, and which my murderous rage threatened to end, the wretched wife sacrificed herself in order to give freedom and life to the father of her beloved children!

However, my spite only grew with this victory. Now, more than ever, I was aware of her contempt! I had tried to convince Maria to unite herself to my destiny forever, although I would return her husband to her. Maria, however, who had sacrificed herself to my demands to save his life, could not hide her disdain, the hatred that my disgraceful person inspired in her. Thus, finally provoked to fatigue and revulsion, I stopped, worn out from the struggle to attain the unattainable. I gave up on the insensate desires that deranged me. Nonetheless, a sinister vengeance came into my mind inspired by the powers of Evil. And I carried it out with the refinement of the most despicable atrocity that can emerge from the depths of a heart overcome with the envy, spite and jealousy that characterized the vile inferiority in which it still delights. This was the cause of the misfortune that for three centuries has persecuted my spirit like a sinister shadow of myself projected over my destiny, a misfortune for which it will take centuries to see its dolorous epilogue!

Maria had pleaded for the life and freedom of her husband and I had promised to concede them. But she had forgotten to ask me to return him intact, without mutilations! Therefore, *I had his eyes gouged out with a red-hot iron, thus barbarically disfiguring him, forever plunging him into the darkness of indescribable torment.* I never even dreamed that there was an Almighty God following from the height of his Justice my abominable act, which I archived in the folds of my conscience as if reflected in a mirror in order to accuse me and demand unappealable atonement throughout the centuries!

Oh! Still today, three centuries later, recalling such a dreadful past still plagues my soul: the vision of the miserable wife who, going to the prison at my invitation to retrieve her poor husband, saw the extent of my wickedness and did nothing but look at me in astonishment; and then, falling to her knees in tears before her blind husband, put her arms around his weakened legs,

kissing his hands with indefinable tenderness, receiving him in his battered and mutilated condition with unsurpassed love while I laughed and mocked them in scorn:

“I have granted life and liberty to your beloved husband according to our agreement, my lady... You cannot deny my generosity toward the deceitful fiancée of my past, for instead of killing him I have deposited him into your arms.”

But it was written, or I had willed it so, that Maria Magda would continue to tread the path of a harsh and stormy Calvary, irremediable for that unhappy existence: Jacinto de Ornelas y Ruiz, unable to accept this unexpected and deplorable situation, and not wanting to be a burden on his devoted wife, who was now heading the household in heroic self-sacrifice and was abandoned by friends who feared the suspicions of the same tribunal that had condemned her husband; whom I had given up on and had lost interest in possessing, wearied of the attempts to make myself loved by her; Jacinto, who had tried to save her and their children from the religious persecution that fatally reached his whole family, committed suicide two months after being freed, assisted in the sinister act by his youngest son, who in the innocence of his five years of age, gave his father the dagger he had discreetly asked for. Jacinto rested the tip of the blade on his throat while thrusting the other end against a table, thus ending his existence!

Maria Magda returned to her village with her children, desolate and forlorn. And never again, up to the time I am writing these pages, have I seen her or gotten any information about her! And more than three centuries have passed, O Lord!

\* \* \*

Repentance did not take long to initiate a powerful reaction within my abominable being. From then on, I never had a moment's peace-of-mind. I could not sleep. An indescribable state of nervous over-excitation kept me stupefied and astonished, because everywhere I went, I saw the image of Jacinto de Ornelas, tortured and blind, as if he were imprinted indelibly on my eyes!

I can even say that my desire to make amends took place at the exact moment when I handed Jacinto over to his wife and saw her kneel before him, covering his hands with kisses and tears, as if to testify, at the pinnacle of her misery, to a sublime sentiment of love and compassion that I was not yet able

to comprehend! From then on, I began avoiding carrying out my superiors' horrific orders, which slowly led me to neglect the duties entrusted to me, which in turn caused me to fall from the good graces I had enjoyed up to that point, and finally, to be imprisoned for life! Thus, from the second half of the 17th century till now, I have been expiating, either incarnated on the earth or as a spirit in the Invisible, the crimes and perversities I committed under the auspices of the Holy Office! It is a true repentance and I can assure you that it inspires my every act. Because of it I am fully willing to confront every sort of unfortunate situation, provided it will erase the shameful stain from my conscience for having used the name of the Divine Crucified One to commit every sort of evil. To narrate what my struggles have been, the tears that have burned my anguished and desolate soul, the unusual forays of tormenting remorse imposed by a guilty conscience – in sum, the whole string of dramatic events that have persecuted me ever since – would be an exhausting task, a horrifying task, to which I will not expose myself. Besides, several volumes would be required for each phase...

Only in the second half of the 19th century – and only then! – did I ready myself for the last phase of inalienable expiations: blindness!

It was imperative that I lose my sight, that I be unable to support myself, that I be deprived of honorable work and have to accept handouts, which was even more vexing and humiliating because of the immeasurable pride that I have been unable to eliminate from my rebellious character even now, although it is at least somewhat more compassionate and kind; that I sacrifice my ideals, wishes and ambitions, while at the same time seeing my intellectual and mental abilities collapse miserably along with my social position, to accept the unalterable darkness of my lifeless eyes! It was also imperative that I endure it with resignation and dignity, proving my remorse for my savage actions against my rival of the past, as well as bearing witness to my reverence and homage to that same Jesus whose memory I had offended so many times!

By now you know the weakness that struck me when I realized I was blind! I did not have the least bit of strength to endure the terrible trial in the culminating hour of my rehabilitation! Oh! The immanent Justice of the Creator, who leaves us with our own responsibilities so that we may punish or glorify ourselves by means of the fateful or brilliant entanglement and sequence of our actions in the unfolding of successive existences! The same horror Jacinto de Ornelas felt with his blindness, I myself felt three centuries

later when I found that I had lost my eyesight! The mental torment, the anguish, the insufferable humiliation, the inconsolable despair at being at the mercy of darkness, leading that poor man to commit the fatal wrong of suicide, also accumulated within my own being with such devastating fury that I copied his gesture, becoming a suicide in 1890, as he had been in the middle of the 17th century...

Everything took place as I have described it. Right, wrong or debatable, this was the way it all happened... and as such it was my duty to narrate it.

From the tessitura of this horrifying story should one understand that the Supreme Law of the Creator imposed on me the expiation of committing suicide and thus suffering its consequences?

Absolutely not!

The Supreme Law, whose principles are founded on the supremacy of Love, Fraternity, the Good and Justice, as well as Duty and all the entire luminous wake of its glorious consequences, and which at the same time prevents every possibility of disharmony and heterogeneity with its sublime vibrations, would never, ever establish as a law the supreme offense it condemns! What happened to me was, before anything else, the logical effect of a cause I myself created outside the Harmonious and Sovereign Law that rules the Universe! Out of harmony with that Law, entangling myself in complexes ever more harmful through crimes perpetrated in the sequential links of corporeal existences, I fatalistically arrived at the culminating tragedy, just as a rock rolled from the top of a mountain travels rapidly and fatalistically to the bottom of the abyss...

The truth is that it was a situation of my own creation, caused by my own wrongs and defects down through the ages!

Whether you believe me or not, dear reader, you cannot destroy the lines of truth dimly expounded in these pages: the sad story of humanity, with its burdens of misfortune, which you know so well, is right in front of you, every day displaying examples identical to those I have just finished presenting to you...

---

## The female element

Supported by the compassionate arms of Pedro and Salustio, I left the sanctuary where the sacred mystery of so many migrations had been lifted from the repositories of my own soul, as well as that of my companions, a fact which had offered us such invaluable elucidations. The effort to remember them had been exhausting, despite the powerful presence and assistance of our eminent instructors. The memories of my criminal past, the sufferings I experienced throughout the centuries, relived and examined for understanding the present, had shocked me profoundly, leaving me weakened and my sentiments and faculties traumatized. I actually felt ill as a result. My mind and sentiments had clashed in a tiring and intricate personal psychical review process. Therefore, after the session, I was taken to a medical office next to the room where those sublime, singular experiences had taken place. Two initiates were on duty because experiences such as mine were quite common, even daily among patients whose sinful mental baggage drove them to uncontrollable hallucinatory outbursts that sometimes bordered on madness.

Kindly received, the fragrance of consoling Charity was extended to my fragile and fainthearted spirit; the Legion servants applied a magnetic treatment to alleviate the urgency of the moment, followed by a very effective clinical-psychical therapy in the days that followed.

At the end of a few days, as I returned to the light of unambiguous reality, completely lucid as far as my true personality was concerned, I reflected maturely and made a single decision that would enable me to completely rehabilitate myself before my conscience and the Supreme Law that I had been infringing for so long: I would reincarnate! Yes, I would reincarnate once again! I would endure reincarnation in order to suffer the trial of the loss of my physical eyesight with serenity and dignity, the trial that I had recently failed because I did not submit to it, preferring suicide to a life

without sight; thus, I would act in a different way than I had in the past, that is, I would love my fellow beings compassionately and charitably; I would protect, aid, and serve my neighbor by utilizing every legitimate and benevolent means within my reach; and, if possible and necessary, as a result of the moral failures of my bitter past, I would go as far as the selflessness of sacrifice, building upon aspects of the true Good, which would help me purge the darkness that I had sown!

An irrepressible sadness, the deepest I had felt until then, brought even more anguish to my days, and dreadful and dominant thoughts of a remorse that incarnates cannot conceive of kept me from attaining any semblance of true happiness!

Nevertheless, the kind instructors, as well as the beloved friends and the affable and charitable female assistants, gave me and my companions in struggle and misfortune renewed strength, for the suffering of one mirrored the suffering of all the others. We were given the best advice and exemplification they had to offer as we continued to receive their lessons. This led us to undertake constructive endeavors immediately, without having to wait until after our physical-material reincarnation, something that had not even been delineated as yet.

As a matter of fact, one of our biggest incentives to conform to the situation was the Art and Morality gatherings to which we have already referred. With the passing of time, they acquired a special place because their examples, demonstrations and analyses were useful for our particular rehabilitation by pointing out the pathway to follow, the models to emulate, etc. Thus, in the city parks, whose extent we had not yet been able to ascertain, there were areas of beauty inconceivable to a human being, such was the superiority of the whole, as well as of each detail, and such were the evocative nuances that attracted one's thoughts to the utmost Harmony in Art, which involved residences in particular, dwellings that surpassed everything that architecture, as well as decorative art, could ever imagine as the noblest and most beautiful in terms of classical examples on the earth; picturesque and delightful miniatures of cities or villages, with graceful lakes bordered with fragrant, flowery lanes; temples devoted to the cultivation of the Belles Lettres, as well as the Arts in general, especially Music and Poetry. These reached mind-boggling proportions unimaginable to any earthly thinker, as in the case of Frederic Chopin, whom we had the pleasure of seeing transfigure the magic of sounds into an enchanting poetic vocabulary translated into a



sequence of enrapturing visions that surpassed our ideas of Beauty, while unexpected sentiments brought tears to our eyes, thus aiding in the awakening of the spiritual faculties that lay dormant in the folds of our being! One could go so far as to say that Music and Poetry were the arts preferred by the initiates – if it was possible to conceive of such predilections in minds such as theirs, educated according to the most advanced principles of the Ideal we were able to imagine! This even extended to exact reproductions of panoramas that recalled the Messianic pilgrimage, suggestive and alluring scenes of the first sounds of the immortal voice that descended from the Celestial Regions for the consolation of sufferers and the liberation of the afflicted! These visions were presented in a sublime quintessential state, beautifully shaped to the point of inspiring reverence due to their fluidic construction under the command of wills trained in the magnanimous concepts of Love and the Good!

Thus, we had the most gratifying experience of walking beside the Lake of Gennesaret, and of visiting other biblical locations, all witnesses of the divine ministry of the Lord. These reproductions were so infused with reality that it felt as if the Divine Friend had just left, since we still received the mental repercussions of the sweet whispering of his voice, emitting the last sounds still vibrating in the air of the unforgettable melody that resonated in the hearts of the disinherited two thousand years ago:

*“Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls...”*

In the presence of such august expressions of love and veneration for the Master, granted by the noble entities in charge of the beauty of our borough, I often entered a state of profound and tender meditation as painful tears of repentance rolled down my face as I recalled the year 33 A.D. I could see the Messiah, now venerated in my heart, with the cross on his shoulder, patient, humble, resigned, climbing the hill towards Calvary while I shouted diabolically, demanding the haste of his death!

However, upon entering any of those places, one could see the emblem of the Legion with the name of the female servants that imagined and materialized them, as it must be conveyed that all this was carried out by the female minds of the educational services of our Institute.

At each daily gathering, visitors, and in particular, patients, were offered wonderful hours of sublime teachings, during which we could see moving examples of selflessness, dedication to others, humility and patience, as well as heroism and moral valor in the face of adversity, all of which we received as a generous incentive for our progress. This learning experience, granted by a breathtaking elucidation extracted from the history of Humanity itself, with its innumerable struggles and sufferings, victories and rehabilitations, was ministered to us – as we were told – by our own masters and mentors or by the visiting caravans that came to us with the fraternal purpose of contributing to our consolation and progress. Many of the personal dramas lived by the female Guardians, as well as by other well-known individuals of our Colony – such as Ramiro de Guzman and the two Canalejas physicians – were presented to us as both exemplification and warning, many of them as models worthy of being followed. These stories were nothing more than the narration of the struggles they sustained on their pathway of progress, the sacrifices they endured during reincarnation, or their tireless work in the spirit world. Afterwards, we were invited to give our opinion, appraisal, and moral and artistic comments... What we observed, among many other important things for our readjustment in the area of Morality, was the surprising fact that human beings are surrounded by the most wonderful expressions of an Art superior to all others: the glorious Art of learning to develop the spiritual qualities that are latent in the depths of their soul!

The day finally came when we were told that it was time for our kind Guardians to present the fruits of their luminous meditations, of their noble sensibility to the loftier ideals. Of course, we were overcome with excitement. The expectation kept us on edge, and it was with uncontainable joy that on the scheduled day we headed for the places created by those kind friends, whose fraternal dedication always kept alive in us the flame of the sacred love of Family, the desire for a home, and of our own self-respect.

Rita de Cassia was a poet. Her sensitive posture as a Christian believer and her wonderful character strengthened in the daily fervor of acts of love and dedication to others – whether in the spirit society she lived in or in the tasks she was responsible for on the earthly planes – were sustained by true inspiration. She herself had come to take us to her residence, which we would be visiting for the first time. It was a lovely sanctuary structured according to the dominance and moving suggestions of her deep filial piety, for she had imagined it by means of her sacred and resigned longing for those who had been her parents on the earth. She had loved them deeply and was the model

of a tender, appreciative, respectful and loving daughter! Hence, she shaped her home in Hope City in the likeness – albeit more beautiful – of her paternal home, under whose care she had lived her last short planetary existence in Portugal, ending in the year 1790...

The sun was slowly setting. Soft tonalities painted the melancholy atmosphere of the University Sector with multicolored effects, as if it were penetrated with resplendent and regenerating fluids that, making it more beautiful and salutary, led all minds sheltered there to tender vibrations, mobilizing all hearts for loftier objectives.

Rita entertained only a few invitees that evening. Her wards, a few of her closer friends, and the initiate masters, whose presence was indispensable – since she too was still learning in her contact with the lucid minds that were educating our whole group – were the only ones present. We were happy that these included the two Canalejas doctors, Joel Steel, who seemed to receive Rita's most devoted fraternal affection, and Ramiro de Guzman.

With everybody assembled, the young poet led us to a serene corner of her garden, where the effect of the last rays of the sun blended with the fluids of the ambient to produce an enrapturing hue, something that to us, poorly acquainted as we were with the fascinating manifestations common to the spirit world, seemed like a piece of heaven transported there as an enchanting and consoling blessing. We entered an enclosure, a veritable dream world, whose graciousness and sweet beauty attested to the kindness of its creator, a young woman whose mind, although highly enlightened, took joy in preserving the delicate sensibility of a 15-year-old girl. It was a small outdoor space, garlanded with climbing roses whose delicate aroma delighted us, eliciting the sense of Beauty and the desire for the best. Artistic, original chairs were arranged in a semi-circle. They seemed to be made of the foliage of flowery shrubs and gracefully adorned the premises as if waiting for angels or fairies for a select gathering, while the soft blue sky above let the distant light of planets and multi-colored suns stream in with the resplendent harmony of their celestial beauty.

A harp, which seemed built with striking, translucent, scintillating golden essences, was standing next to a small table of identical construction, similar to an artistic filigree jewel. A book was on top of the table – a large album – a fluidic delight, luminous like a small blue star, immediately catching the attention of all present.

Rita sat at the table after her guests made themselves comfortable on the chairs, the first row of which was occupied by us, her immediate wards. She opened the book. It held the latest collection of her poetic compositions, unblemished creations of her mind turned to superior ideals in the fields of the noble and meritorious art of poem writing. The resplendent characters, as if activated by a beneficent and indefinable magnetism, sparkled as if kissed by the light of the distant stars that participated with us in the harmony of the sunset.

The young woman asked Ramiro de Guzman to play the harp, to which he kindly agreed. Classical sounds of a soft melody wafted through the flowery, fragrant space, giving the strange impression, however, that we were listening to a whole orchestra, an impression supported only by the suggestions offered by the divine instrument.

Then, in the harmonious silence of the lovely University Sector, under the flowery canopy of the scintillating roses and the luminous blessings of the stars, Rita began reciting her poems. And we, her wards, who had just become familiar with our surroundings, despite having received beautiful lessons on Morality, Philosophy, and Science, were further gifted with new visions of indescribable literary beauty inconceivable to our minds till then! Rita was reading from her book, but her exceptional delivery, her more than wonderful recitation – truly divine! – artistically voiced with vibrations whose enrapturing sweetness surpassed all possibility of being described in human language, elicited enchantment and unimaginable emotions as Ramiro completed the fabulous moment with the sounds of lofty and pure music!

As a spirit already capable of the pathways of progress, Rita de Cassia de Forjaz Frazao, whose name itself was sheer poetry, was one of the few guardians who knew how to create scenes from thoughts, coordinate them and give them life, shaping them with moral and pedagogical features, accomplishing in the same mental endeavor the beauty of Art, the morality of the Law, and the Utility of the lesson that aims to indicate to the individual his or her sacred duty to serve the cause of the Truth with the mental and intellectual gifts that he or she possesses! Our group of delinquents, all ten of us, had cultivated the Belles Letters while incarnate. None of us, however, had been able to ennoble the magnanimous gift conferred by the continuous work of Thought, applying it in regenerating service on behalf of our readers. We had served, if at all, our own purse, our own vanity and pride. We were pleased to regard ourselves as privileged, holders of a special position apart

from the rest of humanity. But actually, we only produced banalities slated to be forgotten, or we infected with erroneous theories the minds of impressionable readers who took us seriously but who were as frivolous as we were.

But now, beyond the grave, a 15-year-old presented us with the model of the moralized intellectual, teaching us to serve the noble cause of our own redemption, as well as that of others, while cultivating things of Beauty and Enjoyment, thus offering us a useful lesson that resounded deeply in our souls and made us remember with shame and confusion the waste of our intellectual talents.

As the charming poet read her poetry from the star-like book, waves of light emerged from her pure mind. The waves touched every corner of the rose-decorated area, enveloping it in their sweet vibrations, penetrating everything with their suggestive power. The scenes described in her poems materialized around us, establishing life and movement, and giving us the ineffable illusion that we were actually present in all the scenes and passages, and were following like marvelous accomplices the elegies or epics, the sweet romances of love magnificently described in the most beautiful and perfect poems we had ever heard! The poetic production venerated on the earth as an everlasting patrimony, a legacy of the geniuses that lived on it, would give only a pale idea of what we experienced on that comforting evening in Hope City! The poems mostly paid homage to Nature, that of the earth and the spirit world, and also that of other inhabited planets she had closely studied, blessing or glorifying in sweet prayers the work of the Divine Wisdom, always turning around luminous expressions of Beauty and Perfection!

Here, the gorgeous seas and oceans, aptly portrayed to our vision as she recited the poem attesting to their magnificent beauty; on the next page, triumphant odes to the high and mighty mountains, eternal monuments of Nature to the glory of Creation, reservoirs of inestimable riches, sacred repositories where the Omnipotent hid treasures until humankind on its own laudably takes possession of them as heirs of the divine bequeathal! Next, the exuberance of the jungles, unknown worlds before which normal individuals are intimidated and recoil, whereas idealists are moved and reiterate their reverence for God. The jungles! Just like the ocean, a lush and profuse sanctuary, in whose bosom innumerable creatures begin the multi-millenary cycle of ascension towards the pinnacles of Being, creatures, like the entire Creation, baptized in the vivifying blessings of the Eternal One, who guides

them with the supreme perfection of his Laws! But that was not all. Later, on another page elegies blossomed, portraying the human pilgrimage in search of redemption. Emotional and alluring stories of friends of the poet, who have trod their pathways of suffering in order to reach joyful planes on the spiritual ladder!...

Following her poetic rapture, our minds vibrated in tandem with hers and we felt the same emotions, which penetrated our spiritual fibers like balsams, calling a truce for our constant sense of personal deficiency that made us feel so small. We felt as if we were present through her thought in all that poetic sublimity: hovering over the vast oceans, climbing majestic mountains in order to glimpse enrapturing horizons; flying towards starlit spaces, plunging into the iridescent ether in the ecstasy of contemplating the march of the heavenly bodies; and co-participating in the dramas and stories narrated so eloquently, with the highest and most sublime expressions that only true poetry would be able to lead us to!

Actually, the themes presented were not new to us.

She spoke of matters we were already familiar with, but that was precisely why we could absorb with such captivation the great Beauty that radiated from all of it. Her superb analyses revealed facets unknown to our perceptions, bringing an exciting new aspect to our highly materialistic spirits, when what was before our eyes right now was the lofty manner in which we could, quite literarily, access the divine plane! When she had finished her reading and the final chords of the harp had faded away, all of us, who had lost the habit of smiling, now did so with a delightful sense of comfort and happiness. Then she said to her guests:

“As you have seen, my dear friends, I have sought to bring the idea of the divine into my humble compositions. As a caretaker of the progress of moral-religious sentiments in your hearts, I invited you here to remind you that, in your literary essays while on the earth, you forgot to laud the beneficent lessons regarding the magnificence that the Universe offers to the authentic thinker... God revealed himself right before your eyes in the unmistakable splendor of Nature! You could have glorified him by making your productions a praise of the Truth, thereby helping others less knowledgeable than you to also find the Divine Thought scattered throughout the glorious history of Creation!... But you preferred destructive negativism, insipid forms and analyses, purely human concepts that were filled with prejudice and slated to be forgotten, because they were not capable of

edifying you or preparing you for any sort of victory!... What I have presented to you this evening was the most elevated and sublime literary expression your minds can conceive of. However, be aware that for us it is but the first step, a simple ABC of artistic knowledge, since I am only a humble and still faltering student of the Universal Science.”

\* \* \*

We will not conclude this exposition without telling the reader about what was happening in the Women’s Sectors. So far we have only focused on suicides involving men. However, I must say that I have very little to add to what has been described so far. And I am going to do this only to describe certain details pertaining to instruction and reeducation, details that are a bit different for spirits who have to reincarnate in a female body in order to re-attempt failed efforts or to repair grave wrongs that were dishonorable both to the female gender and the spirit who committed them.

As spirits, all creatures have the same degree of responsibility regarding what they do within or outside the provisions of the Sovereign Law that rules everything. This means that our sisters, women who succumb to the desperation of suicide, are subject to the same consequences resulting from the sinister cause they created with an act of their own will. The effects of this cause have already been extensively discussed. Thus, women are as responsible for their actions, thoughts and mental states as men are. From this we can conclude that their moral baggage, whether good or bad, will greatly influence the state they find themselves in due to their suicide, a state that is calamitous enough by itself and therefore worthy of being avoided by being morally courageous in the face of life’s struggles, and to be resigned in the face of the inevitable. In the course of our practical lessons, the eminent Souria-Omar, an extraordinary spirit whose reincarnations had entailed every sociological area – something that had given him vast sociological knowledge about uncommon experiences in the psychological field – once took us to see what went on inside the premises where our sisters in misfortune lived, those poor women who abandoned their noble role as recipients of sublimated virtues and let themselves be dragged down into the same abysses of chaotic passions that had swallowed us men. You will recall that upon our arrival from the Sinister Valley, while still in Security and while being registered as wards of the Legion of the Servants of Mary, we were separated from the women due to the necessity of the males being taken to premises proper for their particular recuperation. Hence, the men and women were making

spiritual adjustments in different areas, but structured according to identical norms and under the wardship of the same institution.

We never mingled with the female suicides. However, once we entered the University Sector, we began coming into contact with them because many female suicides were taking the same courses as we were, and just like us, they were residing there until it was time for them to reincarnate. Other than that, they were completely separated from us.

The clear, fresh morning brought golden-bluish tones to the immense avenues of Hope City, which we noticed to be uncommonly busy for that time of day. A large group of students were departing with their mentors on an instructional visit to the Women's Sector, located at the opposite end of the Colony. We were immensely pleased, comforted by the ineffable vibrations of the select group that was honoring us with their watch-care, including Anibal de Silas, Epaminondas de Vigo, and others.

Exactly ten years had passed since our arrival in Hope City. We no longer plodded along on the ground or counted on the help of a vehicle for transport. We had progressed! We had become less dense, less subject to earth's gravity. We had learned to volitate, to travel through space, moving by an impulse of our will, especially on the grounds of the Colony, where everything seemed to be easier, just as if it were our paternal home. This is the normal way that spirits move about, but our state as reprobates had kept us from doing so for a long time.

In order to reach the Women's Sector, we started out from the border between Security and the Hospital Sector. That was where the signs on the magnificent divisionary avenue indicated the way to the many sectors of the solitary Correctional Colony of the intermediate spirit world.

As we entered the Women's Hospital Sector, it felt like we were back in our own, because the two were so similar! The departments were the same, such as the Isolation and Mental Wards; the characteristics of the moral and mental state of the sisters were identical, and the departments were designed in the same manner! However, while the supervision of the departments was the same – Teocrito as the general director of the hospitals, Brother Joao as the supervisor of the Mental Ward, Father Miguel de Santarem as the head of Isolation, and Father Anselmo with an auxiliary of the Tower – the internal workers, such as the nurses, guardians, guards, etc., were all unfamiliar. Those posts were filled by women whose merits and virtues were fully equal



to those of the men in the Men's Sector. In fact, in the altruistic desire to instruct, console, accompany, care for, and direct the activities of that sector, we encountered female figures so respectable and virtuous that I am truly moved as I remember them and try to portray them in these pages. From the first moment, as well as from the subsequent conclusions from what we observed, a great truth was made clear to me, shocking me to tears, while within me the building of a foundation of true respect for women had begun. I began to regard them with much more consideration and a larger amount of goodwill. The reality of the matter is that the spirit that reincarnates numerous times to perform female tasks and missions acquires solid and redemptive virtues more quickly and with greater efficiency, thus elevating itself morally in less time! So, I must acknowledge the fact that the workers in the women's sector, the aids to the supervising initiates, had loftier moral and spiritual qualities than both Canalejas doctors, Joel Steel, Brother Ambrosio, etc., to whom we owed so much for their tireless care. The clinical staff, composed of initiate scientists, as we know, was the only representative of male activities performing duties there. Moreover, they were very secretive and were seen only in the few instances when they were doing their work. They were also as much of an enigma to the female patients as they were to us. We never learned their names. We never even heard the sound of their voices! But how much we owed them! How many celestial blessings they had attracted to alleviate our inner pain, thanks to their psychical-magnetic power! With how much devotion they dedicated themselves to the cause of our readjustment, easing our mental over-excitement with the influx of powerful fluidic balsams, mitigating the burning of the fierce repercussions that for so many years hounded our perispirits stricken by the shock of our suicide!

Smiling, Brother Teocrito welcomed us at Sector headquarters, opening the doors of the hospitals to our visitation. We recalled that, while under his care, we had been visited many times by groups like ours, and we now smiled, understanding what it meant back then...

There was an assistant director, who was in charge of transmitting the orders of the initiates to the workers who carried out noble and sanctifying tasks under their direction. Her name was Hortensia de Queluz, and she appeared to be about thirty years old. She had a beautiful face, attesting to the serenity of her thoughts turned towards the Good, and the harmonious vibrations of a mind strengthened by incorruptible directives. She kindly offered to accompany us, and as we walked softly down the long avenues covered in the familiar white shroud – which, as in our old hospital sector,

characterized the very dense astral zones – she spoke, revealing her deep knowledge of the female nature:

“First, according to orders from your masters, I will take you to one of the most tragic departments of our Institute. You will see the inconceivable being reflected in startling effects regarding our unfortunate sisters... Before your mentors begin to explain things, it would be best to remember, my dear brothers, that most women, unfortunately, have not yet grasped the true purpose for having reincarnated as women, their role in the societies they are called to serve as much as men are! Accustomed to being treated and deemed inferior down through the centuries, women wound up accepting being inferior and didn't have the courage to lift themselves virtuously from their shame... to the point that even nowadays, as much as in the past, they limit themselves to being subservient to men, disbelieving the redemptive ideals and not making themselves capable of fulfilling the intent of the Creator. They belittle themselves even more when, thinking they are putting themselves on a par with men, they imitate men's actions with dishonorable passions and acts. After all, if such passions and acts tarnish men's behavior, for women they become a labyrinth of demerits before the Sovereign Law. This has given rise to the amount of misfortune that has been overburdening women, and which would certainly be insolvable if Divine Providence had not established the necessary correctives through its laws, as merciful as they are wise. These correctives are always meant for the just and speedy rehabilitation of women in the area of Spiritual Morality!... But see for yourselves... Your instructors will know what to offer you for today's lesson.”

We arrived at the Mental Ward, where a nun received us. Her name was Vicencia de Guzman, the sister of our friend from Security.

After the fraternal greetings and introductions, Hortensia left us in the care of Sister Vicencia, whom she authorized to take us to the areas that were normally closed to visitation. In our case, they were included on our learning schedule. Hortensia left immediately. Kind and gentle, the young nun, who was responsible for the ward in the absence of Brother Joao, took us to a large picturesque and pleasant patio. From there we could see numerous, barred windows of unseen, individual cells where the spirits of female suicides struggled, stricken by the worst abominable sort of derangement I had ever observed during my long stay beyond the grave. Desperate screams, horrific groans infused the place with tragic waves, rendering it repulsive and

foreboding, like a true insane asylum! Despite the time that had passed since we first arrived at the Colony, we still remembered the Sinister Valley and were profoundly surprised to hear right here the horrendous chorus that was usual for that place of darkness. We did not ask any questions, however, because we were certain that everything would be explained in due time.

Indeed, as if grasping our interest, the nun herself clarified matters as she had us approach the windows to examine the inside of the cells. It was impossible to enter them in any other way.

“These are the suicides that bear the highest degree of responsibility for their act, and therefore have a larger amount of expiation in the future. They will have to endure atrocious situations that will require centuries to alter and remedy completely. These unfortunate women, my dear brothers, let themselves be enslaved by sinister complexes that unfolded in sequences that were so disastrous that mentally it is as if they were struggling like those who, sinking in quicksand, just go deeper in their attempt to get out... A vestige of those horrific complexes is the shameful motive that pulled them away from their earthly existence before the time determined by the action of the law of nature... Moreover, many of them broke the laws of marriage, betraying the morality of their commitment, forgetting that when they reincarnated they had promised the Law and their Guardians that they would serve as faithful caretakers of the sacred institution of Family, educating their children in the laws of Duty and Justice, seeking to make them citizens useful to Homeland and Humanity, and thus the Divine Cause and the Law of God! With such offenses weighing on their conscience before the Supreme Law, they profaned not only the sacred ties of Matrimony but the laws of Creation, refusing the duties of Motherhood and handing themselves over to earthly passions and vices, disregarding the fulfillment of their sacred obligations, dominated by the deadly vanities proper to the degrading social spheres, treading the paths of moral baseness! In order to avoid the sublime and meritorious commitment of Motherhood, they expelled from their own wombs the gestating bodies meant to be the temporary dwelling of poor spirits that had commitments to fulfill at their side and in the same family; spirits that urgently needed to be reborn from them in order to progress in their social and familial circles. Moreover, they committed this crime many times in disregard of the blessed efforts of devoted workers of the Lord’s Vineyard in the spirit world, who had prepared the sublime event of the spirit’s reincarnation with due care so that the success of the endeavor would compensate for the work involved in it. And what is even more serious, after

the reincarnating spirit was already connected to its new developing body, which means to say, conscious of what they were doing, they committed abominable infanticides! What happens is that after so many and such severe wrongs in the light of Reason, Conscience, Duty and Morality, as well as the modesty appropriate to the female character, they left their physical bodies before they were supposed to, thus dying to the physical-material world via a shameful offense against the sacred rights of Nature. Others, after a demeaning struggle, in which, at the cost of criminal demerits, they extinguished in themselves the sublime founts of reproducibility – appropriate for the human condition – they became subject to a natural string of lamentable infirmities such as tuberculosis, cancer, repulsive infections, etc., which caused them to discarnate before they should have. Hence, in addition to their physical body, they also harmed their spiritual future and peace of conscience, as well as their physical-astral body – the perispirit – with degrading stigmas, as you can see for yourselves... Moreover, they are surrounded by vibrational waves that are so dense and disharmonious that they have deformed their perispirit completely, reducing it to a vile expression of their own minds.”

We got closer, fearful of what we would see, while Ramiro’s sister added:

“They may be from very different social classes, but here they are all equals due to their identical moral and mental inferiority! The largest contingent, however, is from the upper classes. Their situations are so dire that it will take two or three centuries, maybe even more, to resolve them... because unfortunately, dear brothers, I must tell you that, in order to free themselves in less time from the claws of so much wrongdoing, some of them will undergo the terrible necessity of having to live for a while on worlds that are even less evolved than the earth. It is not without consequence that human beings dare to impede the progress of the divine designs. The Supreme Law governs such ignominious experiences!”

She motioned for us to take a look inside the cells. We did so and recoiled immediately in an involuntary gasp of horror.

Vicencia stepped aside as Souria-Omar approached, urging us to maintain a dignified and respectful attitude.

We looked in through the windows again, and while the instructor explained the scientific aspect of our practical examination, we contemplated

the tragic figures of these women that had committed both infanticide and suicide.

Oh! God of all Mercies! How could such monstrosities exist in the sacred light of the Universe that you created so that humankind would glorify itself in it, progressing in Love, Virtue and Wisdom under its wings until attaining your image and likeness?... What repugnant and abominable forms were these that appeared before our fear-filled eyes, forms that were meant to represent the first sentences in the majestic book of Life?... How could women, graceful and beautiful beings endowed with incontestable charm and attractiveness, have belittled themselves morally to such a deplorable extent?!... What were we looking at, really?... Women?! Or primitive monsters, perhaps?...

No! We were looking at – yes, that is right! – spirits who had defrauded the most sublime and revered law of the Creator, the law of reproduction of the species for the superb purpose of Evolution! The divine law of procreation!

Dark disheveled figures covered in rags, tragic examples of Ruin, fought with a thousand persecuting shadows surrounding them in the overcrowded the cells. All over their bodies, darkened by their mental impurities, we noticed what looked like wounds that bore singular marks as if imprinted in fire or blood! At a sign from our instructor, we focused our attention to examine them more closely. They were the mental replica of the human embryos that would have developed in the sacred maternal womb if they had not been expelled from it by an act of pure irreverence toward both Nature and the Divine Creator. Their images had remained reflected in the perispirit of the unfaithful mother as the mental product of a crime committed against a defenseless being deserving of all support and the utmost dedication!

Many of those criminal entities were disfigured by three, five, ten small images, which greatly altered their vibrations, completely unbalancing their mental state. We saw deplorable scenes, faithful creations by minds that had only fed themselves on the harmful idleness of thought; lustful memories, overwhelming proof of conduct contrary to Morality, populated the horrific cells, transforming them into the dwelling of an execrable and deranged collectivity! The disgraced women thrashed about without respite, trying to repel the macabre visions originating in their own minds! The tiny beings that they had expelled from their wombs hovered around them, brought forth from repercussions within the perispirit via the vibrational waves of the mind, to be

reflected there through the magnificent work of the conscience, thus punishing the wrongdoers in the sequence of the natural laws that they themselves activated by committing the infraction! These little beings were like flies buzzing all around the wretched figures, disorienting them to complete madness! Moreover, some of them were harassed by the actual spirits that were to have inhabited the expelled bodies; entities that had not forgiven the criminal act that had resulted in harming their own urgent spiritual needs. As a consequence, they had begun persecuting them with hatred and revolt, their own perispirits attuned to them via the magnetic ties natural to the processes of physical rebirth. They remained united still, as if the fetal gestation process, initiated in the earthly human phase but interrupted by infanticide, continued beyond the grave! The women resembled unbelievable monsters, with no expression in the human language capable of describing their repulsiveness! Our instructor explained that they would reincarnate to expiate their deadly, calamitous wrongs. They would be born irremediably insane in an attempt to correct their vibrational disharmony – something that could not be accomplished in the spirit world. They would be repulsive monsters, deformed, sick, whose level of abnormality would make people doubt the Wisdom of an Omnipotent God, when, on the contrary, they would be witnessing a superlative illustration of his Sublime Wisdom! Others would go into *an outer darkness, where they would weep and gnash their teeth* until they freed themselves from the worst wrong the spirit of a woman can commit against her Father and Creator! The *outer darkness*, however, is nothing more than a horrific stay on planetary dwellings more primitive than the earth, a shameful exile for those who did not deserve to live among the civilized societies of a planet that is striving to evolve on the pathway of progress towards Fraternity and Morality!

Horrified and astonished by what we saw and everything the instructor explained to us, we realized that the cases in the women's Mental Ward were profoundly more troubling and grave than those in the men's, because the tragic consequences for the former far surpassed those of the latter!

We were highly troubled in the face of such misery, which, guilty as we ourselves were, we could never have conceived of! We would have preferred the tender words of Anibal filled with the soft rapture of the Gospel and the enchanting visions of the Messianic ministry... But since we had proclaimed our intent to progress, we had to learn, and everything we were seeing would add to the reeducation experiences that would enrich our minds and hearts!

One of the students voiced the questions that hovered in the minds of all the others:

“I don’t recall seeing these women in the Sinister Valley... Wouldn’t such a place be more appropriate for their condition?”

“Do you think that all moral delinquents are obliged by necessity to inhabit just one circumscribed region of the spirit world?” replied our mentor. “Aren’t you aware of the fact that they can also inhabit earth’s lower social tiers, in contact with the vile circles with which they were attuned even before their discarnation?... Wouldn’t their hell, the fire that scorches their conscience, blaze in the furnaces of remorse that they themselves have lit in their own minds?”

“No, these women did not dwell in the Sinister Valley. Spirit suicides that gravitate to the Valley already exhibit something that would imply an affinity for normal progress... These poor women, however, were completely attuned to darkness, their consciences compromised by tremendous wrongdoing. And they were all accompanied for a long time by a sinister cortege of evil entities, whose suggestions they linked themselves to through identical mental ties. When they discarnated, they were enveloped by malefic vibrational waves in tune with their own. They have remained like that till now and will be so in the future until bitter expiations, existences abundant in serving the true Good, undo the shackles that have enslaved them to evil, expunging from their conscience all the sinister causes that disfigure them at the moment... In spite of their deplorable state, they are actually in a better condition than they used to be... At least they are under the watch-care of faithful friends of the Good and sheltered in a safe place where they will no longer be disturbed by their odious accomplices in evil, or the enemies that followed them for such a long time, like vultures sniffing out rotting flesh.

“Many of these women discarnated only to be seized by the components of the perverse phalanx to which they were attuned through their criminal acts. They were then imprisoned in horrific places in the spirit world and even on the earth, where they were subjected to mistreatment and indescribable, inconceivable humiliation! There are cases where the spirits who should have reincarnated through them, but who were expelled, thereby incurring a load of harm and suffering, joined the wicked beings that surrounded these women in order to punish them with acts of execrable vengeance. Other women, succumbing to old tendencies, remained for a long time in dens of degradation and immorality in the midst of human society, animalized and

mentally shackled to vile instincts. And still others, desperate and evil, approached incarnate women who gave them access, and suggested they do things identical to the ones that had debased them, thus weaving a perfectly diabolical deed inspired by the most demeaning manifestations of jealousy and envy for no longer having a physical body! To tell you about the exhausting efforts of workers in the External Relations Department and other volunteers to free them from the claws of such supreme degradation would be superfluous at this time because you already have some idea about them due to your own collaboration in the services of Security, which, as you know, is part of your learning experience.

They will reincarnate exactly as they are now, and all the measures have been taken for their return to a physical body... Since they are in no condition to choose anything for themselves, the Law has imposed on them their renewal in a material body to reach a better situation, in accordance with their level of responsibility; that is, the demerit accumulated by their wrongs forces them to endure terrible expiatory reincarnations, which means to say that, while they were committing wrongs in the past, they were also laying out for themselves an avoidable future of darkness, tears and expiation! Their complexes cannot be solved in the spirit world, and because they are so urgently in need of vibrational improvement, they will reincarnate in any of the family circles on the earth that also have dolorous atonements to undergo, or ones that are sufficiently Christian and selfless to charitably receive them for the love of God... something that will not be easy at all.”

The remaining quarters of the Mental Ward, as well as the branches of the Isolation Ward and the Tower, resembled those already expounded in this book, so I will not have to describe them. However, everything proved a great and resplendent truth to us: spiritually, woman is as responsible as man before the Great Law, for rather than being merely a woman, she is, above all, a spirit that must attune itself to the Good, Justice and the Light, willingly agreeing to perform the noble and sanctifying tasks that are entrusted to her by the law of the Creator if she does not want to incur the same demerits and debts!

However, we did discover one department in the Women’s Sector that did not exist in the premises occupied by men. We shall describe it. It was the Young Women’s Boarding School – as the kind guardians called it – sort of a model school for young suicides who had succumbed to the sinister act due or not due to sentimental imbalances, broken hearts, etc. The Hospital complex



and Hope City both had such a school. This explained why they had not lived together with all the other women from the very beginning of their stay in the Colony. During their residence in the hospital sector, they underwent a strict psychical treatment under the care of the same devoted physicians who assisted us. Those whose vibrational state improved enough for them to enroll in the reeducation courses of the University Sector were supervised by virtuous female spirits, who endeavored to prepare them for their return to the trials of the earth as a result of their failed duties and tasks because of the grave infraction of their suicide. According to what was explained to us, their initiation was therefore carried out under the guidance of the same masters that assisted us, as well as the learning realized in the Colony's departments of internal and external services. Finally, they attended a Women's Academy, where they had to learn the rightful role women are called to fulfill in earthly society, that is, the role of the virtuous and Christian woman, since it had been precisely this deficiency that had been the motive for the impulses that resulted in their fearsome infraction! However, not one contingent from the Mental Ward ever attended this Academy, and very few spirits were ever released from the Isolation Ward to enroll in those magnificent courses. Such groups were usually small, and just like us men, they came from Hospital Headquarters. But most of the participants for the various courses of the University Sector always came from the Young Women's Boarding School.

---

## Final entries

I have been in the astral world for fifty-two years. Having entered it through the violent act of a suicide, I still have not found the true happiness and inner peace that are the imperishable benefits of the righteous and those obedient to the Divine Law. All this long time, I have intentionally postponed the sacred duty of reincarnating in the armor of a new body on the physical-material plane, something that has made my days overly distressing. I have been putting it off in order to continue to absorb from my noble instructors the education I will need to protect me sufficiently once I am back in a physical body and to ensure my victory in the great struggles I will have to face on the road to my moral-spiritual rehabilitation.

I have learned quite a lot during my half-century stay in this Correctional Colony, which has sheltered me on days when the tears pouring from my soul were the most ardent, when the daggers piercing my hesitating heart were the most dolorous, and the disappointments that assailed my spirit were the most atrocious and discouraging within the walls of the grave I dug for myself with the insane act of suicide! But if I have learned a few things that I did not know before, and which have been relevant for my rehabilitation, I have also suffered and wept a lot, stooped over due to the responsibility for what I did! Even though I have enjoyed the comforting presence of so many devoted friends, and of so many caring mentors looking after the progress of their wards, I still shed bitter tears of discouragement, that overpowering and wicked hydra attempting to block my steps on the pathway I have traced out for myself!

But I have learned to revere the idea of God, which has been a powerful support in my struggle with myself. I have learned to converse with the Beloved Master on the luminous and consoling wings of pure and fruitful prayer! I have toiled every day for forty years to learn sublime lessons from

virtuous and wise masters in order to manifest, from the unknown depths of my being, the lovely image of Humility to combat the pernicious and malefic figure of Pride, which for so many centuries has held me in the nettles of evil, immersed in the inferiority of animality! Under the charitable influence of the Servants of Mary, I have also begun to write out the first letters of the divine alphabet of Love, and have collaborated with them in services of aid and assistance to others, making myself a better person by means of endeavors of dedication to those who suffer in a way I never thought possible! I have struggled for the Good, guided by those noble spirits, and I have extended my activities to fields of work accessible to my humble capabilities, both in the spirit world and on the material plane, where I have been allowed to contribute to enabling serenity to return to the hearts of mothers, and a smile to return to the graceful faces of infants after days and nights of unbearable suffering, during which fever, coughing or bronchitis had stricken them. Even to the hearts of the young, discouraged in the face of adversity, I have been able to bring the blessed light of Hope that nowadays guides my own steps, keeping them from taking the dangerous and treacherous road of dismay that would have led them to the same abyss I fell into! For forty years, I have worked devotedly at the side of my beloved Guardians! I have served not only the Good by adopting fraternal conduct, but the Beautiful by learning from remarkable artists and “virtuosos” to pay homage to Truth and to respect the Law, giving to Art the best and most dignified elements that I have been able to extract from the sincere depths of my soul.

However, I have never felt completely content and at peace with myself! There is a void in my being that cannot be filled until I undertake renewal in a physical body, until I fulfill the duty that I failed at in my last earthly pilgrimage, cut short by suicide! The dolorous memory of Jacinto de Ornelas y Ruiz, the man whom I disgraced with permanent blindness in a show of spite and jealousy, remains imprinted on my mind, imposing itself on the sensitive fibers of my being as the tragic stigma of an inconsolable Remorse, demanding from me an identical penalty in my future – the same blindness – because I annulled the supreme trial of becoming blind the first time Providence offered it to me. I chose suicide instead, thinking I could free myself from it. Consequently, I still carry that debt on my conscience!

I should have reincarnated a long time ago. Everything that I needed to learn in the Academies of Hope City was generously offered to me by the Colony’s magnanimous directors. They did not erect barriers to any of the studies I wished to undergo. I even learned advanced elements of psychical

medicine from our masters in the Science classes and in the tasks at the infirmaries of the Mary of Nazareth Hospital, where I have been serving for the last twelve years, replacing Joel, who departed for new earthly experiences in the trials he owed to the Law as a suicide himself. This position will enable me to become a “healing medium” when I once more inhabit the earth, where so many and such profound instances of suffering afflict Humanity due to its constant wrongdoing!

What I was lacking, however, was the knowledge of the fraternal language of the future, that invaluable instrument for Humanity that will envelop it in the unifying embrace of races and peoples brought together for the conquest of the same ideal: progress, harmony and a civilization illuminated by Love! That course was an elective, as were all the others we chose. But that one was particularly recommended by the initiates. They gave the course great importance, because that language, Esperanto, whose symbolic name recalls the name of our University Sector, that is “Hope,” will resolve problems even in the spirit world, allowing higher order spirits to communicate efficiently and brilliantly through literary and scientific works that the earth will receive from the spirit world in the near future. They will use mediums that have learned this language in order to serve the imperatives of the mission they will carry out in the name of Christ, for the love of the Truth and for the redemption of humankind.

Thus, it was highly important for my interests in general, and for my spiritual interests in particular, to acquire this new knowledge in the spirit world, that is, Esperanto. Upon reincarnating, I would take it with me in the luminous fibers of my perispiritual brain, and at the right time I would have the intuition to re-learn it. As a matter of fact, I was told that I would be a medium in my future existence, and I made the commitment to help spread the celestial truths, despite the phantom of blindness that has positioned itself, waiting for me on the paths of the future. I pondered the appropriateness of a universal language between humans and spirits, and how much I, as a medium, would be able to produce on behalf of the cause of Fraternity – the same cause as Christ’s – if my intellect was in possession of such a treasure! Therefore, as soon as I got permission to take the course, I registered at the Academy that taught it and dedicated myself fervently to it.

The Academy was not merely one more building on the extensive Academic Avenue, where splendid buildings were lined up in a majestic effect of pure art; rather, it was an example of architectural beauty that would

dazzle any thinker! It was also a temple, like the other buildings, and within its magnificent rooms Universal Fraternity was unceasingly honored under the most salutary inspirations of Hope by Ministers of the Good, tireless in their endeavors for the benefit and progress of humankind. Situated at one end of the main avenue of the noble and graceful astral city, it rose from a small, elevated area surrounded by gardens whose profuse flower beds released waves of fragrances into the fresh air, which was infused with pure and delightful essences. Flowering trees – beautifully dappled with light green translucent tonalities, some tall and slender with festive branches, others broad and edged with graceful garlands where sweet breezes sang tender raptures – lined the lanes and small squares of the garden, giving the enchanting place the august resemblance of areas created under the inspirations of higher spheres.

It was with a thrill of emotion that I slowly climbed the stairs that led to the main avenue. Pedro and Salustio accompanied me to my first class since they were representatives of the university administration.

From afar, the building glowed softly, as if made of emerald tones of a delicate astral substance. It seemed like the sun's rays, which very gently pierced the horizons of the city, glided softly over the building's domes and graceful latticed cornices, enveloping it in daily blessings, warming with fraternal incentive the ideal taught within its stately interior by a group of enlightened instructors in love with human progress and the transcendental endeavors among the societies of the earth and of the spirit world. It was not fashioned in the classic Hindu style and was the only building that glowed in golden emerald tones, unlike the others, which glistened in bluish-white nuances. It was closer to the Gothic style, resembling certain famous buildings in Europe such as Cologne Cathedral. Its divisions and recessed arches were embroidered like filigree jewels, its spires pointing gracefully to the sky amid a shimmering that resembled the effect of waves of perennial inspirations shooting outward. The inside of the building did not disappoint. It was the most beautiful and noble that I had had the opportunity to appreciate in Hope City. Resembling a cathedral, with astonishing light effects and an accent of fluidic art of the finest conceivable quality, I immediately surmised that its designers were neither Hindus nor initiates; nor were they members of the phalanx in charge of our reeducation. Instead, it was the product of other phalanxes, something like a special embassy representing other shores and having a lofty mission among us, and whose purpose was, without any doubt, altruistic.

Indeed! In answer to my question, Pedro and Salustio explained that it was a branch of the large astral Esperanto University headquartered in a higher sphere, and which radiated inspiration to its branches in the rest of the Invisible and also the earth, where a substantial movement had started on this worthy endeavor among intellectuals and thinkers of all nations!

Furthermore, unlike the other Schools of our city, it was not directed by initiates of the Secret Doctrines. Its directors on the earth and in the spirit world were neutral as far as philosophical or general religious beliefs were concerned. Above all, they were innovators par excellence, idealists fighting for better social, commercial, cultural, etc., relations that are of such interest to Humanity. We saw great reformers from the Past lending their invaluable assistance to the lovely cause. Some of them had lived on the earth haloed by unsuspected virtues, their names engraved in the annals of History as martyrs of Progress because they had spent several lifetimes working nobly and heroically for the improvement of the human condition and for the fellowship of nations.

I was surprised to find that intellectual luminaries from all over Europe had gotten involved in the movement, among them the great Victor Hugo as just one of the French representatives. As always, he was still genial and very active, using his extensive energies to spread this invaluable patrimony to Humanity everywhere. So, when I took my seat in the large, well-lit auditorium for my first class, I felt strongly attracted to this new and admirable phalanx of the servants of the Light.

Gentle emerald nuances blended enchantingly with the fluidic and subtle golden latticed architectural details. I was surprised to see that there were far more women students than men. And throughout the entire interesting course, I witnessed my kindly female colleagues' dedication to the immense endeavor of storing in the folds of their perispiritual brain the spiritual bases of a language that, once they reincarnated, would become a blessed lenitive, a generous means for them to open a larger horizon for the heart and the mind. It would offer them greater potential for mitigating critical situations, removing obstacles, and solving problems that might appear on their pathway of reparations and trials in the future. And how many pure and charming friendships were born during those studies!... In the affable company of my comrades of the Esperanto ideal, my heart was harmonized with their vibrations from the very start. My spirit was filled with indescribable satisfaction, my heart opening wider for the advent of the most vivid and

consoling Hope of better days presiding in the future over the earthly societies into which we would reincarnate many times on our way towards the higher realms of Progress!

Like the classes given by masters Anibal and Epaminondas, from the first day of class at the Esperanto Academy we watched a majestic parade of civilizations. We eagerly analyzed their difficulties, many of which have remained unsolved to this day, and many of their most serious impasses in movie-like image sequences showing humankind struggling against the insurmountable waves of a multiplicity of languages and dialects. This problem is one of the scourges that have afflicted troubled Humanity, complicating even its spiritual future, because in the Invisible itself there are struggles against obstacles caused by differences in language in the lower or transitional zones populated by less evolved or still highly materialized spirits.

Everything was magnificently examined, from the first civilizations to those of the twentieth century, which I had not yet been part of on the material plane: all the smallest details, the ramifications, the surprising consequences even in private homes, the discouraging barriers in love relationships and relationships among nations, peoples and individuals. Then, we examined the simplification of the same problems, the removal of the same difficulties, the dawn of open progress, based on the clarity of a language that will be a universal patrimony like Fraternity and Love, uniting ideas, minds, hearts and efforts for one single overall movement and a glorious acquisition: the diffusion of widespread learning, the coming together of peoples for the triumph of the unity of purposes, the happiness of all creatures!

Next, we learned to spell the words, presented to us artistically using vivid and intelligent images. These were accompanied by splendid reading materials, furnishing us with what we needed in order to access the skills that would enable us later on to talk fluently to select groups. These materials included books and clever video-books that seemed animated by a singular fluid, teaching us verbal and written skills, all the resplendent effects of a language that was being imprinted on our intellect. Once we reincarnated, these skills would allow for brilliant intuitions to surface as soon as we were introduced to the subject! And such were the perspectives we glimpsed from the heights of that accomplishment that we felt joined with the rest of Humanity in a three-fold manner: through the loving ties of the Doctrine of

the Christ; the blessings of the Science that illuminated our hearts; and the purpose we would be led to by speaking a language that in the future would enable us to feel as if we were at home, whether we were living in our Homeland, in other nations or even in the spirit world!

The Esperanto Embassy in our Colony did not limit itself to granting us linguistic elements capable of enabling us to commune with other incarnates, with whom we would have to live in the near future.

Once in a while, visitors from higher realms would come down with the benevolent intent of encouraging their brothers and sisters of the same ideal still shackled to the difficulties of old delinquencies. These visits to our Academy would entail conferences where we would discuss the interests of the Cause, what needed to be done for the victory of the Ideal, and the sacrifice and struggles of many luminaries of the new endeavor for its spread and progress! These were opportunities for us to appraise the collaboration of eminent figures that had lived on the earth and whose names were recorded in history, as we have already explained. Large groups of students of the same movement, but belonging to other spheres, would participate in these conferences, compassionately collaborating for the consolation of their poor brothers and sisters who had succumbed to suicide.

Those were very festive days in Hope City! Some events were held in the majestic parks and gardens that surrounded the Esperanto Embassy, on patches of velvety grass dotted with blue forget-me-nots and white or pink azaleas. These were veritable tournaments of Classical Art, during which the spectator's soul would be transported on the wings of wonderful sentiments, dazzled by the majesty of the Beautiful, revealed in all the delicate and graceful tones that displayed it! There were choreographed ballets and individual performances presented by young and industrious Esperantists, whose souls, reeducated in the beneficent light of Fraternity, did not disdain coming down from their luminous and blissful spheres for this friendly visit to show their esteem and consideration to their brothers and sisters still captive to sin, and to give them respite from their ominous worries through the balsam of magnificent artistic expressions!

The beauty of the spectacle would reach the indescribable when, gliding graciously on the flowery grass, or hovering in the air like multi-colored dragonflies, beautiful ensembles portrayed the lovely art of Terpsichore<sup>64</sup> down through time, displaying the characteristics of the groups that were the best at interpreting it. Youths that had lived in Greece performed



interpretations that depicted the beauty and ideals of the dances of their ancient birth place; then, groups of Egyptians, Persians, Hebrews, Hindus and Europeans, all belonging to a large phalanx that cultivated Beauty, charmed us with their kindness and grace, while fabulous light effects flooded the backdrop, like spectacular fireworks pouring from the confines of the firmament to shed blessings of light over the city. All of Hope City would be covered in delicate and wonderful pastel colors that changed at every moment into rays that played with one another in indescribable games of color, crossing and blending into constantly new and surprising scintillations! This entire dazzling and indescribable artistic spectacle, which by itself was an elegy to the Supreme Creator of Beauty, was conducted out in the open and not on the sacred grounds of the Temples. It was accompanied by splendid orchestrations, where the most delicate sounds of harps and violins – like birds chirping sidereal modulations – brought to our ears and hearts impulses of benevolent emotions that surfaced to reinvigorate our spirits, nourishing our desire to be better persons, unveiling to our still weakened being horizons never glimpsed in the intellectual realm!

How many times famous musicians accompanied the caravans of Esperantists to our Colony, collaborating with their now richer and nobler sublime inspirations in those fraternal festivities that Love for neighbor and the worship of Beauty sponsored! However, all was manifested in a state of superiority and moral grandeur that humans are far from conceiving!

The presentations continued: chorales that reached mirific expressions; musical pieces before which the most enrapturing earthly melodies would pale; poetical presentations, whose majesty touched the unimaginable, would take us to ecstasy! And the language utilized by those magnificent artists that belonged to phalanxes that lived and progressed under the banner of every clime and homeland on the terrestrial globe was Esperanto, the one that would crown our initiation, reeducating us in the principles of Morality, Science and Love!

The only Art that was admissible was Classical Art. In the University Sector we never saw regional art of any sort. And after tears bathed our faces, our souls dazzled by all that splendor and wonder, our kind guardians would say as they accompanied us back to our quarters:

“Don’t be so amazed, my friends! What you have seen is only the beginning of the Art in the spirit world... It is the simplest expression of the Beautiful, the only one your minds can grasp for now... In more highly

evolved spheres, there is more, so much more!... The sinful soul needs to rehabilitate itself from its failures by acquiring virtues through renunciation, work and love in order to deserve ascending to such spheres...

The sentiment of duty has led me to think seriously about the need of returning to the earth to testify to my desire to definitively attune myself to the Science of the Truth that I have gotten a glimpse of during my stay in the Colony. I cannot stay in Hope City any longer unless I want to worsen my debts with a state of stagnation that is incompatible with the tenets I have just finished studying and accepting. It would be a grave wrong if I were to delay the reparation I owe both to myself and the Law of the Eternal, which I have disdained for many centuries.

Of all the companions and friends from the Sinister Valley who left the Hospital Sector to enter the University Sector, I am the only one remaining. I have been afraid of testing my abilities in the expiatory struggles of the earthly realms. Belarmino de Queiroz e Souza, the noble friend whose invaluable friendship was one of my most cherished lenitives during the difficult spiritual struggle on the path of rehabilitation, departed ten years ago for new experiences. He wanted to be born in Brazil because that country would offer him the support of the protecting Doctrine<sup>65</sup> he had embraced during his preparation in the Academies. He became a destitute orphan after he lost his mother to tuberculosis one year after he was born, and I was greatly saddened as I leaned over his poor crib. Many times I have whispered loving thoughts in his ears on lonely days when, small and unhappy, he ponders the thorns that already pierce his heart. And I have wept with much compassion and sadness as I contemplate his bitter childhood: the semi-paralyzed arm, the inevitable inheritance from his suicide in the 19th century; a skinny, sickly child of a mother with tuberculosis, the same fate awaiting him in adulthood! I wanted to leave when he did and be his brother, living at his side in order to protect and console him while invigorating myself with his loyal friendship. But that was not possible! That would be a mission of love that was beyond the reach of a reprobate like me, in need of the same assistance and care! Our destinies and situations were to be different. Only later on, after having successfully endured our trials and expiations, will we meet again, here in this same place, in order to recommence our progress towards the Better. Doris Mary also wanted to accompany him as a member of his family. She loved him tenderly and would willingly make sacrifices to soften his anguish with the dedication of a sentiment based on Christian

fraternity. But she was not given permission either, because such self-sacrifice would entail a string of misfortunes. Regarding the earthly social landscape, Doris already has merits, rights and compensations granted to her by the Divine Law for having lived an existence in which she had to tread a harsh path of well-endured trials at the side of a brutal and misunderstanding husband, a path that Joel's suicide made even worse. Her guides did not recommend that she make new sacrifices for the time being on behalf of her son, nor any on behalf of Belarmino, who had caused his old devoted mother the very same type of torment! Indeed, Doris would watch over both of them, but as a protecting and luminous shadow that from the Beyond would project inspiration and consolation upon their pathways when they needed it most!

So, we can see that both Belarmino and Joel have reincarnated for their redemptive renewal. Joao d'Azevedo and Amadeu Ferrari have also returned to the duty of renewing their failed experiences. I watched as they went into Isolation eight years ago for the appropriate preparations. The latter, taken by anguish and inconsolable remorse, did not even finish the preparatory course that was so important to all of us. Armed with ardent courage derived from the teachings of the Divine Emissary, he left for Brazil, asking to be given the physical body of a humble black man so that he could patiently put the two-fold torment that afflicted him to the test: his past suicide and his tyranny as a slave owner! And, dear Lord! I do not know why I have not yet had the courage to imitate their noble gesture, when even Roberto de Canalejas is no longer part of the Hospital staff, having just recently reincarnated for a blessed endeavor related to the Third Revelation. Even Rita de Cassia has reincarnated, that beautiful and enchanting guardian that wiped so many tears from my remorseful eyes, and for whom I felt the sweetest fraternal tenderness! Marriage will not be part of Roberto's struggles this time around. True to his feelings for his former fiancée, he preferred to serve broader causes, devoting himself to activities on behalf of the common good. Rita, however, an adamant character with a heart tending towards the highest aspirations, and therefore capable of female missions involving great responsibilities, received permission to follow in Joel's footsteps, to marry him after the indispensable trial of repeating the experiences he failed at in his last lifetime. She will appear in his life as a radiant alleluia after he rehabilitates himself before his own conscience! They loved each other! I was aware of it from the very start! And as I write these lines, I keep thinking about the supreme Goodness of the Lord of the Worlds and all Creatures, who

allows such rewards to human souls after they emerge from the darkness of their wrongdoings!...<sup>66</sup>

Rita will be a loving and gentle guardian on the earth, just as she had been in the spirit world. In her familial circles she will surround herself with souls that need support, consoling and strengthening them with the tenderness of her affections, while at the same time, through her virtuous examples, guiding them on the pathways of Victory!

In the large dormitory I have inhabited in Hope City since the beginning of the year 1910, there are only “novitiates.” Sometimes, a profound desolation comes over my soul, like someone who, after having lived for many decades, is left without beloved friends and relatives. Gazing upon the emptiness that their death-caused absence has brought to his old age, where the coldness of his inner grief dwells, he has become incomprehensible and intolerable in the eyes of the younger generation that now surrounds him. The beds of my old friends are now occupied by others who, despite being attuned to the same principles and ideals, are not connected to me as tenderly through the ties forged by times and misfortunes experienced together... I see the large window with its embroidered balustrade, divided into three arches of fine artistry, recalling a Hindu design of a superior nature. At dawn, Belarmino would lean on its ledge to salute the day and connect with the Higher Realms through the august communion of Prayer! Over there is the simple desk where I can still see Joao d’Azevedo’s sad and depressed figure bent over, planning the activities suitable to his case in the arenas of the earth. Over yonder, appealingly positioned under the fragrant canopies of the trees, are the benches where my old friends in misfortune and I would meet to talk about the hopes that would bring us new energies!

I look at these little nothings and tears stream from my eyes. It is a longing that whispers sadness into the folds of my soul, telling me that I should hurry to emulate them in order to pay the debts weighing on my conscience! All this time, however, I have never been idle. I try to calm my saddened heart in the company of my esteemed advisors, working to serve those who suffer more than I do. I divide myself between tasks at the Hospital and other various responsibilities, either on the earth or on the perimeters of our Colony, the only borders within which I can operate until I offer my due testimonies to the Great Law!

However, none of these activities can remove the self-judgment from my anxious mind, a depreciative judgment of someone who knows he has begun

incurring new wrongs, willfully increasing the debts already weighing on him. At this point, one could say that I am but an unscrupulous parasite, occupying space that would be best occupied by others! My face always turns red when, on the boulevards of the city, I run into Anibal de Silas, Epaminondas de Vigo or Souria-Omar, who released me from their classes long ago so that with the experience of reincarnation I could worthily prove the principles I acquired. They smile at me kindly and look at me with interest, but their eyes are like darts of fire asking my conscience for the reason why I have still not found the courage to fulfill my duty!

Carlos de Canalejas and Ramiro de Guzman have counseled me quite often lately. Before departing for his reincarnation, Roberto suggested that I get closer to his friend and former father-in-law. He told Ramiro that someday he should tell me the tragic story of Leila, for whom both of them had experienced the utmost suffering. I have been working quite a bit under his guidance, which, because he is the head of External Relations, has furnished me with a vast field of work on the earth. It has been under his watch that I have visited my old friends now returned to their imprisonment in physical bodies. Two months ago I came back from a twelve-week learning experience on Brazilian soil, where work relating to the sublime truths that edify my soul nowadays occupied all my time. The kind mentor took me to visit Mario Sobral, now reincarnate in one of Brazil's busy capital cities. I could not contain myself and shed copious tears beside the small and miserable bed, where the deformed body of Eulina's unfortunate lover and murderer lay. The miserable hovel, made of weather-battered pine boards and corrugated steel, is the expression of the most squalid poverty of Brazilians yoked to the fires of dolorous expiations in the sublime work of reconstructing themselves. But it is also the only home suitable to the reincarnation of an old bohemian proud of his physical gifts, someone who in the dens of idleness and the infamy of brothels, lost the paternal inheritance honorably and arduously acquired in the labor fields!

Dressed in rags, bare feet calloused from continuous contact with the gravel and dust of the streets; his arms deformed, his hair still disheveled and unkempt, just as we used to see him in the Sinister Valley; facial features resembling those we had known; nervous and sickly, stricken with a strange infirmity that afflicts his trachea and pharyngeal channels, causing constant painful fits of coughing accompanied with high fever and the loss of his voice; without a family, since before, in Lisbon, he had betrayed the honorable and loving family circle he had been born into, something that

Providence had granted him so that, in contact with their virtuous conduct, he would be able to furnish himself with enough good will for honest accomplishments; poor, wretched and hungry, because in the past he had not been a faithful custodian of the material wealth that Providence had entrusted him with, but had instead squandered it, using it for the perversion of customs; and illiterate, because in the University of Coimbra in his past life he did not use his wealth of intellectual knowledge for noble purposes, but instead let himself slide into idleness, succumbing to dissolute conduct and the moral inability to edify either himself or others. What lay before my terrified eyes was no longer that Mario whose brilliant speeches and vast vocabulary had charmed his companions in the Colony infirmary, but a miserable peddler who had to beg for the charity of those who passed by him! It was social ruin reduced to the lowest and most dolorous level I had ever seen, and that is why my face was bathed in compassionate and bitter tears. At my side, however, Ramiro de Guzman smiled tenderly, trying to comfort me with the luminous consolation of his wise words:

“You’re overreacting, Camilo! This is not a repository of ruins in a poor hovel or a deformed body. It is a work of rehabilitation by a soul that belongs to Immortality, a soul visited by sincere remorse, impelling it to ennobling conquests! Profoundly remorseful for his wrongful past, as you will recall, Mario – he, himself! – drew the chart for the expiations that you now see before your eyes. Suicide by hanging is the cause behind the nervous infirmity and the vibrational insufficiency of his pharyngeal system. His perispiritual organism was greatly wounded by repercussions in that area... All of this demonstrates that his lamentable condition is a result of his own past and is not punishment by an austere or inclement judge seeking revenge.

“You say you are looking at ruin?... Let me assure you that from this ruinous debris, the dawn of new progress will emerge for your friend Mario Sobral, because in mending himself here, the dishonorable debt that has kept him shackled to the torments of remorse will be paid, rehabilitating him before the laws he infringed... Do you perchance think that he is abandoned and at the mercy of people’s charity?... You are mistaken!... Isn’t he still a ward of the Legion of the Servants of Mary?... Isn’t he registered in the Mary of Nazareth Hospital? You must remember that such a reincarnation is the appropriate treatment for cases as serious as his, a sublime surgery that will lead him quite soon to his convalescence... Isn’t Brother Teocrito looking after him?... Aren’t guardians and nurses from the Hospital, as well as my Department, kindly assisting him as if he were a critically ill patient, daily

infusing him with ever new and stronger energies, courage and hope in their sublime concern of helping him remove the heavy mountains of inequity erected on his pathway by the acts he himself practiced against the Good?... Don't I myself visit him often, just as I'm doing at this very moment, faithful to my responsibilities, and don't I frequently take him to emergency outposts in the spirit world with the intent of comforting him, reinvigorating the fluidic energies of his physical-spiritual body – the perispirit – so that he can endure without much discouragement the bitter sentence he wrote for himself?... Moreover, aren't you aware of the fact that he plods along amid smiles of an acceptance that is building an inarguable victory in the unappealable expiatory cycle that he must complete?... He even feels happy, because in the depths of his conscience is the blissful certainty that, just as you see him here, he is fulfilling the sacred duty of an immortal citizen, whose destiny is to attune himself to the harmonious rhythms of the law of the universal Good and Justice!”

I had nothing more to say. Resigned and pensive, I meditated on the pressing decisions I myself should make. Ramiro put his translucent hands on Mario's feverish forehead, transmitting fluidic energies that would calm his dyspnea. I reverently began praying to the Loving Guardian of our Legion, beseeching her to send relief to the miserable companion of my old misfortunes. When Ramiro finished, he reassured me again:

“Providence puts us on pathways of glory, my dear friend, involving fruitful struggles amid tears and opportunities for redemption... And along these pathways it grants repentant wrongdoers compensations that they are often unable to appreciate, given the difficulties created by the stay in a physical body...”

He turned to one of the hovel's dark corners that I had not noticed, focused as I was on Mario Sobral, and nodded towards a silent, humble figure who was watching over him while mending some tattered clothes, and said:

“Do you see that poor woman?... You cannot surmise the splendid work of redemption that, under the watch of the Sublime Master, is taking place in the folds of her soul, which is as repentant as Mario's amongst the thorns of extreme poverty, of struggles as arduous as they are worthily endured!”

I tried to reorient myself, interested and moved by the tender tone of my instructor. Next to the entrance door – the only door the shack had – trying to find a bit of light so that she could see what she was doing, I saw a black

woman, poorly dressed but neat in appearance, who looked to be around fifty years old. Her serene face denoted simplicity and humility. Surprised, I asked:

“I don’t recognize her... Who is she?”

“Try harder, Camilo... Access the vibrational waves of her thought as it reveals old memories, and see what happened around forty years ago, that is, around the time that Mario returned to the terrestrial realm...”

Intrigued, I obeyed as the woman approached the sick man, tenderly lifted his head to give him a homeopathic medication, and then returned to her task. The silence invited the emergence of memories. It was getting late outside, the fiery Brazilian sun setting in the west with its ardent rays of festive gold, illuminating the sky with a thousand coralline reflections. Inside the shack the woman thought and thought... The images rose around her brain in whimsical movements and sequences. Terrified and moved, I read and understood, as if I were reading an open book:

“Mario had been born in a brothel... His mother never adjusted to being pregnant, and to culminate her disgrace when she saw the child’s horrific deformation and lack of strength to cry like all newborns – he was half suffocating in spasmodic convulsions as if iron hands wanted to strangle him – she rejected the little monster in horror in an outburst of tears.

She was a wretched wrongdoer, for whom motherhood would be an obstacle to her freedom. So, she entrusted the miserable newborn to a poor washerwoman that lived nearby, honestly enduring the harsh tasks imposed by poverty, and promised to pay her monthly to care for the baby. The good woman acquiesced, not only because of the increase in income, but mainly because of the charitable impulses of the Good in her heart. She was a disciple of a vast source of light and enlightenment – the Third Revelation – and despite her lowly social status, she knew that adopting that little one, who came into the world surrounded by such somber traces from the past and such bleak perspectives for the present, was obviously a decree from the Higher Realms! She took him back to her humble shack and loved him as much as she could, even though he had not come into her life until after being born. She also had a thoughtful and industrious ten-year-old daughter who obediently helped her with the daily chores. She loved the little brother that life had brought into her arms, and to help her mother, she has patiently cared for him, dedicating herself to the wearying endeavor for the last forty years – as no *grand dame* would ever have done! Ever since Mario’s irresponsible



mother failed to fulfill her promise when he was born, and ever since her own mother died more than fifteen years ago, the daughter had been faithful at her post of selflessness, working so that her unfortunate brother would not have to beg on the streets any more than was absolutely necessary!...

I approached the woman, and in a gesture of gratitude for all the things she had been doing for my dear friend, I placed my right hand on her head, which at the moment was haloed by light:

“May Jesus bless you, my dear sister, for all you have done for poor Mario, whom I have always known to be such a tormented soul!” I said, feeling dolorous tears pooling in my poor eyes.

As if revering the Sublime Law whose magnanimous splendor sparkled in that hovel of redemption, Ramiro de Guzman whispered and in my ear, to my complete astonishment:

“Have you still not recognized this woman in her black body, devoting herself to Christian activities for her own spiritual rehabilitation?”

And as I looked at him questioningly, he said her name:

“Eulina!”

\* \* \*

I have finally made up my mind: tomorrow, on my way to the Isolation Ward, I will enter the Reincarnation Department to start the sketching of my next physical-earthly body, researching the most appropriate environment for my renewing immersion in the flesh. I consulted with all the authorities of the Colony involved in my case, and they were unanimous in encouraging me to pursue this indispensable and beneficial endeavor. Because I have sufficient lucidity to undertake such a responsibility, I want to structure my own schedule of tasks to readjust myself to the laws infringed by my suicide. I will become blind at forty years of age, irremediably blind, as if Jacinto de Ornelas’s empty eye sockets had become my own after three centuries of anticipation with my spirit standing terrified before the incorruptible image of Justice! Asking for inspiration and assistance, I consulted my dear masters – Anibal de Silas, Epaminondas de Vigo, Souria-Omar and Teocrito – who lovingly agreed to assist me in balancing the general outlines of my plan with the imperatives of the Law. However, only after my confinement in the Isolation Ward will this information be sent for approval by the Temple. These dear friends assured me that they will accompany my steps, guiding me

on the pathway of Duty, inspiring me at decisive moments, just like the guardians they have been as they have watched over me during my stay in this benevolent Institute. They told me that the medical assistance headquartered in the Hospital Sector will follow the development of my future physical body from its embryonic state in the sacred genetic coffer to the final moments of the separation of my spirit from the physical body that I will have endured to make up for the time lost with my suicide! I will be set free from the physical-earthly ties when I am sixty years old, which means I will spend twenty years looking within myself, performing a fruitful and glorious endeavor of self-education to tame the manifestations of pride that are not completely extinguished in me! I am often gripped by the fear of another failure, of forgetting the duties and tasks I must accomplish once I am submerged in the ocean of a new incarnation, a failure so common to all spirits who attempt their rehabilitation. My instructors, however, have informed me that I will take with me solid elements of victory acquired during my lengthy reeducation here, and that is why it is not very likely that my will might become corrupted to the point of dragging me down into bigger and more serious wrongdoings.

I have said farewell to all my friends and companions in a fraternal journey through all the sectors of the Colony, starting with Security under Olivier de Guzman and Father Anselmo. All were unanimous in promising me their assistance through prayer to the Lord of all Things during my exile. I feel a premature longing for this dear refuge where I have been sheltered for such a long time, and where I have acquired so much invaluable enlightenment for restarting my activities in the earthly social circles where I will be called to testify to new moral principles. For the past few days, a veritable pilgrimage of friends has come to this Ward to visit me: section leaders, nurses, guards, and even the psychical masters and instructors, congratulating me on my decision and predicting glorious days for my spirit in its endeavors of rehabilitation. Filled with encouragement and kindness, they have also offered me wishes of victory and the acquisition of merit. And I feel very grateful for all of it, certain that in the trials that are waiting for me on the picturesque banks of my dear old Tagus River, from which I never want to be separated, a luminous phalanx of spirit friends will be present to strengthen me with their devoted inspiration. Yesterday they even offered me a farewell party! A comforting surprise was waiting for me at that gathering where fraternity and beauty once more dictated their indescribable effects: by means of an extremely powerful piece of equipment, I was able to see, for the

first time, the marvelous Temple in all the fullness of its harmonious and indescribable beauty! I was able to see an assembly of initiates and hear their sublime discourses, inspired by the highest expressions of Morality, Philosophy, Science and the Beautiful – in sum, the Truth – that I was capable of bearing! In that Sanctuary were the stately table for communion with the Higher Realms and, united in identical purposes and ideals for the solemn moment of Prayer, the twelve initiates responsible for the whole Colony! And after that the enrapturing panorama of the city that I will not be able to enter until after my reincarnation: its residences, the vast horizons dotted with flowers and the delicate bluish nuances that the rays of the Sun transform into golden scintillations... Tears bathed my face, and while imprinting the august vision on the folds of my conscience as a beneficial incentive for the harsh struggles ahead, my soul whispered to itself:

“Courage, pilgrim of sin! Return to the starting point and rebuild your destiny and improve your character in redemptive struggles through the Sorrow that instructs! Suffer and weep with resignation, because your tears will be a blessed fount where your conscience, eager for peace, can quench its thirst! Let your feet bleed amid the thorns and brambles of the toil of earthly reparation; let your heart be forged in the fires of adversity; let your hours endure the dark shroud of disillusionment, filled with anguish and loneliness! Be patient and humble, and remember that everything is temporary, that it will change with your readjustment to the sacred laws you infringed... And learn, once and for all, that you are immortal and that it will not be through the reckless detour of suicide that any person will ever find the harbor of true happiness...”

---

<sup>64</sup> Terpsichore: one of the nine Muses, the goddesses of music, song and dance. In late classical times, when the Muses were assigned specific literary and artistic spheres, Terpsichore was named Muse of choral song and of dancing. She was portrayed with a plectrum and lyre. [www.theoi.com](http://www.theoi.com). – Tr.

<sup>65</sup> Spiritism. – Tr.

<sup>66</sup> How many times, amid the turmoil of an affliction that seems insolvable, people succumb to desperation and dive headlong into the sinister recklessness of suicide, when they would have soon found the solution to their problem, compensation, and the assistance of Divine Providence as their consolation! What they lacked, however, was patience, the necessary serenity to reflect and wait for the situation to clear. Consequently, their destinies would be marked by an abyss of darkness in centuries of struggles and renewing experiences identical to those they failed to endure, teaching that what is best for human beings is strength and patience in adversity, and never, ever rebelliousness and despair, which are not beneficial in any circumstance! – (Medium’s note)



Publishing Council:

*Jorge Godinho Barreto Nery – President*  
*Geraldo Campetti Sobrinho – Publishing Coordinator*  
*Cirne Ferreira de Araújo*  
*Evandro Noletto Bezerra*  
*Maria de Lourdes Pereira de Oliveira*  
*Marta Antunes de Oliveira de Moura*  
*Miriam Lúcia Herrera Masotti Dusi*

Publishing Producer:

*Fernando César Quaglia*

Translated by:

*Darrel W. Kimble*  
*Ily Reis*  
*Marcia M. Saiz*

Cover:

*Ingrid Saori Furuta*

Graphic Design and Layout:

*Rones José Silvano de Lima – [instagram.com/bookebooks\\_designer](https://www.instagram.com/bookebooks_designer)*

Cover Photo:

*DNY59\istockphoto.com*

Technical Standardization:

*Biblioteca de Obras Raras e Documentos Patrimoniais do Livro*

E-book:

*Diego Henrique Oliveira Santos*