



Francisco Candido Xavier

Dictated by the spirit ANDRE LUIZ

# ACTION AND REACTION

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT WORLD



# Action and Reaction

Francisco Candido Xavier

# Action and Reaction

Dictated by the Spirit  
Andre Luiz

*Translated by Darrel W. Kimble and Ily Reis*



International Spiritist Council

Copyright © 2010 by  
FEDERAÇÃO ESPÍRITA BRASILEIRA  
Brasília (DF) – Brazil

All rights of reproduction, copy, communication to the public and economic use of this work are retained exclusively by the International Spiritist Council (ISC). No part of this publication may be reproduced, sorted on a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilm, Internet usage, CD-ROM, DVD recording or otherwise, without prior permission from the copyright owner and the publisher of this book under the terms of law 9.610/98, which regulates the connected copyrights.

ISBN original book: 978-85-7945-038-9  
ISBN digital version (ePub): 978-85-7945-140-9

Original Title:  
AÇÃO E REAÇÃO  
(Brazil, 1956)

Translated by Darrel W. Kimble and Ily Reis

Cover design and Digital version (ePub): Luciano Carneiro Holanda  
Layout: Rones Lima  
Photo: www.sxc.hu / Grazyna Sliwinska

Edition of  
**International Spiritist Council**  
SGAN Q. 909 – Conjunto F  
70790-090 – Brasília (DF) – Brazil  
www.edicei.com  
edicei@edicei.com  
+55 61 3322 3024

Authorized edition by Federação Espírita Brasileira

International data for cataloging in publication (ICP)

L979

Luiz, Andre (Spirit).

Action and reaction / dictated by the spirit Andre Luiz ; [received by] Francisco Cândido Xavier ; translated by Darrel W. Kimble and Ily Reis. – Brasília, DF (Brazil) : International Spiritist Council, 2010.

268 p. ; 21 cm

Original title: Ação e reação.

ISBN 978-85-7945-038-9

1. Spiritualism. 2. Spirit writings. I. Xavier, Francisco Cândido, 1910-2002. II. Title.

CDD 133.9

CDU 133.7

# The 100th Anniversary<sup>[1]</sup>

Under the aegis of God's Christ, on April 18, 1957, the Kardecian Codification<sup>[2]</sup> will celebrate its first 100 years of invaluable service to earthly humankind.

One century of work, renewal, light...

Andre Luiz wrote this book as his contribution to honor this memorable occasion.

In writing it, our friend has revealed a small piece of the lower zones to which the guilty conscience goes after physical death. He wishes to stress the importance of physical existence as being a true blessing of Divine Mercy, an opportunity for us to adapt ourselves to the mechanism of Infallible Justice.

For this reason, he weaves the threads of his observations with a narrative of the relationships between the sphere of incarnate spirits and the circles of purgation, wherein dwell human beings unchained from the flesh, who have become accomplices in moral delinquency. The excesses of their own conduct have created an outward hell, which is nothing more than a reflection of our inner selves, when, through negligence and cruelty, we give in to practicing degrading actions that force us to endure temporary segregation in the deplorable consequences of our wrongs.

Von Liszt, the eminent criminologist of modern times, has observed that the State, in its position as a superior authority – except, of course, for criminal groups that sometimes temporarily drag it down in dreadful abuses of power – does not set punishment aside, thus sustaining judicial order. The State's need to preserve itself justifies punishment. Consequently, almost all the old controversies surrounding theories of Criminal Law have ceased, since, even in the climates of different political regimes, the tendency to punish is innate in the ordinary individual due to the necessity of maintaining order in the collective realm as much as possible.

Andre Luiz, however, enables us to perceive that Spiritism reveals a much broader concept of justice.

The individual is not simply subordinate to the criterion adopted by the world's magistrates, who may be seen as skilled surgeons in the treatment or extirpation of social gangrene. Both on and off the earth, the more enlightened the individual, the more responsible he or she becomes through the shackles of his or her own conscience for falling into the thorn bushes of guilt.

This book was thus written to emphasize the fact that the principles codified by Allan Kardec have opened up a new era for the human mind, compelling it to examine and readjust

itself to the pathways traced out by Jesus for the true progress of the soul. For this reason, the book also explains that Spiritism disciplines our freedom so that we not only enjoy a worthwhile social life on the earth, but so that our spirit may live harmoniously, duly adjusted to the dictates of the Perfect Universal Life in accordance with the norms of Eternal Justice, instituted by the supreme balance of God's laws.

That is why, in introducing these pages to our dear readers, we recognize in the concepts we embrace not only a sanctuary of sublime consolation but also a temple of well-defined responsibilities. Reincarnation should be considered a sacred step for the recapitulation of our experiences, and the Spiritist Doctrine, reviving the Gospel of the Lord, is a bright light on the evolutionary journey, helping us regenerate our destiny for the construction of true happiness.

In short, the author shows us that our current possibilities are linked to the darkness of our past, demanding tireless work for the good for the construction of tomorrow upon the redemptive foundation of Christ.

So, praising the invaluable merits of Allan Kardec's works, we warmly salute their blessed 100 years.

**Emmanuel**

*Pedro Leopoldo, January 1st , 1957*

[1] Reference to the first book of Allan Kardec's Codification, *The Spirits' Book*, published in 1857 (See *The Spirits' Book*, 2nd ed., published by the International Spiritist Council, 2008). – Tr.

[2] The Codification is comprised of five books: *The Spirits' Book* (International Spiritist Council –ISC – 2005/2008), *The Mediums' Book* (ISC, 2006), *The Gospel According to Spiritism* (ISC, 2008), *Heaven and Hell* (ISC, 2006) and *Genesis* (ISC, 2009). – Tr.

# A Light in the Darkness

“No,” Instructor Druso told us wisely, “the study of the spiritual situation of the human individual after the death of the body cannot be relegated to a secondary position. All the civilizations that preceded the western glory of modern times dedicated special attention to the problems of what happens beyond the grave. Egypt maintained ongoing communications with discarnates and taught that the dead underwent a severe evaluation by Anubis, the jackal-headed god, and Horus, the hawk-headed god, along with Maat, the goddess of justice, to decide whether their souls should ascend to the splendor of the sun or return to the mazes of earthly trial in deformed and vile bodies. The Hindus believed that, depending on the decision of the Judge of the Dead, discarnates would either ascend to Paradise or descend into the precipices of the kingdom of Varuna, god of the waters, to be isolated in torture chambers, bound to one another by infernal serpents. The Hebrews, Greeks, Gauls and Romans held to more or less similar beliefs, convinced that the heavenly heights were reserved for spirits who were upright and good, pure and noble, whereas those who had debased themselves in wickedness and crime awaited the torments of hell in the regions of dread either on this world or somewhere else, through reincarnation in bodies misshapen by expiation and suffering.”

The conversation fascinated us.

Hilario and I were visiting “Mansao Paz”[\[1\]](#), a noteworthy institute of readjustment headed by the kind and selfless Druso.

Situated in the Lower Zones, the institute was similar to a “St. Bernard’s monastery,” in that it was located in a region punished by a hostile natural environment. The difference was that the almost constant snowfall around the famous monastery on the slopes between Switzerland and Italy was replaced around the institute by thick darkness, which, at the moment, had become even heavier and more dreadful, as if whipped by an incessant gale.

Under the jurisdiction of “Nosso Lar,”[\[2\]](#) the welcoming shelter was founded more than three centuries ago and is dedicated to receiving unfortunate or infirm spirits who have decided to work on regenerating themselves. After some time, these individuals may either be admitted to more advanced colonies in the higher realms or return to the human sphere for rectifying reincarnation.

With that purpose in mind, the vast building, resembling a huge citadel equipped with every means of security and defense, maintains departments of assistance and education, where, after earthly death, doctors, priests, nurses and teachers find learning experiences and

activities of the highest importance.

Our plan was to make a few observations concerning the laws of cause and effect – the karma of the Hindus – and so, after having been duly recommended by the Ministry of Assistance, we found ourselves here, enraptured by the explanations of the director, who, after a lengthy pause, proceeded attentively:

“It is important to remember that the earth is seen from a wide variety of perspectives. To the astronomer, it is a planet orbiting the sun; to the warrior, it is a battlefield whose geography is changed by the tip of the bayonet; to the sociologist, it is a large stronghold where different races coexist; but to us, it is a valuable arena of spiritual work, something like a filter in which the soul purifies itself little by little over the course of the millennia, developing divine qualities for the ascension to heavenly glories. Thus, it is vital to keep the light of love and knowledge burning amid the darkness, just as it is necessary to keep medicine focused on the disease.”

As we talked, we gazed outside through the transparent material of a broad window at the tumult of nature.

A raging windstorm carrying a dark substance similar to airborne dirt whirled violently in a strange vortex like a dark waterspout.

From the monstrous body of the dreadful storm, human faces emerged, twisted in horror, cursing and moaning.

They appeared suddenly, linked to each other like enormous chains of creatures holding on to each other in a moment of peril in their instinctive anxiety to prevail and survive.

Like us, Druso contemplated this sad picture with visible compassion written on his face.

He looked at us silently as if inviting us to reflect. He seemed to be implying how sorrowful the work was for him in that place of suffering, when Hilario asked:

“Why not open the doors to those who are crying for help out there? Isn’t this supposed to be a rescue outpost?”

“Yes,” answered the Instructor, very moved, “but rescue is only truly meaningful for those who actually want to be rescued.”

And after a short pause, he continued:

“Here, on this side of the grave, the most painful surprise for me was exactly this: meeting human beasts that used to live in the flesh as ordinary people. If given shelter here without being duly prepared, they would immediately attack us and destroy this institute of peaceful assistance. We mustn’t forget that order is the basis of charity.”

Despite this serene and firm explanation, Druso concentrated on the scene outside, compassion still showing on his face.

The Instructor recomposed his facial expression and added:

“We are being hit by a large magnetic storm today and many wanderers in the lower



zones are being blown about by the hurricane like dead leaves in a gale.”

“Are they even aware of it?” Hilario enquired, perplexed.

“Very few are. Souls who wander like that after the grave are ones who have no worthy principle in which to take moral shelter. On the inside they are as agitated and dark as the storm itself because of the out-of-control and cruel thoughts they nourish. They hate and destroy; they bite and wound. Giving them shelter straight away in these sanctuaries of assistance would be like giving shelter to bewildered tigers among the faithful praying in a temple.”

“But do they stay so terribly maladjusted forever?” insisted my distressed friend.

The director tried to smile and answered:

“Of course not. Such a phase of unconsciousness and madness passes like a storm, although the crisis sometimes lasts for many years. Beaten by the tempest of trials that impose pain from the outside inward, the soul transforms and composes itself little by little so that it can finally accept responsibility for what it has created for itself.”

“So that means,” I said in turn, “that, after death, the pilgrimage of the spirit’s purgation in the realms of darkness and suffering is not enough to pay all the debts of the conscience...”

“Exactly,” Druso clarified, interrupting my reticent question. “Despair is like a state of dementia into which souls fling themselves in explosions of intemperance and rebelliousness. That doesn’t count as payment in the divine courts. It wouldn’t be right if the defaulter could use screams and profanities to settle the debts it contracted with its own free will. Moreover, from the mental disobedience in which we have carelessly indulged, we always emerge even unhappier and more in debt than before. When the fever of insanity and rebelliousness is over, the guilty spirit turns to remorse and penitence. It calms down, like the earth returning to serenity and patience after being hit by an earthquake, despite having been mangled and wounded. Then, like soil that has become productive again, the spirit submits once more to the renewing sowing of its destiny.”

A cloud of tormented expectation had come over us, when Hilario considered:

“Ah! If incarnate souls could *die in the body* only a few days every year, not like the physical sleep during which they recover, but with full awareness of the life that awaits them!”

“Yes,” Druso added, “that would certainly change the moral face of the world. In any event, human existence, no matter how long it may be, is simply a learning experience in which the spirit asks for beneficial restrictions to put it back on the right path. Using a new physiological machine amongst its fellow humans, it must see to its own renewal, and this requires focusing its mental powers on the earthly experience that temporarily shapes it.”

The Instructor’s fluent, wise words truly enchanted us, and because I felt that I ought to make the most of the time, I silently pondered the condition of the discarnate souls suffering the strain of the storm outside.

Druso perceived my mental inquiry and smiled as if waiting for me to ask a clear and positive question.

Commanded by the power of his gaze, I commented respectfully:

“In light of that pitiful spectacle outside, we must, of course, wonder about where those experiencing the immersion in this whirlwind of horror came from... Are they ordinary moral delinquents or are they criminals accused of major wrongdoings? Might some of them be young souls from our indigenous peoples, for instance?”

Our friend’s answer came quickly.

“I too had similar questions when I came here. I have been living in this place of assistance, prayer and hope for fifty years now. I crossed its threshold as a critical patient after discarnation, and I found it to be both a hospital and a school. With proper support, I began to study my new situation and was eager to serve. I pushed gurneys, helped with the cleaning, became a nurse, a teacher and a magnetizer, until some years later, I was delighted to accept the job of guiding the institution under the positive command of the instructors who supervise us. My duties demanded patient and laborious research, and I can safely say that only those consciences that committed deliberate crimes, thereby turning off the light of their inner equilibrium, commingle in the dense darkness out there. Having committed only the natural errors of their first experiences on the earth, young souls do not pass through these lower zones in any kind of purgative affliction. Because of magnetic attraction, every spirit is yoked to its proper circle of evolution. Until they develop their mental world, most primitives almost always live confined to the jungle that comprises their interests and dreams, and are only gradually taken from their tribal grounds under the direction of the benevolent and wise spirits who watch over them. As for the souls who are notoriously primitive, the majority develop under the guidance of kind spirits, who support and inspire them by means of sacrificial work at the bottom of the social institution, utilizing moral errors – offspring of good intentions – as invaluable instruction that ensures their education. Thus, I can assure you that the hellish regions per se are inhabited only by those minds that were aware of their moral responsibilities but deliberately ignored them with the foolish purpose of trying to deceive God. Strictly speaking, hell can thus be defined as a vast arena of imbalance, established by calculated evil, born of willful blindness and downright wickedness. There are some spirits who have lived there for centuries, who have become veritable beasts, crystallized in cruelty and selfishness. Such sad places are a vast, vibratory province connected with earthly humankind, because all infernal suffering is nothing but a creation of humankind itself. They function as strainers for spirits that slid into all sorts of derelictions, scorning the responsibilities the Lord gave them. Consequently, every soul that has been endowed with the knowledge of truth and justice is responsible for upholding the good. But if it slipped into this or that crime while on the earth, heedless of the ennobling duty that the world offered it, it will spend days, months or years in such places after the death of the physical body so that it can reconsider its attitude before reincarnating for the readjustment required of it.

“So...”

Hilario was about to draw a conclusion, but Druso anticipated his thought and summarized:

“So, the infernal spirits who think they rule over this region with infallible power have lived here for an undetermined amount of time, and the wicked creatures that are attuned to them, although suffering their domination, let themselves be imprisoned here for years on end. The souls who fell into moral delinquency and vice, but who show potential for a quicker recuperation, remain here fairly briefly or come at regular intervals, learning that the price of the passions is much too high. Although they are not completely free of the dark complexities that cast them into the darkness in the first place, discarnates of this type, who begin experiencing repentance and remorse, laceration and pain, find that such places of fraternity and assistance work actively and diligently to make them feel as welcome as possible, habilitating them for the return to the expiatory experience of the flesh.”

I was recalling the time when, disoriented and semiconscious, I myself had searched the pathways of the darkness after my disengagement from the physical body, and was confronting my own mental states of the past and present, when Druso continued:

“Thus, it is easy to understand that if darkness is the frame that emphasizes the light, then, as a region of suffering and disharmony, hell is perfectly conceivable, representing a just process for the filtering of the spirit on its way to the Higher Life. All hellish places appear, exist and disappear with the approval of the Lord, who tolerates such human creations like a father who allows his children to get hurt and uses the experience to help them appreciate health. Consequently, minds dedicated to rebelliousness and criminality may believe they are working only for themselves, but they are actually working for the Lord, who corrects evil with evil itself. That is why everything in life is a step toward the victory of the supreme good.”

Druso was going to continue, but an unseen bell rang. Seeming to be aware of time constraints, he stood up and told us simply:

“My friends, the time has come for us to talk with some of the patients who have shown themselves to be peaceful and lucid. We devote a few hours twice a week to this activity.”

We stood up without any further comment and followed him.

[1] Literally “Mansion of Peace.” – Tr.

[2] Literally “Our Home.” See the book “*Nosso Lar*”, published by the International Spiritist Council. – Tr.

## The Instructor's Comments

The room we entered was large and comfortable, but for the most part the expressive group gathered there was unpleasant and sad.

In the light of several lamps and from the broad platform on which we were seated with the instructor, we could observe the distorted faces that comprised the majority.

Here and there were assistants and nurses, their spiritual condition easily distinguishable by the friendly manner in which they were encouraging the sufferers.

I guessed that there were approximately two hundred patients.

More than two thirds displayed facial deformities.

Anyone who has ever visited a clinic for skin diseases and seen a group of the most acute patients can imagine what that gathering of silent and barely recognizable souls was like.

Noticing the almost total silence around us, I asked Druso about the storm raging outside. The kind friend informed me that we were in one of the citadel's inner rooms that had been properly outfitted with sound dampeners on the outside.

As part of the director's team, Hilario and I were introduced to three amiable and gracious workers: Assistants Silas, Honorio and Celestina, three of the most dedicated assessors in the administration of that assistance institution.

Except for the usual greetings, there was no opportunity for further conversation. The instructor asked one of the patients to offer the opening prayer. We listened movingly, and then Druso began speaking naturally, as if addressing a circle of friends:

“Brothers and sisters, we will continue our comments regarding courage.

“Please do not feel that I am separated from you by virtues I do not possess.

“To speak well and easily is very often a thorny duty in our mouths, forcing us into meditation and discipline.

“I too am here as a fellow spirit waiting to *go back*.

“The redemptive prison of the flesh beckons to us.

“That is because the objective of life works in us and with us in every way possible to guide us to perfection. If we curtail its impetus, we act contrary to the Law and create affliction and suffering for ourselves.

“On the physical plane, many of us believed that death would be the solution to our problems, while many others considered themselves favorites of the Infinite Goodness for having embraced superficial postures in temples and churches.

“However, the journey from the grave has taught us an important new lesson: we are indissolubly tied to our own deeds.

“Our actions weave wings of freedom or shackles of imprisonment, for our victory or our loss.

“We owe our fate to no one but ourselves.

“Nonetheless, if it is true that we find ourselves today among the ruins of our own deplorable deeds, it is also true that we are not without hope.

“Although the wisdom of our Heavenly Father does not forego justice when judging us, this same justice is not displayed without love.

“If we are victims of ourselves, we are also beneficiaries of Divine Tolerance, which reveals the sanctuaries of life so that we may expiate and solve, restore and pay.

“In days gone by, either we wasted time instilling sentiments and thoughts in others that we did not desire for ourselves, or we sowed a vast crop of hatred and persecution through cruelty and pride.

“With such attitudes, however, to our harm we attracted the disharmony and suffering that accompanied our lives like inexorable ghosts.

“The past speaks to us with the shouts of a demanding creditor, piling before us the bitter fruits of what we have sown... Hence the maladjustments and diseases that assault our minds, damaging our means of manifestation.

“We believed that the transition from the grave would be a miraculous cleansing that would free our spirit, but we awoke in the subtle body we have today with the ills we have nourished inside us.

“Consequently, our links to the past remain alive. The ties of misguided emotions and the chains of aversion still bind us to incarnate and discarnate fellow spirits, many of them presenting more serious and constraining imbalances than our own.

“As we nourish goals of regeneration and improvement, today we are beings awakening between hell and earth, as attuned to each other as we are to our deeds.

“We may find ourselves steeped in the dream of renewal and peace, aspiring to immersion in the Higher Life; but who can acquire respectability without first paying off their debts to the law?

“No one can move ahead without clearing the debts they contracted.

“How can we walk the path of the angels with our feet shackled to the earth, where humans accuse us of wrongdoings, thereby immersing our memory in the darkness?!”

Druso made a short pause and after a significant gesture, as if pointing to the tormented

landscape outside, he proceeded in a moving tone:

“Our shelter of work and hope is surrounded by infernal suffering.

“How many souls there are out there who have become petrified in rebelliousness and indiscipline and have gone too far in self-degradation?

“Heaven is victory, but it does not impose itself.

“The Divine Law is founded on inexorable justice and applies equally to everybody.

“For that reason, our conscience reflects either the darkness or the light of our individual creations.

“Light clears our vision and unveils the road ahead; darkness blinds us and chains us to the prison of our wrongs.

“The spirit in harmony with the Higher Designs can see the next horizon and walks courageously and serenely ahead in order to cross it; however, those who misuse their free will and reason, breaking the currents of the divine blessings, shape darkness around themselves. They isolate themselves in dreadful nightmares and are thus incapable of going any farther.

“Therefore, in defining our own particular situation, we could say that we are souls caught between the light of sublime aspirations and the fog of appalling debt. As the restarting of the learning experience, reincarnation is a concession from the Heavenly Goodness, and we must take advantage of it for our indispensable redemption.

“Of course, we will continue to suffer the effects of our ties to our accomplices and partners in intemperance and immoderation for a long time, but by means of new opportunities for work in the physical arena, we can redo our destiny and liquidate heavy debts, and above all, sow new crops of love and dignity, understanding and spiritual growth.

“By submitting to the workings of laws prevailing in the physical realm, we will have the fortune to meet up with our old enemies under the veil of temporary forgetfulness, thereby facilitating the precious opportunity to make amends.

“Therefore, the task of making them our friends will depend on us, because by bearing their incomprehension and hostility with humility and love, we will sublimate our sentiments and thoughts, creating new qualities of the life eternal in our souls.”

Taking advantage of the Instructor’s pause, I looked around and saw that everyone in the audience was listening to him immersed in elevated thought.

Some of the patients had tears in their eyes, while others exhibited the rapt faces of those amidst consolation and hope.

Druso, too, sensed the effect of his words on the comforted audience and continued:

“We are spirits in debt. We must do everything possible for our renewal. Let us begin to articulate redemptive and spiritually constructive ideas from hereon out so that we can rebuild our future.

“Let us be willing to forgive those who have offended us, with the sincere purpose of asking forgiveness from our own victims.

“Cultivating prayer and serving our neighbor, let us acknowledge the good spirit who helps us in hard times, challenging us to put forth a greater effort.

“Gathering all the possibilities within our reach, let us spread the help of our prayers and the concourse of our fraternal hand in the provinces of darkness and pain that surround us. That is how we can prepare for our return to the battlefield in the physical realm, where the Lord will give us the blessing of a new body to help us forget evil and sow the good.

“For us, heirs of a reprehensible past, the realm of physical forms symbolizes the exit door from the hell we have created.

“Overcoming our moral infirmities and extinguishing old pernicious habits by triumphing over ourselves, we will purify the qualities of our spirit so that, in uplifting ourselves, we may extend our friendly hands to those who remain stuck in the mire of misfortune.

“We, who have erred in the darkness; we, tormented travelers in suffering; we, who know the wasteland of ice and the torment of fire in our oppressed souls, could we find a greater happiness than to ascend a few steps in heaven in order to safely descend into hell to save those we love the most, lost today just as we ourselves were lost in the past in the caves of misery and death?”

Dozens in the audience looked at one another in wonder and happiness.

By now, the mentor was surrounded by a soft light radiating from his chest area in opalescent scintillations.

I glanced at Hilario, and noticing his tear-clouded eyes, I tried to stifle my own emotion.

The Instructor was not speaking like somebody teaching only in theory. His voice was imprinted with the inflexion of someone who had experienced enormous pain, and he addressed the humble spirits gathered there as if they were all dear children of his heart.

“Let us beseech the Lord,” he continued movingly, “to grant us strength for victory, a victory that will be born within us for greater understanding. Only then, by paying the price of sacrifice in readjustment, will we receive our passport to freedom!”

When the director of the institute finished his address, a woman with a sad face got up, walked over to us and asked him in tears:

“My friend, forgive me for interrupting. When can I leave for the terrestrial realm with my son, Paulo? I visit him in the darkness as often as I can... He neither sees nor hears me... He is unaware of his moral misery and continues to be authoritarian and proud... But I don't see him as my enemy... He's an unforgettable son... Ah! How can love contract such an enormous debt?!”

“Yes,” said Druso, a little reticent, “love is a divine force that we frequently degrade. We take it, pure and simple, from the life with which the Lord has created us, and with it we

invent hate and imbalance, cruelty and remorse, and this strands us indefinitely in the darkness... As far as the Law is concerned, it is nearly always out of love that we get entangled in mazes of bitterness... love misinterpreted... misused.”

As if emerging from a quick escape into his inner world, he touched the tormented woman’s hands and said with a new sparkle in his eyes:

“We think you will be able to join your son very soon in the valuable undertaking of redemption. According to the information we have, he won’t remain stuck much longer in his current limitations. Let’s be calm and trusting.”

As the poor soul withdrew with a smile of patience, the Instructor explained:

“Our sister possesses excellent moral qualities, but she was unable to direct her maternal sentiment toward her son, now languishing in the darkness. She instilled ideas of unhealthy superiority in him and they crystallized in his mind, encouraging him to rebelliousness and brutality. The wretch was a social tyrant and after the death of his body he was drawn unawares into the dreadful darkness. His poor mother feels responsible for having sown the illusions that ruined his life, and is now trying hard to get him out of there.”

“Will she succeed?” asked Hilario.

“Yes, she will,” Druso replied, convinced.

“But... how?”

“Our friend softened the fibers of her moral responsibility in a life that was too comfortable. She will reincarnate in an extremely poor environment, where, as a needy young woman, she will receive the son she harmed in her former fantasies as a superficial, well-to-do woman. In their want of financial resources, she will be an inspiration of heroism and courage for him, giving him a new vision of life and purifying his energies in the forge of difficulty and suffering.”

“And will they be victorious?” asked my companion again, obviously intrigued.

“Victory is the felicity we all hope for them.”

“And what if they fail in the struggle?”

“Then of course they will return in an even worse state to the precipices that surround us,” said the Instructor with a significant intonation.

After a sad smile, Druso added:

“When we are born again in the flesh as spirits in debt, each of us brings to the human environment a tiny bit of the heaven we hope to gain and a big mantle of the hell we made for ourselves. When we don’t have enough strength to ascend to heaven through the opportunities it confers on us, we return to the hell that beckons us from our past.”

Our host was going to continue, but an unsteady elderly man came up to us and said humbly:

“Ah! My instructor, I’m tired of working in these harsh conditions!... I’ve been bringing



crazy and rebellious patients to this asylum for twenty years now!... When will I get my new body so that I can rest in the forgetfulness of the flesh near my loved ones?”

Druso patted his head and answered with tenderness:

“Don’t give up, my son! Be comforted! We too have been bound to this place for many years by the demands of our duties. Let’s continue to serve with joy. The day of change will be determined by the Lord.”

With sad eyes the old man became silent.

The Instructor rang a little bell signaling the audience that they could engage in conversation.

A young man with a friendly expression approached us, and after greeting us affectionately, said anxiously:

“Dear Instructor, listening to your learned and ardent words left me wondering about the enigmas of memory... Why this forgetfulness after our physical death? If I had other existences before this last one, whose mistakes I’m now trying to correct, why can’t I remember them? Before I left for the physical realm on the pilgrimage where I was given my present name, I must have left good friends behind in the spirit world, just as those, who, traveling from one continent to another, often leave behind loved ones who don’t forget them... Why this amnesia that keeps me from remembering the friends I surely must have had?”

“Well,” the Instructor remarked wisely, “spirits who rightly attend to their duties in their physical life do, in fact, peacefully recover their memory after leaving the dense body. They reenter communion with the noble and worthy ties that wait for them in the Higher Life so that they can continue their respective work of spiritual growth and sublimation. On the other hand, for those of us with troubled consciences, the death of the corporeal vehicle does not mean liberation. We may lose the physiological instrument but we remain chained to the invisible prison of our guilt; and guilt, my friend, is always a black cloud of darkness eclipsing our sight. Regarding our moral failures, our mnemonic faculties are sort of like photographic plates, which, if not well-protected, will be ruined.”

The Instructor paused briefly and then continued:

“Let’s think of the mind as being a lake. If the water is still and clean, the light of the sky will be reflected on it without distortion. But if the water is always in turmoil, the images are lost to the turbulence of the moving waves, especially when the muck on the bottom comes up to the surface. Strictly speaking, here in the lower zones we are a long ways from being spiritually renewed, despite being discarnate.”

The enquirer listened to him visibly surprised. He was about to ask some more questions, but Druso, anticipating it, emphasized in a friendly tone:

“Observe this reality in yourself. Notwithstanding your current studies and despite the sublime hope now dwelling in your heart, your mind is still bound to the sites and landscapes that you supposedly left behind after death. On the pathway of the spirit life, you still identify

with the dark reminiscences that remain in the past: home, family, commitments imperfectly kept... All this is ballast that keeps your mind geared toward the physical world, where our debts demand sacrifice and payment.”

“True... true...” agreed the young man bitterly.

But the Instructor continued:

“Under hypnosis, our memory can go back and recover for a few moments. However, this is forcing things... In everything, it is always better to accept the wisdom of nature. We need to free the divine mirror of our mind that lies under the muck of repentance, remorse and guilt, and it will reflect the sun with all the splendor of its purity.”

Druso was going to continue, but the arrival of a coworker compelled us to end the conversation.

### 3

## Intervening in the Memory

Introduced to us by the institute's director as Assistant Barreto, the new worker had approached to state with anxiety reflected in his eyes:

"Instructor Druso, three of the newly-arrived patients in Ward Five are having a severe crisis of anguish and defiance."

"I know," said Druso. "It's a case of insanity produced by hallucinatory telepathy. They aren't yet strong enough to resist the impact of the perverse energies discharged against them from a distance by pitiable acquaintances."

"What should we do?"

"Remove the regular patients and turn on the ward's stun rays. That's all we can do."

The messenger left as another coworker approached:

"Instructor, now that the raging storm has weakened somewhat, the warning screen that had stopped working has just transmitted an urgent message... Two of our research expeditions are in dire straights in the chasms of the Great Darkness."

"Do we know their exact position?"

"Yes."

"Go tell the director of emergency operations. Help must be sent as soon as possible."

Unexpectedly, another coworker approached:

"Instructor, please help us with the *Jonas case*. We just got a message saying that his reincarnation is in definite peril."

For the first time, I noticed the director's deep concern. Revealing enormous surprise, he asked:

"What's the problem?"

"His future mother, Cecina, has sensed his dense fluids and refuses to receive him. She is in her third month of pregnancy and this is her fourth attempt to miscarry. We've been doing all we can to keep her in maternal integrity."

Druso displayed a serene firmness on his face and stated:

"She won't succeed. She will end up accepting him in accordance with her own debts."

Moreover, we need Jonas to be interned in a physical body for at least seven years. Bring Cecina here tonight as soon as she falls asleep so that we can help her with magnetic intervention.”

Other coworkers arrived. I was eager for explanations, so I went to a nearby corner with Assistant Silas, whom I plied with discreet questions so as not to disturb the room.

Who were all these coworkers? Was it right to bother the director with so many questions when the administrative work could easily be divided up?

My friend hastened to enlighten me, explaining that the messengers were not mere workers but were in charge of certain subdivisions. All of them were educated and praiseworthy Assistants and Assessors with enormous responsibilities. They approached Druso only after having taken all the measures possible at their level of authority. Hence, the problem was not one of centralization, but of intensive labor.

“What about that case of pending reincarnation?” I dared to ask respectfully. “Can the institute rightly offer to intervene in such a matter?”

Silas smiled benevolently and answered:

“To be clear on the matter, I must explain that if there are reincarnations linked to the higher planes, there are those that are rooted directly in the lower zones. Just as humans have prisons because of criminal activity, hell exists in the spirit world because of guilty consciences. Thus, just as we can count on a justice that is genuinely interested in helping criminals recover by means of parole and prison-schools that are organized by the same authorities that run human courts in the name of the law, here the representatives of Divine Love can mobilize merciful resources on behalf of indebted spirits. But they have to show that they are worthy of the assistance that can hasten their expiation and regeneration.”

“So,” I pondered, “that means that, using good old earthly logic, and utilizing a language that a person would use in the physical sphere, there are reincarnations that are in perfect tune with the infernal realms.”

“Yes, indeed. They serve as invaluable opportunities to break free of the dark lower zones. And because such reincarnations are for expiation only, on many occasions they are planned and carried out from right here by benefactors authorized to act and help in the Lord’s name.”

“And in such cases,” I added, “does Instructor Druso have the necessary jurisdiction to solve these kinds of problems?”

“As is reasonable,” my esteemed friend said, “our director does not enjoy unlimited faculties, and this institution is certainly big enough to absorb most of his attention. Even so, when it comes to matters of reincarnation, he works as an intermediate authority.”

“How so?”

“Twice a week we get together in Mansao Paz’s ‘Upper Room’<sup>[1]</sup> and by means of appropriate instruments, the messengers of the light discuss the subject, evaluating the cases

our institute presents to them.”

“Messengers of the light?”

“Yes. They are representatives of Angelic Intelligences who never take their eyes off the infernal regions, because even if the spirits of darkness don’t believe it, the powers of Heaven do in fact watch over this hell, which exists to control the regenerative work on earth.”

And smiling, he added:

“Just as a sick person needs medicine, spiritual purgation is necessary in order to habilitate ourselves for life in the higher realms. For the soul who has constructed hell within itself, it is similar to what the forge is for the metal: it purifies it and shapes it appropriately.”

My companion was about to continue but a strange noise got our attention. At the same time, a messenger burst through one of the nearby doors and approached Druso:

“Instructor, once the storm abated, the attack with disintegrating rays started again.”

The instructor looked worried and ordered:

“Turn on the exhauster devices. We’ll observe our defensive action from the Needle of Vigilance.”

He asked us to accompany him.

Silas, Hilario and I followed without hesitating.

We went down vast corridors and passed through large halls in an ascending manner until we finally started to climb more directly.

The place known as the Needle of Vigilance was a spiral staircase-equipped tower dozens of meters above the large, complex building.

At the top, we reached a small room containing interesting devices that enabled us to observe the landscape outside.

They looked like small telescopes, which emitted rays that eliminated the fog outside, allowing us to accurately evaluate the dreadful surroundings populated by aggressive, bizarre creatures that fled in terror at the sight of a large group of spirits wielding curious weapons similar to small canons.

“Are we being assaulted by an army?” I asked, intrigued.

“Yes, we are,” Druso confirmed calmly. “These attacks are common, however. Our unfortunate brothers are trying to force us to move our building and render us powerless so that they can take over the region.”

“What about those weapons? What are they?” asked my frightened colleague.

“We might define them as electronic bombardment canons,” explained the instructor. “Their discharges at us are carefully calculated to hit us without missing.”

“What if they do hit us?” asked my colleague.

“They would certainly cause disintegrating phenomena that could ruin us completely, not to mention the trouble it would cause our patients because they are still incapable of making any attempt to move. The rays they shoot at us contain elements of affliction that cause the worst fits of terror and madness.”

Not far from us, a gloomy noise vibrated in the atmosphere.

It seemed like thousands of invisible bullets were hissing violently through the air a short distance from us before ending in a crackling noise that filled us with dread.

Perhaps because Hilario and I displayed uncontainable astonishment, Druso stated paternally:

“No need to worry. Our exhauster barriers are very effective.”

He pointed to a long wall made of thousands of metallic poles surrounding the entire citadel like a long series of skillfully arranged lightning rods.

At every stage of the attack, electric sparks flashed at the points of contact, attracted by the poles.

To the naked eye, the spectacle, in its terrifying beauty, highlighted the scintillating contrasts between immense darkness and flashing light.

“The conflicts are never-ending here,” said the instructor with serene dignity. “However, we have learned that peace is not a victory of inertia; rather, it is the result of the balance between faith in the Divine Power and trust in ourselves as we work for the victory of the good.”

Just then, a coworker entered the room:

“Instructor Druso, according to your orders, the patient we received last night has been placed in the magnetic assistance room, awaiting your examination.”

“Was he able to say anything?”

“No. He only moans from time to time.”

“No way to tell who he is?”

“None.”

The tireless instructor invited us to follow him, explaining that the procedure ahead could offer us important elements for our study.

Soon afterward, the four of us were in a regular-sized room, marked by its simplicity and soothing blue color.

On a collapsible table, a deformed man was stretched out on his back, barely breathing.

To be frank in our description, we must say that the wretched creature looked quite repulsive, in spite of the care he had received so far.

He seemed to be suffering from an indefinable hypertrophy, exhibiting enormous arms

and legs. However, the spot where the exaggerated size of the perispiritual body was most unpleasant was the face – all the features were mixed up as if we were looking at a bizarre spherical mass instead of a head.

Had he gotten run over while on the earth, and was he now awaiting the emergency care given to those involved in such accidents?

Druso sensed this silent question and explained:

“This hard-to-identify brother was brought here by one of our first aid expeditions.”

“Was he just recently released from the physical world?” asked my colleague, as impressed as I was.

“We don’t know yet,” explained the instructor. “He’s one of those poor souls who probably left the physical realm suffering an obsession so terrible that he was unable to receive the spiritual help of the compassionate legions that work in cemeteries. Undoubtedly, he left his dense body under complete mental subjugation, immersed in agonizing problems.”

“But why such a disaster?” asked Hilario, filled with astonishment.

“My friend,” Druso replied benevolently, “wouldn’t it be better to probe the reasons why we decide to contract such horrendous debts?”

And changing his tone of voice, now sadder and more moved, he advised:

“The infernal regions are packed full of the suffering that we ourselves create. We must strike a balance between courage and compassion in order to safely meet our responsibilities in such places.”

I looked at the wretch, who remained deeply prostrate like a patient in a coma. Considering the imperatives of our learning experience, I asked:

“Can we know the reason for this shocking deformity?”

The Instructor perceived the constructive core of my question and replied:

“The phenomenon – all of it – is of a spiritual nature. You must remember that pain felt in the physical vehicle is a real occurrence in the encephalon, but purely imaginary in the organ that supposedly experiences it. Through the brain cells, the mind registers the corporeal disharmony, constraining the organic instrument to the sometimes painful and difficult work of readjustment. Here, too, an abnormal, even monstrous appearance is the result of the dominant imbalances in the mind, which, concentrating on certain impressions or hardened by suffering, temporarily loses control of the form, thereby allowing the delicate tissues of the perispiritual body to be tumultuously disturbed in an abnormal state. In such a situation, the soul can fall under the captivity of perverse intelligences, giving rise to deplorable occurrences that can push it into temporary animalization through hypnotic means.”

I could tell, however, that the compassionate Instructor didn’t wish to prolong explanations that didn’t have anything to do with helping this unfortunate spirit, so I kept

still.

Druso bent over him with the tenderness of someone examining a much-loved brother and stated:

“Let’s hear what he has to say.”

Unable to hide my astonishment, I asked:

“Isn’t he asleep?”

The Instructor nodded.

“Our unfortunate friend is under terrible hypnosis. Without a doubt, he was put in this condition by fearsome enemies. Obviously wanting to torture him, they fixed some pain-filled memory in his mind.”

“But,” I asked moved, “can such torment befall someone without good reason?”

“My friend,” said our guide expressively, “with the exception of the glorious path of the great souls who choose to sacrifice themselves to the apostolate of love with which they help humankind, it is impossible for the thorn bush of suffering to grow without the roots of guilt. To have reached such a deplorable state, our brother must have amassed exceedingly dreadful debts.”

Next, preventing us from wandering off the subject, he pointed out:

“Let’s disintegrate the magnetic forces that constrain his vital centers and help his memory so that he can speak freely.”

Perhaps due to my look of mute appeal for more clarification, he added:

“It wouldn’t be right to act based on hypotheses. We have to listen both to moral delinquents and victims so that through their own information we can find out where to begin helping them.”

I tried to avoid premature questions and waited anxiously.

Immediately, the Assistant, Hilario and I instinctively established a current of prayer without previous accord. Our combined energies strengthened the Instructor, who, displaying calm and optimism, started the magnetic procedure by applying dispersive passes[2] to the prostrated man.

The patient reacted gradually, as if waking up from a long sleep.

After a few minutes, Druso placed his right hand on the deformed head, as if calling his memory to the necessary awakening. The wretch suddenly began to moan, revealing the terror of someone longing to be released from a nightmare.

Because Druso broke off the procedure to keep him in this state, Hilario asked anxiously:

“Is he going to stay like this, on the verge of waking up but unable to regain control of himself?”



“It wouldn’t be good for him to return to reality right away,” the kind mentor clarified. “He might suffer a deplorable outburst of madness with grave consequences. He can talk to us in his present state, even with his mind still entwined with the fixed idea that imprisons his thoughts in an ongoing vicious circle. That way, we will be able to understand the crucial problem without any distortions.”

The Instructor’s words revealed profound experience regarding the psychology of spirits victimized in the darkness.

After further application of passes on the glottis, the wretch’s eyelids opened, and with bewildered eyes he started to scream:

“Help! Help!... I’m guilty, guilty!... No! I can’t stand it any more... Forgive me! Forgive me!”

Looking at Druso and obviously taking him to be a judge, he claimed:

“Your Honor! Your Honor!... At long last, I can speak! Let me speak!”

The director stroked the tortured brow and said kindly:

“Speak up. Say what you want.”

The patient’s face streamed with tears. Revealing the hyper-excitation of somnambulists who transform their own weakness into unexpected energy, he began to speak contritely:

“I’m Antonio Olimpio... the criminal!... I’ll confess everything. It’s true; I sinned... I sinned... so it’s only just... that I suffer in hell... The fire tortures my soul without consuming it!... It’s remorse, I know it well... If only I had known, I wouldn’t have... committed the wrong... But I couldn’t help myself... the ambition... After my father’s death... I was forced... to share our plantation with my two younger brothers... Clarindo and Leonel... But my head... was full of plans... I planned to transform the property... that I administrated... into a large source of income... But... sharing it would get in the way... I could tell that my brothers... had different ideas... and I began to devise the plan... that I ended up carrying out...”

A fit of tears muffled his voice, but Druso supported him magnetically and kindly encouraged him:

“Go on, go on...”

“I convinced myself,” the patient continued more firmly, “that I would only be happy if I killed my brothers... and when the time to split the inheritance got closer, I invited them to take a ride with me... a boat ride... to inspect the large lake on our property... But before we left, I gave them a drink laced with tranquilizers... I calculated the time the drug would need to work and... as we continued to talk, I noticed they were getting sleepy... I deliberately tipped the boat over on a well-known stretch... where the water was really deep... Ah!... What an unforgettable calamity!... I can still hear their terrified screams... begging for help... but... with their nerves numbed... in a few minutes... they were dead... I swam back with a guilty conscience but still firm in my mad purpose... I got back to the shore and shouted for help... With a rehearsed attitude, I painted an imaginary accident... So, I managed to get the whole

estate for myself... leaving it later to Luis, my only son... when I died... I was a rich man, supposedly honest... Money granted me the social approval and public privileges that politics grants to all those who are winners in the world... due to their sagacity and intelligence... From time to time... I remembered my crime... a constant cloud shadowing my conscience... but... in Alzira's company... my unforgettable wife... I sought distractions and outings that would take my mind off of it... I was never able to be happy... When my son entered adolescence... my wife became terribly ill... Because of the fever that ravished her for many weeks... she went crazy... and ended up drowning herself in the lake... on a night of horror. A widower... I kept asking myself if I wasn't a plaything... of my victims' ghosts... But I was afraid of anything regarding death... and so I decided to... simply enjoy the fortune that was very much mine."

The wretch made a long pause to rest, but noticing our expectant looks, he continued:

"Poor me!... When I closed my eyes... in death... the prayers I had paid for did me no good... I thought my brothers were dead... but there they were, right there in front of me... Transformed into avengers, they were standing at my grave... They accused me of the crime... they swore at me and beat me mercilessly... until... perhaps... tired of punishing me... they took me to a dark cave... where I was reduced to this nightmare... In my mind... I can only see the boat in the sinister sunset... and hear the screams of my victims... who weep and laugh strangely... Wretched me!... I'm shackled to that dreadful boat... and can't escape... Who can help me sleep or die?"

As if the end of his confession had brought him some rest, the patient fell into profound apathy.

Druso wiped the man's tears, spoke words of consolation and care, told the Assistant to take him to a specialized ward, and then addressed us thoughtfully:

"We know enough to establish a starting point for our assistance. We'll return to this case when the time is right."

And after a long pause, he added pensively:

"May Jesus help us!"

It wasn't possible for us to voice any remarks. A messenger arrived to inform the instructor that a caravan of newly-discarnates was about to arrive, and so we accompanied Druso to the work he described as an "inspection task."

[1]The institution's inner temple – Spirit Auth.

[2] Passes are a transfusion of energy, altering the cellular field. . . . A. Luiz, *Nos Dominios da Mediundade (In the Realms of Mediumship)*, Ch. 17. – Tr.

## 4

# Some Newly-Discarnates

We came to a large enclosure built like an inner courtyard of ample and precise proportions.

It was as if we were entering a huge atrium, somewhat like certain railway stations on the earth. On the seats scattered here and there sat dozens of spirits in obvious expectation.

Truthfully, I didn't see one sign of complete happiness on any face.

The various groups, some in quiet conversation with each other, were divided between worry and sadness.

As we walked by them, we could overhear different dialogues.

In one small circle, we heard statements like:

“Do you think that now she'll be able to devote herself to making the necessary changes?”

“Doubtful. She let her life spin out of control for too long.”

Further along, we heard a woman talking to an anxious-looking boy:

“Calm yourself, my son. According to Assistant Claudio, your father won't even be able to recognize us. It'll take him a long time to get his bearings.”

As we passed by, I overheard just a few bits of such conversations.

At a certain point in the busy courtyard, Druso kindly entrusted us to Silas, mentioning urgent obligations that demanded his attention.

He told us we would meet again the next day.

This kind promise led me to ponder the aspect of time.

Because of the ever present darkness, we didn't know if it was day or night.

Consequently, the huge, twenty-four hour clock there was like a compass for the traveler. It informed me that it was the middle of the night.[\[1\]](#)

Sounds of invisible bells cut through the air. Silas noticed our curiosity and explained that the caravan-convoy would be arriving in a few minutes.

I took advantage of those moments and asked questions that I deemed pertinent.

What kinds of individuals were we expecting? What sorts of conditions were the newly-discarnates in? How was this “caravan-convoy” organized? Did it arrive at the institution everyday at a set time?

Silas explained that the spirits about to arrive were part of a group of nineteen, accompanied by ten of the institution’s workers leading the group. The newly-discarnates were mentally unstable, but deserving of immediate assistance since they had neither completely given up hope nor had they completely yielded to the forces of darkness. He also informed us that the caravan was made up of specialized workers under the supervision of an Attendant and that they traveled in simplicity, without stylish vehicles, carrying only the materials needed to move through that heavy atmosphere of darkness with the help of a few intelligent and helpful dogs.

Mansao Paz had two of such groups.

Every day, one of these groups arrived at that place of readjustment, alternating in their merciful endeavor of assistance.

He stated that they didn’t have a set time for arrival at the institute, however, because the journey through the realms of darkness normally depended on circumstantial factors.

Silas had just finished his explanation when the caravan entered the huge atrium.

The workers responsible for the expedition seemed at ease, although some displayed deep concern in their eyes.

The patients, on the other hand – except for five mindless, sleeping ones that arrived on stretchers – exhibited obvious disturbances, expressed in some as unpleasant although peaceable madness.

While the nurses did their best to help them kindly and attentively, and while the exhausted dogs lay down to rest, the newly-arrived spirits talked and complained. They displayed a complete mental absence of reality that inspired both pity and embarrassment.

Silas invited us to walk around.

Actually, we felt we should lend a hand.

The caravan head approached us and the Assistant introduced him in a friendly gesture.

He was Attendant Macedo, a brave conductor of assistance work.

Friends and relatives of the newcomers surrounded us, expressing both joy and grief.

A few of the women I had seen waiting anxiously a short time ago were weeping discreetly.

I noticed that, as disturbed as they were, these individuals recently disconnected from the dense body displayed all the signs of the diseases that had caused their discarnation.

A brief clinical examination would certainly facilitate an individual diagnosis.

A pleasant-looking woman approached a younger one who was being kindly supported by

one of the institution's nurses. She embraced the girl in silent tears. The newly-freed girl received her affection and begged:

“Don't let me die!... Don't let me die!”

Showing that she was enclosed in the memory of the last moments in her material body, she stepped toward Silas with tormented and tear-filled eyes and exclaimed:

“Father! Father, you can bless me with the last rites, but keep the scythe of death away from my soul!... I've tried to wash away my sin in the fount of charity for the poor, but my ingratitude toward my mother continues to weigh heavily on my poor conscience. Ah! Why did pride blind me to the point of condemning her to destitution?!... Why didn't I possess twenty years ago the understanding I have today? My poor mother, Father! Do you remember her? She was a humble actress who raised me with enormous tenderness!... She dedicated her whole life to me!... She came down from the festive limelight of the stage to take on rough domestic labor to earn our bread... Society was against her, and my father lacked the courage to fight for our happiness. He let her slip into extreme poverty. He was cowardly and unfaithful to the commitments he freely made.”

The poor creature paused for a moment, mixing her own tears with those of the poised woman who held her tightly. With her mind fettered to the confession she had made *in extremis*, she continued as if the priest was still right beside her.

“Father, forgive me in Jesus' name, but when I was young and had the big dowry my father had given me, I felt ashamed of the maternal angel who had spread her white wings over my days. I joined with the vain man I had married and kicked her out of the house!... Ah!... I still feel the coldness of that terrible night of farewell!... I said the cruelest things to her face!... To justify my vile heart, I slandered her without mercy!... With the intent of elevating myself in my husband' eyes, I lied that she wasn't even my mother! I accused her of being a common thief who had stolen me at birth!... I remember the look of grief and compassion she gave me as she left!... She neither complained nor reacted... She just looked at me sadly, her eyes swollen from the tears!”

The woman supporting her stroked her entangled hair and tried to comfort her:

“Don't be so distraught. Rest... just rest.”

“Ah! Whose voice is that?” screamed the girl, crazed with anguish.

And touching the kindly hands that were stroking her face, she exclaimed without seeing them:

“Oh! Father! I feel like she's right here, next to me!”

And turning her blank supplicant eyes to heaven, she begged in tears:

“O God, don't let me meet her again until I've paid my debts!... Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner, who offended you by humiliating and hurting the loving mother you gave me!”

With the help of two nurses, the kindly woman put her on a portable bed and calmed her down with incomparable tenderness.

After helping get the patient situated on the bed, Silas noticed my emotion and explained:

“The kindly woman who welcomed her into her arms is her mother.”

“What do you mean?” asked Hilario, astonished.

“Yes, she will accompany her lovingly but without identifying herself, so that the poor discarnate doesn’t suffer a harmful shock. Perispiritual trauma entails a lengthy time of disturbance and affliction.”

“Why did the girl decide to confess like that?” asked my friend, intrigued.

“That happens a lot,” explained the Assistant. “The mental faculties of our suffering sister stagnated in the remorse caused by the huge wrong she committed in her last existence, and since she was even more intensely touched by such memories when she died, she surrendered completely to them. She was a Roman Catholic, so she still imagines herself before her priest, confessing the sin that stained her life.”

The scene had struck me deeply.

The harsh reality offered by the truth led me to a dolorous thought.

So, on earth there was no hidden evil!

All the crimes and wrongs committed by human beings would be exposed, someday, somewhere!

Silas grasped the anguish of my reflections and came to my rescue:

“Yes, my friend, you’ve drawn the right conclusion. God’s creation is glorious light. Any darkness in our conscience impacts our life until we wash the stain away with the sweat of our labor or our tears of expiation.”

And amid the anguished and affectionate appeals as children, parents, spouses and friends met one another once again, the Assistant added:

“Usually, those who inwardly carved out the deepest hellish conditions and crystallized themselves in perilous illusions are the ones who are brought to these realms of affliction. The Infinite Goodness of the Lord, however, allows victims that have a degree of understanding and forgiveness to act as selfless supporters of their former tormentors. As one can plainly see, our Heavenly Father’s immeasurable love covers not only the glorious lands of paradise but also the tormented provinces of the hell we have created for ourselves.”

A poor woman burst into convulsive tears nearby, interrupting our friend.

With clenched fists, the wretch complained:

“Who’s going to deliver me from Satan? Who’s going to deliver me from the power of darkness? Holy angels, help me! Help me against the dreadful Belphegor[2]!”

Silas asked us to provide her with immediate magnetic assistance.

Nurses came running to keep her outburst from getting worse.

“Damn you! Damn you!” The demented woman kept repeating, crossing herself.

Appealing to divine help through prayer, I tried to neutralize her convulsive movements. She gradually fell asleep.

With the atmosphere now serene, Silas invited us to probe her disturbed mind, now under deep hypnosis.

I tried to investigate her disharmony through a quick mental analysis, and I was astonished to see that our poor friend bore horrifying thoughts.

Deeply rooted in her mind, I saw the animal-like figure of a tall man with a long tail and the face of a degenerate goat with hooved feet and two horns. He was seated on a crude chair, as if living in perfect symbiosis and mutual magnetization with the wretched woman.

In response to my silent question, the Assistant explained:

“It’s a mental cliché that she herself has created and nourished. The macabre ideas of black magic, such as the witchcraft and demonism fostered by the so-called Christian churches under the pretext of combating them, maintaining erroneous beliefs and superstitions by means of conjurations and exorcisms, create images like this one, which are absorbed by weak, imprudent minds, giving rise to epidemics of hallucinatory terror. These contorted images are spread all over the earth through black magic literature or the careless preaching that lend them temporary vitality, and perverse discarnate intelligences use them in the same way that an artist uses sketches drawn by a child, taking them as the basis for drawings meant to impress infantile minds.”

This explanation seemed to be the fitting key for the solution of many mysteries with regard to obsession, where the infirm start by tormenting themselves and end up tormented by spirits in tune with their imbalance.

Hilario had been attentively following the inner duel between the prostrated patient and the thought-form in her head, and stated, very touched:

“A long time ago back on the earth, I perused a book written by Collin de Plancy and approved by the Archbishop of Paris. It contained the detailed description of various demons, and I think I saw a picture like the one we have here.”

Silas confirmed:

“That’s right. According to annotations by Jean Weir, it’s the demon Belphegor, who thoughtless church authorities allowed to be distributed in Catholic circles. We know the book you’re talking about. It has caused enormous hurdles to thousands of souls who unintentionally assimilate such symbols of Satan, offering them to bestialized spirits who use them for terrible processes of fascination and possession.”

As I pondered the problem of mental molds in people’s lives, the Assistant detected my questions and pointed out good-naturedly:

“Here, it is easy to realize that each soul builds the hell it imprisons itself in, according to its own deeds. Thus, we have with us the devils we desire, according to the designs chosen or

modeled by ourselves.”

The assistance work, however, required further attention, and so we moved the patient to the clean, well-furnished room that was waiting for her.

A few minutes later we went back to the atrium. It was now empty and silent.

Only a few attentive and tireless night sentinels were keeping watch.

The torments I had witnessed compelled me to think. I had done a lot of studies on thought and mental fixation, but the suffering of those newly-arrived souls had filled me with compassion, almost dread.

I confessed to the kind Assistant who benevolently accompanied us the indefinable torment assailing me, to which he replied wisely:

“In fact, we aren’t even close to understanding all the creative and agglutinative power contained in pure and simple thought, and that is why we must do all we can to free human beings from all the disturbing expressions of their inner life. Everything that enslaves us to ignorance and misery, to laziness and selfishness, to cruelty and crime strengthens the darkness against the light and hell against heaven.”

And maybe because I eagerly wanted more information about this transcendent topic, Silas added:

“Do you remember reading anything about Marconi’s first experiments at the dawning of the wireless telegraph?”

“Yes,” I said, “I remember that the scientist was still very young when he began dedicating himself to studying the observations of Heinrich Hertz, the great German engineer who conducted important experiments on electrical waves. Marconi confirmed the theories on the identity of transmission between electricity, light and radiant heat. I also know that, on one occasion in his father’s garden, he used an oscillator along with a Popoff antenna and Branly receiver, and was able to transmit the signals of the Morse code wirelessly. But... what does that have to do with thought?”

The Assistant smiled and said:

“The reference is significant for our discussion. In addition, let’s consider the television, one of the current wonders[3] of the world.”

He added:

“I’m referring to the subject to remind you that, in radio and TV broadcasting, the electrons that carry voice modulations and the elements that form the images travel through space at the speed of light, that is, 186,000 miles[4] per second. That means that in just one location a broadcasting and a receiving station can both operate at the same time; hence, in one second, images and words can be sent and received simultaneously after having crossed immense distances in space in an infinitesimal fraction of time. Now let’s picture our thought as a living and active force, whose speed is even faster than light. Emitted by us, it unavoidably returns to us, compelling us to live of our own accord in its wave of created



forms, which naturally fix themselves in our mind when fed by the fuel of our desires or attention. Hence the vital need for us always to keep ourselves in the noblest ideals and purest purposes of life, due to the fact that energies attract other energies of the same kind. Thus, when we dwell on vice or darkness, the mental forces that we exteriorize then return to our mind, forces which are reanimated and intensified by the elements in tune with them. Consequently, we reinforce the bars of the prison in which we thoughtlessly remain, making our soul a closed world, where the voices and images of our own thoughts combine with the suggestions of those who are in tune with our behavior, thereby imposing recurrent hallucinations on us and temporarily neutralizing our senses.”

And after a short pause, he concluded:

“That is why, once the somatic body disappears in the ordinary phenomenon of death, the discarnate spirit, moving in a vehicle more plastic and more subject to influences, can spend a long time as a prisoner of its unconstructive creations, and remain in vast regions of suffering and illusion together with those who share the same deceits and nightmares.”

The explanation could not have been clearer.

Hilario and I became silent, overcome with the same feeling of respect and reflection.

Silas perceived our inner attitude and generously invited us to take a break so that we could spend a few hours resting and... thinking.

[1] We are referring here to regions embedded in the realms of the earth itself, and thus subject to the same laws that regulate its time. – Spirit Auth.

[2] One of the demons whose portraits were drawn from nature by L. Breton and published in *Dictionnaire Infernal* by J. Collin de Plancy (Paris 1863). [www.rahoorkhuit.net](http://www.rahoorkhuit.net) – Tr.

[3] This book was written in 1956.

[4] 300,000 kilometers – Tr.

# 5

## Sickly Souls

When our break was over, Silas was encouraged by the institution's director to give us a quick tour of the grounds.

Moreover, Druso also granted our desire to study how the principles of cause and effect worked in newly-discarnate spirits.

We knew that death of the physical body was always the first step toward life's harvest, and thus we were aware of the fact that this environment would be most favorable for our constructive investigation because the immense Umbral just beyond the earth plane was packed full of men and women who had crossed over the great frontier still fully connected to the corporeal experience.

Hilario and I happily followed our friend and passed through the huge gate to the outside. He was obviously aware of our objectives and told us good-naturedly:

“Without a doubt, for those of us who have recently returned from earth, the hellish regions, much more than the heavenly ones, are more suitable for our studies of the law of cause and effect, since crime, expiation, imbalance and pain make up part of our basic emotions in our daily toils, whereas angelic glory and bliss represent higher states of consciousness that transcend our comprehension.”

And casting a look at the sorrowful scenes around us, Silas added movingly:

“Psychically, we are closer to evil and suffering... That is why we understand very easily the many, many afflictive problems here.”

As we walked farther along, we more deeply entered the dense darkness, which grew thicker with each step, but was illuminated here and there by dim torches as if light there had to struggle dreadfully to nourish itself and survive.

Sobs and screams, cursing and blasphemies were coming from the darkness.

By looking back, we could see that the space occupied by the institution was rectangular in shape and that the terrain before us was located behind it, inhabited by a huge population outside its walls.

Perceiving our curiosity and interest, the Assistant began explaining:

“We are, in fact, in the region behind the institute. It's a broad area overflowing with troubled, suffering spirits.”

Hilario, who was no less surprised than I was, remarked frankly:

“But all these spirits seem to have been abandoned to the storm. Shouldn’t Mansao expand its embrace to help and defend them inside its walls?”

“Of course,” replied Silas calmly, “that idea is most desirable; however, we are dealing with an enormous multitude of souls in readjustment. This immense conglomerate of creatures without a body of flesh started out as a group of discarnate beings who clamored for help from Mansao but they did not possess the necessary prerequisites to receive it. Firm in carrying out its program, our institute couldn’t open its doors to them right away because they took pleasure in their state of desperation and revolt, but it didn’t disregard the possibility of assisting them outside its walls. That is how, contrary to what we had wanted, this abyss of suffering got started. Thousands of spirits are gathered here haphazardly, victims of their own insane and gloomy thoughts. When they finally overcome their state of trouble or anguish – which may last for days, months or years – they are brought to our institute, which, as much as possible, avoids opening itself to minds that are still completely entrenched in constant rebelliousness.”

Maybe because we were silently recalling the scenes from the night before involving the discarnate spirits sheltered in the large asylum, our friend added:

“Yesterday, you witnessed the assistance rendered to an unfortunate brother abused in the darkness, and you also saw the arrival of sufferers just recently delivered from the flesh. Among those who were benefited, you saw unconscious, indebted souls, but no evil and rebellious ones.”

In light of this remark, which, to a certain extent eased his restless mind, Hilario asked:

“Can this environment, writhing in misfortune as it is, count on getting the help it needs?”

“Yes,” said our friend. “Many individuals who recovered at Mansao have accepted invaluable tasks of aid by offering fraternal assistance in vast areas of this tortured region. After having recovered there, they bring back here the blessings they received, making themselves valuable liaisons. Through them the administration of our institute assists thousands of needy minds and is certain which suffering brothers and sisters are worthy of entering the institute after their gradual transformation. Scattered about in the fields of darkness in small domestic sanctuaries, they continue their own renewal here by learning and serving.”

“Nevertheless,” continued Hilario curiously, “doesn’t such an unfortunate colony of maladjusted souls suffer the control of wicked Intelligences like the ones we saw yesterday on the other side of this place?”

“Yes. Assaults like that are constant and unavoidable here, particularly regarding spirits who left bestialized accomplices behind in hellish lairs or in centers of terrestrial activities. In those cases, the victims of such discarnate human beasts suffer long, unimaginable torment through hypnotic fascination – something that many spirits of evil know how to do very

well.”

After a short pause, Silas continued:

“Those are just some of the phenomena of comprehensible punishment that certain mystics observe during their out of the body experiences in the darkness, and which they classify as *purifying torment*. To them, guilty souls after death experience horrible tortures by demons inhabiting the darkness.”

The Assistant’s explanation, added to the ceaseless moaning and lamentations we were hearing, caused an unpleasant feeling.

Maybe that is why Hilario, painfully touched by the cries around us, asked in wonder:

“Why did you say comprehensible punishment?”

And trying to get it off his chest:

“Do you think it is right for all these people to be grouped together in such desolation?”

Silas smiled sadly and said:

“I understand your concern. Undoubtedly, so much suffering in one place would not be right if it were not the result of those who preferred injustice while in the world. Isn’t it right that we must all reap what we have sown? On the same patch of fertile and neutral land, those who plant nettles will pick stinging nettles, and those who protect the garden will pick the fragrant flower. The soil of life is the same for all of us. On this huge stage of anguish, we never find simple and innocent souls but rather individuals who abused their intelligence and power, and who, willfully deaf to prudence, lost themselves in the abysses of madness and cruelty, selfishness and ingratitude, temporarily rendering themselves prey to the insane and monstrous mental creations they weaved for themselves.”

Our conversation ended suddenly in front of a small house half hidden in the fog, and from whose interior came comforting rays of light.

Large dogs that we could barely make out in the flickering light yelped strangely when they sensed our presence.

All of a sudden, a very tall, rugged-looking man appeared and greeted us from the small gate that separated us from the threshold of the house and invited us in.

Silas introduced him happily:

His name was Orzil, one of Mansao’s guards working in the darkness.

A few minutes later, we were inside the warm shelter.

At the guard’s command, two of the six dogs made themselves comfortable by lying down at our feet.

Orzil was huge; he looked like a bear in human form.

However, there was sincerity and devotion in the mirror of his clear eyes.

I got the perfect impression that he was a convict in the process of rehabilitation.

In the simple, cramped room there were rows of seats, and above them there was an oval-shaped hollow, in which there was a hand-made cross illuminated by an oil lamp in the form of a shell.

Orzil left to calm down the less-tame dogs in the back. Meanwhile, the assistant informed us:

“Orzil is a friend with very little education who committed lamentable crimes in the world. He suffered a lot at the hands of old adversaries, but after a long stay at Mansao, he has been rendering valuable help in this vast region inhabited by despair. He is helped by helping. By serving unselfishly and with fraternal devotion, not only does he reeducate himself, but he will also soften the playing field for the new life waiting for him in the physical realm due to the sympathies he has attracted on his behalf.”

“Does he live alone?” I couldn’t help asking.

“He dedicates himself to meditation and studies of a personal nature,” Silas remarked patiently, “but as is the case with many other outposts, this one has a few cells occupied by spirits under treatment and waiting to be received by our institute.”

Just then, Orzil came back and the assistant asked him kindly:

“How’s the work going?”

“There’s a lot of it, boss,” he replied humbly. “Yesterday’s storm brought immense devastation. I think there must have been enormous suffering in the swamps.”

Assuming that he was referring to the abysmal precipices where thousands of unfortunate, troubled souls struggled, Hilario asked:

“Wouldn’t it be possible to reach such places to help those who are suffering?”

Our new friend grimaced with sadness and resignation and replied:

“No, it wouldn’t be.”

As if coming to his friend’s rescue, Silas added:

“Those who struggle in those caves are almost always extremely rebellious, and because of their insanity, they have become veritable demons of insensitivity. They must become willing to opt for clear and peaceable conformity so that, even though they may still be half-conscious, they can profit from the help that is extended to their souls.”

As if he wanted to demonstrate what he meant, he invited us to inspect the nearest cells.

“How many patients have you got today?”

Very respectfully, Orzil answered without hesitation:

“Three friends who are barely conscious.”

After a few steps we heard loud screaming.

The accommodations reserved for the patients were in the back and looked like large, comfortable stables. That is the best way to describe them, because, taken together, they conveyed an image of rusticity and security that naturally lent itself to the purposes of restriction of movement.

As we drew nearer, we were met with an unpleasant smell.

Answering our silent question, the Assistant explained:

“You’re aware of the fact that all individuals are surrounded by an aura of vital energies that vibrate deep within them and that this aura consists of energy particles that radiate in all directions, striking our sense of smell pleasantly or unpleasantly, depending on the nature of the individual who radiates them. Thus, just like what happens on earth, each spirit here is characterized by its own exhalation.”

“Yes, yes...” Hilario and I confirmed simultaneously.

Even so, the nauseating smell of rotting flesh at that moment was overwhelming.

Silas noticed our surprise and addressed a questioning look at the one in charge of that merciful place of purgation. He replied quickly:

“This is brother Corsino; his thoughts are still completely entwined with his body in the grave. Surrounded with the memories of the excesses he committed while in the flesh, he hasn’t been able to free himself from the memory of who he was, and so the image of his decaying corpse tops all of his memories.”

Silas did not say anything more because we had suddenly reached the first cell, whose bars allowed us to see an aging man holding his head with his hands and clamoring:

“Call my sons! Call my sons!”

“And this is our brother Veiga,” said Orzil helpfully. “His mind is fixated on the fortune he lost when he discarnated: a huge amount of gold and properties that subsequently became the property of his sons, three young men who are now competing for the largest and best slice of the inheritance, using corrupt judges and unconscionable shysters.”

Leaning against the bars, Silas told us to pay special attention to the ambiance that was forming the man’s psycho-sphere.

In fact, from my point of view I could see pictures that appeared and disappeared quickly like the ephemeral forms that silently appear from fireworks.

From these panels, which came alive and then went blank, emerged the images of three young men carrying a number of documents, bank notes and lock boxes full of valuable papers. It was as if these images had been painted in the air with a very delicate paint that alternately thinned and thickened.

I understood that we were observing the thought forms created by the memories of our friend, who, of course, could do nothing for the time being but live out his inner drama, so strong was the mental fixation in which he was incarcerated.

As far as I could tell, evidently supported by the helpful vibrations that the Assistant was sending him, he rubbed his eyes as if he were trying to rid himself of an imperceptible mist, and then he saw us. He leapt toward us, and holding onto the bars that separated us, he shouted like a madman:

“Who are you? Judges? Judges?”

And he started complaining pitifully:

“I fought for twenty-five years to recover the inheritance that my grandparents left me... and just when I had it in my hands, death mercilessly robbed me of my body... I didn't resign myself to that sentence and remained in my old house... I at least wanted to watch how my fortune would be divided, but my sons cursed my influence and sent me poisoned and hostile words at every turn... Not satisfied with these mental assaults, they began to hound my second wife, who had always been their mother rather than their stepmother. They gave her poison by means of her harmless medicine until the poor soul had to be committed to a nut house without any hope of recovery... All because of the money that my sons want to pillage... In light of such injustice, I decided to ask for help from the beings who inhabit the darkness, because only the spirits of evil can be the faithful executors of great revenge.”

He tried to wipe his tears of despair and added:

“Tell me!... Why did I nourish wretched thieves when I thought I was caressing the sons of my soul? I got married very young, cherishing dreams of love, and wound up giving birth to thorn bushes of hate!”

When Silas asked him to calm down, the wretch shouted furiously:

“Never!... I will never forgive them!... I resorted to the spirits of hell because I knew that holy ones would advise conformity and sacrifice... I want the demons to torture my sons as much as they have tortured me!”

His weeping became shrieks of laughter, and he began shouting:

“My money! My money! I demand my money!”

The Assistant turned to Orzil and commented compassionately:

“Yes. For the time being our friend's situation is too complicated. He cannot leave his cell without harm.”

We left the sick man shouting abuses at us with clenched fists and approached another cell.

Following Silas's suggestion to observe the scene, we saw another sickly spirit. He was a profoundly sad man sitting at the back of the cell. He was holding his head in his hands and was staring at the wall.

Following his attention to the spot where he was concentrating his visual rays, like an invisible mirror reflecting his thought, we saw a large, living screen picturing a moonlit street in a big city. We saw the man behind the wheel of a car, chasing down a drunken pedestrian

and then killing him without compassion.

We were looking at a murderer being held prey to compelling mental pictures that made him prisoner to punishing memories.

We could see his indescribable anguish, split between remorse and repentance.

At Silas's gentle call, he woke up like a wild beast roused from the calm of sleep.

Instinctively, he lunged at us in a spectacular leap, stopped only by the bars, and shouted:

“There are no witnesses... There are no witnesses!... I'm not the one who ran over that wretch even if I did have the right to hate him. What are you going to do? Accuse me? Cowards! Were you hiding on that deserted street?”

We didn't answer.

Silas looked at him compassionately and remarked:

“Let's leave him be. He's completely ensnared by the crime he committed. He thinks that even after death he can cheat justice.”

Aghast, Hilario interrupted:

“In that sick man, surrounded by his three sons and in this brother, who still contemplates a death scene, we have seen...”

Our friend Silas understood his thought and completed his remark:

“We have seen two miserable brothers living with the images they themselves are holding on to through the mental power with which they feed them.

Just then, we arrived at the third cubicle, where a man, covered with ugly sores was trying to squeeze the pus out of them using his nails.

The frankly pestilential atmosphere demanded enormous discipline to keep us from gagging.

Registering our presence, he stepped toward us clamoring bitterly:

“Have mercy on me! Are you doctors? Help me, for the love of God! Look at the filth I'm lying on!”

I followed his look down to the floor and, sure enough, I saw that the wretch was moving around on a mound of filth streaked with rotten blood.

Only after I looked more closely did I realize that the repulsive picture was constructed from the wretch's mental emanations.

“Doctors!” he continued in a supplicant tone: “There are people who say I robbed others in order to satisfy my addiction to the brothel I used to visit... But that's a lie! A lie!... I swear I lived at the brothel out of a spirit of charity... The unfortunate women needed someone to protect them... I helped them as much as I could... Even so, it was through them that I caught



the disease that destroyed my body and which still makes my breath smell like hell!... Whoever you are, help me!... Help me, whoever you are!”

The repetition of his appeals sounded imperative, as if the simple petition were merely a disguise for an authoritarian command.

The assistant invited us to leave and explained:

“He is an old, inveterate idler who spent huge sums of money that weren’t his on useless pleasures. For a long time yet, his mind will waver between anger and disenchantment, thus feeding the disgusting atmosphere in which he’s the imbalanced focal point.”

On our way back to Orzil’s den, I couldn’t help but ask:

“So, our sick brothers will have to be kept segregated like that until they rehabilitate themselves?”

“That’s right,” said Silas kindly.

“And what do they have to do?” asked Hilario with insufferable amazement.

Our friend smiled and stated:

“The problem is of a mental nature. If they modify their ideas, they will modify themselves.”

He paused briefly, displayed more life in his penetrating look and added firmly:

“Nevertheless, that is easier said than done. At the moment, you are specially dedicated to studying the principles of cause and effect, so you should know that our mental creations weigh fatalistically in our lives. They free us when they are rooted in the good that synthesizes the divine laws, or they imprison us when grounded in the evil that expresses our irresponsible delinquency, thereby binding us to the subtle enticement of guilt. An old aphorism says that ‘The criminal always returns to the scene of the crime.’ Moreover, we can say that even if the criminal does manage to avoid the crime scene, his thoughts are still attached to the atmosphere and the very substance of his crime.”

And noticing our perplexity, he added:

“We must remember that thoughts act like waves that travel faster than light and that every mind is a dynamo generating creative force. Now, if the good is the expansion of the light and evil is the condensation of the darkness, then when we lose ourselves in cruelty toward others, our thoughts, which are waves of subtle energy permeating places and people, situations and matters that affect our memory, act and react upon each other in a closed circuit, always bringing back to us the unpleasant feelings caused by our contact with our unfortunate deeds. We just saw three types of souls who, in their last existence, left only sad, deplorable pictures that do not provide any mitigation of their debts. The sons of our friend who is suffering from miserly fixation didn’t receive any resources of a worthwhile education from him that would enable them to help him when visited by their father’s thoughts, which return to their point of origin loaded with their mental principles of hate and selfishness. Our brother who is suffering from remorse because he was not punished by human justice in

order to expiate the crime he deliberately perpetrated receives, in return, the thought waves he emits, without any help to mitigate his painful repentance. Finally, our brother who is wallowing in filth reabsorbs the waves of his own mental field, waves which are full of deplorable aspects. As he emits them, they return to him with increased elements of corruption.”

In light of our amazement, the Assistant asked:

“Do you understand?”

Yes, we had...

Really excited, Hilario considered:

“Now I understand more clearly the concrete benefit of prayer and compassion, sympathy and help that we should offer sincerely to the so-called ‘dead’.

“Yes, yes!” answered Silas. “We are all connected to each other both in the flesh and out of it, and according to our deeds we are either free or imprisoned in the field of experience through the connections of our mental life. The good is the light that frees us; evil is the darkness that imprisons us... Studying the laws of destiny, we must never forget such unavoidable, eternal realities.”

We remained silent, concerned and thoughtful.

For that reason, our return to Mansao, after a short stop at Orzil’s hut, was dedicated to meditation and silence with regard to the invaluable lessons we had received.

## 6

# In The Prayer Circle

On our third night at the institute, Instructor Druso invited us to participate in the ‘prayer circle’.

Silas kindly explained that it would be an interesting study opportunity.

The group prayer service was held semi-weekly in a suitable spot in Mansao, and during the event one or two high-order mentors, who were overseers of the institution, usually materialized. On such occasions, Druso and his most important assistants received orders and various instructions having to do with the work being done. Questions were answered and work plans were carefully laid out. And although we were only visitors, we ourselves could express any doubts or ask any questions, which would be addressed in due time.

I was thrilled.

Hilario was a bit worried and asked if we should follow any special plan. The Assistant explained that while in the sanctuary we should only remember to keep our hearts and minds clear of any idea or sentiments that would be unworthy of the reverence and the trust we were expected to show Divine Providence, and which would be incompatible with the fraternity we sincerely owed one another.

I used a few instants to pray to Jesus for inspiration so that my presence would not be a cause of disturbance in the friendly environment where we would be meeting.

Hilario and I accompanied our friend to a simple room, where a smiling and kind Druso was waiting for us.

There was a large table, and around it were simple armchairs for seven women and three men. At the head was the big chair in which Druso would sit.

At the other end and facing us was a translucent screen about 18 feet [6 meters] square.

Outside the circle of individuals who would evidently be playing the most important part, there were seats for three assistants, five nurses, two plain-looking women, Silas, Hilario and myself.

There was still time for edifying and discreet conversation.

I used this opportunity to ask our friend about the roles of the ten fellow spirits sitting around Druso, as if to strengthen his thoughts.

Silas didn’t hesitate to explain:

“They are friends of ours whose mediumship capabilities are particularly favorable for the kind of work we do here. They work with highly subtle vital fluids and radiant elements, which our Instructors draw upon in order to become visible to us.”

Amazed, my colleague considered:

“Can we regard them as saints working here at Mansao?”

“Of course not,” exclaimed Silas good-humoredly. “They are just helpful workers. Like us, they still suffer the pressure of disturbing memories of the physical plane, and they have brought with them the roots of past debts that will have to be redeemed in an upcoming reincarnation. Even so, because of the discipline with which they have devoted themselves to their fellow beings, they have won the sympathy of valuable friends, a fact that will mitigate the difficulties and trials of their upcoming struggles.”

“That means...”

But Hilario’s reticent question hung in the air. Silas anticipated the question and stated optimistically:

“Yes. It means that even in the hellish zones we have invaluable opportunities to work, not only in order to overcome the purgatorial afflictions we created for ourselves, but also to prepare new pathways for the heaven we must build within us.”

This bit of instruction brought us an immense feeling of consolation.

At this point, Hilario focused his attention on the two women, whose extremely sad faces displayed a sharp contrast to the others gathered there. He asked respectfully:

“My dear Silas, who are those sisters who seem to be so psychically different than the others?”

Silas smiled and said:

“They are sisters who, because of their work, have earned the right to take part in today’s session in order to ask for help in solving problems that affect their souls deeply. I know them personally. They are discarnate women known for their self-denial on behalf of other spirits of the same family group who are in this region suffering the consequences of the wrongs they thoughtlessly committed.

Silas looked kindly at the two women and finished:

“In their last lifetime Madalena and Silvia married two brothers who hated each other terribly from the day they were born until the day they died, and because of their quarrels, they committed deliberate, egregious wrongs in the area of regional politics they were involved in. They nourished enormous seedbeds of selfishness and discordance, thereby hindering the progress of the community they had promised to serve and feeding grudges and cruelty among the acquaintances who shared their points of view. They incited many crimes because they loved to stimulate constant disharmony among the members of their political party, and that is why they are now in the lower zones expiating the crimes against brotherhood they committed against each other.”

I meant to ask about the nature of those unfortunate brothers' trials, but Druso was urging us to prepare ourselves.

Obviously discerning the accidental mistakes that might occur because it was the first time we were taking part in the prayer service, Druso asked us to guard ourselves completely against unworthy thoughts and banish any unpleasant memories in order to avoid interfering with the *crystalline chamber* – the name he gave to the big screen in front of us – during the manifestation of the venerable messenger whose visit was expected.

He explained that the combined energies of the mediums possessed enormous plastic power and that a simple idea coming from us, if incompatible with the dignity of the room, could materialize improper, though temporary images on the screen.

Finally, invited by the kind director to express any questions or concerns we might have, I asked if we would be able to ask the visitor one or two questions. He agreed wholeheartedly provided that any topic had everyone's spiritual welfare in mind and that we refrain from asking personal questions.

He then informed us that by means of special devices, all the resources offered by the mediums in the room would be concentrated in the chamber, which, from that moment on would be sensitized to the needs of the task at hand.

A gentle silence came over us.

In an expectant and respectful attitude, the director of the institute stood up and prayed emotionally:

“Divine Master, bless our meeting in this place of peace and service.

“Due to your kindness in the name of the Infinite Love of Our Heavenly Father, we have received the sublime gift of the regenerative endeavor.

“Even so, in these tormented regions, we make up vast ranks of spirits lost in expiatory suffering after having committed unthinkable crimes in which our minds now wallow.

“Despite being prisoners, shackled to the sorrows we have created for ourselves, we praise your divine glory and feel renewed.

“Grant us, O Lord, the assistance of your selfless and sublime ambassadors so that we may not fail in our good intentions.

“We know that, without the warmth of your compassionate hands, our hope would die like the fragile plant without the blessing of the sun!

“Master, we too are your wards, albeit still prisoners of clamorous rebelliousness, enduring the deplorable consequences of our crimes.

“From these terrible places come anguished moans seeking out your incommensurable compassion. We, the slaves of penitence, are the ones who so often weep aimlessly, pining for the return of peace... We, the murderers, traitors, ingrates and the wicked transgressors of the Divine Laws, now beg for your intercession so that our consciences undergoing dolorous

purging may be made clean and may rise to meet you!

“Have mercy on us; we deserve all the pain that shreds our hearts! Help us so that affliction may be our health-giving medicine, and help our brothers and sisters who, in the darkness of these places, have surrendered to irresponsibility and indiscipline, making their own regeneration more difficult for having increased the crushing torrents of despair coming from their souls!”

At this point in the prayer, Druso paused at length to wipe the tears flooding his eyes.

The tone of his words, filled with pain as if he himself were a spirit in bitter suffering, impressed me very much. I couldn't take my eyes off of him. Irrepressible emotion constricted my chest and irresistible weeping shook me.

“Lord, you have entrusted us,” he continued, stricken, “with the task of examining the problems of the unfortunate brothers and sisters who knock at our door... Thus, we are compelled to probe their misfortunes so that we may somehow lead them to readjustment. Eternal Benefactor, do not allow our hearts to become hardened, even in light of the greatest wickedness!... We are fully aware that diseases of the soul are much more painful and serious than those of the flesh... Therefore, fill us with tireless compassion so that we may be instruments of your love!

“Allow your messengers to support us in the decisions we will have to make.

“Do not abandon us to the weakness that is ours in particular.

“Give us, O Christ of God, your inspiration of love and light!”

At that moment, even if Druso's tone of voice had not signaled the end of the prayer, our kind friend would not have been able to continue because emotion constrained the prayer in his throat.

Everyone was weeping under the influence of his abundant tears...

Who was Druso, after all, to pray like that, as if he himself was the one among us who was suffering the most?

But I had no time to consider the matter any further, because, in answer to his ardent appeal, a large mass of vaporous fog covered the face of the screen. I was surprised to see something like a large milky white cloud expanding out of the fog.

Ecstatic and happy, we saw emerging from the milky cloud the impressive figure of an apparently elderly man, but who displayed the most intense youthfulness in his eyes.

A broad halo of sapphire-blue splendor crowned his white hair, which flooded us with utmost respect, spreading sublime scintillations on the simple tunic that covered his slender body. A half-smile was spread on his noble and calm countenance. After a minute of silent contemplation, he raised his right hand, which projected a large amount of light over us, and greeted us:

“May the peace of the Lord be with us!”

There was so much sweetness and energy, so much affection and authority in that voice that I had to make an effort to control my emotions so that I would not sink to my knees.

“Minister Sanzio,” stated Druso reverently. “Blessed be your presence among us.”

The light radiating from the venerable visitor and the dignity with which he was showing himself imposed on us the most profound respect. However, as if he wanted to undo our feelings of inferiority, the Minister, surprisingly materialized and sustaining the vibrational field in which we found ourselves, stepped forward and offered us his hands in a fatherly gesture that put us right at ease.

“I wish for no formalities,” he added affectionately and convincingly.

And then, demonstrating the value of time, he asked the director to show him the cases to be studied.

I marveled as I watched Druso show him the documents: twenty-two large cards, each of them containing the necessary information to treat twenty-two spirits recently interned in the institute.

At the time, I could not risk asking a direct question, but later, Silas told me that Sanzio was responsible for the elevated functions of the Ministry of Regeneration and thus had a great amount of power with regard to the institute. He had the right to support or to order any measure concerning the assistance work on behalf of sufferers. He could also approve and order steps to be taken involving segregation and justice, reincarnation and banishment.

The ambassador carefully examined all the cards, which contained short summaries, and on which appeared not only written information but also micro-photographs and identification resources, much like the elemental dactyloscopes back on earth. After briefly considering each individual case, the Minister decided whether or not to accept Druso’s suggestions, and then affixed on each card a seal that identified him as the person responsible for the decision.

As visitors, we were left out of all the examinations and deliberations except for the last case being considered, that of Antonio Olimpio, who had been admitted the day before and whose awakening we had witnessed.

We were amazed at the speed with which the data about the former landowner had been collected.

Aware of the importance this case had for us, the Instructor asked Hilario and I to identify Antonio’s picture and the accuracy of the statements that he had made under the magnetic influence to which he had been submitted.

We were very much interested in the solution to the problem, so we listened to the Minister, who agreed with the opinion of the institution as to the appropriateness of immediate help for the poor brother with his upcoming reincarnation into the family in which he had committed the wrong so that he could restore to the two brothers the land they had been expelled from. He added, however, that, according to the criminal’s own statements, there weren’t any any mitigating circumstances that could attenuate his guilt.

The director said that Antonio Olimpio had lived for himself, dominated by an insane egocentrism. He had thought only about what was good for himself. He had spent his money and time to no one's benefit but his own. He had lived in isolation, enjoying pernicious pleasures, and thus had not brought to the spirit world anyone's gratitude that might work in his favor. Consequently, in terms of affective support, he had only the sympathy of being born into his small family circle. Because of this, he was really a complicated friend whom it would be extremely difficult to help in his return to the physical experience.

Nonetheless, the magnanimous messenger recalled that his wife and son were indebted to his unsurpassable providence. According to the Law, those two souls were mentioned as positive elements for the delinquent, because any good done to whomever and wherever is a living resource benefiting the person who does it.

Summing up his conclusions, the messenger informed the small gathering that he would invite sister Alzira to tell us the steps already taken with regard to the process, and that he was not going to summon brother Luis, the son who had inherited the fortune, since he was incarnate in a physical body at that moment. Such a summons would only be justified under exceptional conditions.

The Minister prayed silently, and in response to the petition, we saw that the thin material covering the screen was moving slightly, allowing the appearance of the graceful figure of a beautiful woman.

Sister Alzira had arrived.

She seemed knowledgeable about what was happening because she didn't show any surprise.

She greeted us graciously and responded humbly to Sanzio's initial questions:

"Venerable benefactor, I understand my former husband's difficult position with regard to his commitments and I offer myself willingly to help him in his restorative endeavor. Moreover, I have been hoping for that opportunity because it would be a priceless blessing. Antonio Olimpio may have been his own brothers' executioner, killing them in order to usurp their possessions; however, for my son and for me, he was always a selfless and very dear friend and protector. To help him stand on his feet again is not only a duty for my soul but also a source of inexpressible joy."

The Minister looked at her in satisfaction, as if he had not expected any other answer, and said:

"But you know that the murdered brothers have held on to their hatred and have been persecuting him mercilessly until today."

"Yes. I know all about it," said the kind woman. "I know their avenging power... They snatched my husband from the stillness of the grave in order to satisfy themselves with dreadful vengeance, and they have never allowed me to get close to him in the valley of darkness where they have stayed for so many years... In addition, as a result of past debts, I too was assaulted by them by means of terrible obsession and died in the same lake where



they had lost their physical bodies. But that is no reason to give up. I am ready to serve in any way that I can be useful.”

Sanzio thought for a few seconds and then added:

“It will require time for Olimpio to recover enough for reincarnation. However, you can initiate the work of helping him with support from this place.”

And in response to the selfless wife’s expectant attitude, he continued:

“The victims of yesterday, having become the hardened tormenters of today, live on the estate that was stolen from them by their fratricidal brother, feeding the hate against his descendants and vexing their lives. So, you must go in person and beseech them to improve their attitudes so that they may be open to help from our organization in preparation for their physical rebirth when the time is right. After you have succeeded in this initial phase of your work of assistance, you will help with Olimpio’s return to his son’s home. In turn, you too will reincarnate thereafter to be his wife once more so that you may welcome Clarindo and Leonel into your arms as your beloved children, to whom Olimpio will restore their earthly existence and assets.”

A smile of happiness shone on the sublime woman’s face, and maybe because she had thoughts of fear, Sanzio came to her rescue:

“Don’t worry. You will be supported by Mansao Paz during all your contacts with our friends obsessed with revenge, and we will personally attend to all the matters involved in the transference of your activities to the estate with regard to the authorities you are subordinated to. Our unfortunate brothers will not be insensitive to your pleas... You suffered merciless attacks from them during your last days in the world, and the humility of those who suffer is an essential factor in the renewal of those who cause suffering.”

In tears of joyful gratitude, the noble woman kissed the Minister’s hand and left.

The simple, touching scene had a profound impact on us.

I could feel God’s immeasurable love laying the foundations of his unavoidable justice, and down deep I shouted in my own ears: “May you be praised O Father of Infinite Goodness, for you sow joy and hope even in the infernos of crime, just as you plant roses of beauty and fragrance in the midst of thorns!”

After being authorized by Druso, Madalena and Silvia approached the Minister and beseeched his intercession so that their husbands could be admitted to that establishment of peace and fraternity for the reconstruction of their future together. Sanzio welcomed their requests with affection and benevolence and ordered that both unfortunates be brought to the institute, promising to facilitate their reincarnation soon.

A subtle signal from the instructor told us that we were now free to ask questions; thus, impressed by what we had seen and heard, Hilario and I approached the venerable messenger intending to hear what he had to say so that we could take advantage of that time of rare and beautiful discussion.

## An Invaluable Discussion

To make our task easier, Druso introduced us more familiarly to Minister Sanzio and informed him that we were studying the laws of causality by observing some problem cases at Mansao. Hoping to access broader spheres of knowledge concerning destiny, we asked him about pain.

For a few moments the great messenger seemed to abdicate his elevated hierarchical status evidenced by his distinctive personality, and as much through his look as through the inflection of his voice, he now seemed more closely like us and seemed more casual.

“Pain, yes, pain...” he murmured compassionately as if he were mulling over a transcendent issue in the corners of his soul.

And looking at Hilario and me with unexpected tenderness, he emphasized almost sweetly:

“Like you, I have been studying it too, my sons. I am a humble servant of the abysses. I know firsthand the misery and wretchedness of many. I know brothers and sisters who have borne the stigma of horrendous suffering, animalized for centuries in the infernal precipices. However, in crossing the dense darkness, and even though the mystery of pain has torn at my heart, I’ve never seen a single individual that was forgotten by the Divine Goodness.”

As I listened to Sanzio’s wise and loving words, an inexpressible sentiment came over my entire soul.

Until now, I had had the opportunity to study with a good number of instructors, although only temporarily. From many of them, I had gleaned inspiring lessons and observations, but none had reached my mind with that mixture of rapture and caring, admiration and respect that was now emerging in my sentiments.

As Sanzio talked kindly, purplish silver scintillations hovered over his head, but it wasn’t his outward dignity that fascinated me. It was the caressing magnetism that he was able to exteriorize.

I had the impression that I was looking at my own father or mother, before whom I ought to be kneeling.

Totally incapable of controlling my emotions, burning tears rolled down my face.

I couldn’t tell if Hilario felt as I did, because I could see nothing in front of me but Sanzio and his humble greatness.

Where, O Lord – I silently asked in the folds of my soul – had that illustrious, and yet so humble, soul come from? Where had I seen those beautiful, clear eyes before?

Where had I once received the dew of his divine love, like a worm in a cave feeling the blessing of the sun’s warmth?

The Minister perceived what was going on inside me, like the teacher who perceives the student’s confusion, and as if he wanted to urge me to take advantage of the time, he remarked kindly:

“My son, you can ask me anything non-personal in nature and I will answer as best I can.”

I realized his noble intentions and I tried to get a hold of myself.

“Great benefactor,” I exclaimed, striving to ignore my sentiments, “may we hear what you might have to say about *karma*?”

Sanzio assumed his customary stance by the crystalline screen and began:

“Yes, *karma*, an ordinary expression among the Hindus and which means *action* in Sanskrit, actually implies *cause* and *effect*, since every action or movement is the result of previous causes or stimuli. For us, it means the account we all must pay, including all our debits and credits. There are accounts of this kind not only listing and defining individual persons but also peoples and races, states and institutions.”

The Minister paused as if to perceive that the subject was complex, and continued:

“In order to better understand *karma* or ‘the account of destiny created by us’, we must remember that the Governor of Life also has a bookkeeping system that is expressed in the mechanics of inalienable justice. If in the circle of earthly activities any organization needs to set up such a system in order to perform the tasks that are its responsibility, God’s Organization, which entails the whole universe, would not be able to function without order either. Because of this, the Divine Administration has knowledgeable departments for relating, preserving, commanding and enriching Cosmic Life, with everything governed under the magnanimity of the broadest love and the fairest justice. In the sublime heavenly regions of each world that is dedicated to intelligence, reason and the progress of God’s children shine the angelic genii responsible for efficiency, beauty, betterment and ascension of the Sublime Endeavor, with suitable ministries in charge of loans and postponements, special credits and extraordinary resources for all incarnate or discarnate spirits who deserve them because of their service to the Eternal Good; and in tormented regions like this one, swept by cyclones of regenerative pain, we have the authority to promote charges and auditing, readjustment and recovery of all those who made themselves multiple debtors to Divine Justice: authority that purifies evolutionary pathways and restricts the manifestations of evil. Thus, earth’s religions were right when they located heaven in the higher realms and hell in the lower ones, because in the former is the increasing glory of the universe, whereas in the latter is the purgation and renewal necessary for life so that it may purify itself and rise to the splendor of the heights.”

During a sudden pause, I could see that the Minister was willing to continue his conversation with us, and so I added:

“It’s exciting to know that Divine Providence is Perfect Magnanimity and is limitless as it generates treasure stores of love to be distributed abundantly to all God’s creatures; in addition, it is Vigilant Equity in the management and application of the universe’s assets.”

“In fact, it could not be otherwise,” said Sanzio kindly. “When it comes to the law of cause and effect, it is essential not to forget that everything in life, from the remotest constellations to the tiniest subatomic particle belong to God, whose unfathomable designs can change, renew, destroy or rebuild everything that has been made. Hence, we are simply users of nature, which manifests the Lord’s treasures, and we are responsible for all our actions as soon as we possess a little discernment. A spirit, wherever it may be, whether incarnate or discarnate on earth or on other worlds, in fact, spends something that doesn’t belong to it as it receives as loans from the Eternal Father the resources it uses to effectuate its own sublimation in knowledge and virtue. Material patrimonies and riches of intelligence, time and form, affections and honorific titles of any origin whatsoever are the property of the All-Merciful, who grants them to us temporarily so that we may use them for our own spiritual growth as we progress on the wide roads of experience in order to finally possess the eternal values synthesized in love and wisdom, and make use of them in the distant future to mirror His Sovereign Glory. From the electron to the astronomical giants on the cosmic canvas, everything comprises stores of God’s energies, which we use for our own benefit with his permission in order to work seriously on raising ourselves to His Sublime Majesty. Consequently, it is easy to understand that, after we have won the crown of reason, we have to give an accounting at the right time, for there is no progress without justice in the appraisal of our character.”

I instinctively remembered our erroneous concept of life on earth, where we are always ready to take undue possession of the resources of the human experience – land and houses, titles and favors, prerogatives and affections – and to drag around the shackles of the grossest selfishness.

Sanzio read my mind, because after a short pause, he emphasized with a fatherly smile:

“It is true that in the world the intelligent person knows good and well that any concept of exclusive ownership is no more than pure presumption. Yes, as a loan, everything in life is awarded by Divine Providence for a period of time since death acts as an implacable judge, transferring assets from some hands to others and recording with unequalled exactitude how each spirit uses all the advantages and concessions that were given to it by the Agents of Divine Goodness. In this example, we can see the principles of cause and effect in full manifestation, because in the use or misuse of the reserves of life that represent God’s eternal Ownership, each soul creates in its own conscience the credits and debits that will inevitably bring it joy and pain, ease or difficulty along the way. The more knowledge we have, the more we are responsible for what we do. Through our thoughts, words and actions, which invariably flow from the heart, we constantly spend and transform the Lord’s energies during our evolutionary journey in the sectors of life, and from the quality of our intentions

and applications, our sentiments and practical actions along the way, life organizes within us our agreeable or disagreeable account in light of the Laws of Destiny.”

At this point of the invaluable explanation, Hilario asked humbly:

“Dear Instructor, in light of the seriousness of this lesson, what should we understand by ‘good’ and ‘evil’?”

Sanzio made a gesture of kind tolerance and answered:

“Let’s avoid diving into the mazes of philosophy despite the respect it deserves, since we are not merely sparring with words. Above all, we must try to simplify things. It is easy to recognize good when our heart willingly nourishes itself before the Law. The good, my friend, is progress and happiness, safety and justice for all human beings and for all the creatures we meet on the road, and to whom we must dedicate ourselves exclusively, but without any coercion on the part of purely human rules, which would put us in a false position as regards service, since they would work from the outside inward, very often causing disorder and rebelliousness in our interior cosmos to our harm. Thus, the good is our willing cooperation with the Law on behalf of all, even if it means we have to renounce ourselves completely. We cannot ignore the fact that by helping the Law of the Lord and acting according to it, we ourselves will be helped and sustained in the field of imperishable values. And evil will always be represented by that sad tendency of keeping the good exclusively to ourselves, expressed in selfishness and vanity, insensitivity and pride, which portray the inferior lines of the spirit.”

After a short pause, the Minister added:

“Our Lord Jesus Christ is the paradigm of the Eternal Good on earth. Having given himself completely for the benefit of others, he didn’t hesitate to accept the supreme sacrifice on behalf of all so that good for all could prevail, even though only incomprehension and suffering, flagellation and death were reserved for him personally.”

In view of a momentary pause and because of my eagerness to understand, I dared ask:

“Kind friend, could you tell us something about the karmic indications we bring with us?”

Sanzio thought for a few moments and said:

“It is very difficult to grasp the meaning of the Divine Laws using the limited resources of human language. Nonetheless, I shall try by resorting to images that are as simple as possible. In spite of the inadequacy, we may compare the human sphere to the vegetable kingdom. Each plant produces at the right time according to its species, and each soul establishes the fortunate or unfortunate circumstances in which it finds itself according to its actions and through its sentiments, ideas and decisions during its evolutionary pilgrimage. At first, the plant is contained within the seed, and at the first of each new existence, the soul’s destiny is contained within the mind. Given time, the plant sprouts, grows, blossoms and produces fruit, and given time, the soul also sprouts beneath the sun of eternity, grows in knowledge and virtue, blossoms in beauty and understanding, and produces the fruit of love

and wisdom. However, a plant is a chrysalis of conscience that sleeps for long millennia, rigidly held to the principles of ordinary genetics that determine the traits it has inherited from its forbearers, whereas the human soul is an already-formed conscience that portrays within itself the laws that govern life, and it therefore possesses, to a certain extent, faculties with which to influence genetics and thus modify its structure, because the responsible conscience always inherits traits from its own self, adjusted to other consciences that are in tune with it. Our mind preserves in seed form all the pleasant or unpleasant incidents that will come back to it tomorrow, just as the tiny seed potentially contains within itself the productive plant that it will become in the future.”

At this point, a troubled Hilario asked:

“Doesn’t what you have said condone complete determinism? If right now our minds contain everything that is going to happen to us tomorrow...”

But Sanzio explained patiently:

“Yes, in the earliest stages of evolution determinism may be viewed as being irresistible: the mineral obeys the invariable laws of cohesion and the vegetable responds faithfully to organogenetic principles, but in the human consciousness reason and free will, knowledge and discernment affect the forces of destiny, conferring on the spirit the natural responsibilities it must possess regarding itself. For that reason, although we realize that we are subordinate to the effects of our own actions, we cannot forget that each one of us, within this relative determinism, is the result of our own conduct, which may mean quick liberation or a longer, increased or lessened imprisonment in our condition as souls indebted to the Law.”

“But even in the worst possible expiatory situations,” I asked, “doesn’t the conscience enjoy the rights inherent to free will?”

“And why not?” stated the Minister kindly. “Let’s imagine a monstrous criminal who has been segregated in a prison. Accused of many crimes, he has been deprived of any of the freedom he would experience in an ordinary cell. Even in this condition, if he were to use his time in prison to willingly work for the well-being of the authorities and his fellow inmates, accepting with humility and respect the decisions of the law that is used to correct him – such attitude being the result of his free will to help or harm himself – in a short time this prisoner would begin to attract the sympathy of those about him, thus advancing surely toward self-regeneration.”

The reasoning was clear, but not wanting to lose the thread of such a simple but invaluable lesson, I asked:

“Venerable benefactor, could you tell us what the best way would be to collaborate with the divine law for our spiritual development? Mightn’t there be a way to escape justice?”

Sanzio smiled and remarked:

“No one can escape divine justice, especially since our conscience, as it awakens to the sanctity of life, yearns to rightly pay all the debts that it has acquired regarding God’s

Goodness. However, the Infinite Love of the Heavenly Father shines on all processes of readjustment. Consequently, if we fail at this or that crucial experience needed to acquire the light that the Supreme Lord has reserved for us, we must adapt ourselves to the just recapitulation of our frustrated experiences by using the patrimony of time. Let's imagine, for example, a forty-year-old man who has turned coward in light of life's struggles, and thus commits suicide. This man enters the spirit world suffering the immediate consequences of his unfortunate act, and depending on the attenuating or aggravating reasons for his desertion, he will have to spend a long or lesser time recomposing the cells of his perispirit. When the time finally comes for him to deserve the reward of a new physical body, among the trials he will have to go through will be the overwhelming temptation to commit suicide again at the exact age in which he forsook his responsibilities the previous time. This is so because the destructive images he has stored in his mind will surface through a phenomenon we may call 'reflex circumstances.' These reflex circumstances give rise to deep emotional imbalances that will, of course, put him in contact with the unbalancing forces that are in tune with his temporary way of being. If this man has not saved up renewing and educational resources through learning and the practice of fraternity so as to overcome the inevitable crisis, it will be very hard for him to avoid committing suicide again because, despite being reinforced from the outside, temptations have their starting point within us and they feed on what is already there."

This explanation was invaluable and so I asked again with the respectful curiosity of a student interested in learning:

"How can people prepare themselves properly to pay the price of their freedom?"

Sanzio did not hesitate and promptly replied:

"Like all debtors who work to pay off their commitments. Of course, those who have a lot of debt must accept restrictions on their comfort so that they can cleanse their debts by saving money to do so. Consequently, they cannot live like spendthrifts but must live with abstinence and sweat in order to free themselves from such a repressive existence as soon as possible."

The kindly instructor paused briefly as if he needed to reflect, and continued:

"Let's go back to the symbol of the plant. Let's imagine that an orange seed has fallen on infertile, dry soil. According to the laws that govern agricultural activities, it will germinate amidst constraining obstacles and will become a withered bush that is only capable of a sorry production when the time comes. But if the orchard keeper sees to its needs and demands as it begins its struggle by fertilizing, watering and protecting it, as well as pruning it at the right time, the orange tree will respond wonderfully to its fate... Such attention, however, must be given at just the right time; that is, when the soul is incarnate, and insofar as is possible, it must begin this renewal during the most appropriate moments of the physical journey."

Hilario had been following the lesson and was as fascinated as I was by the logic of those wise and simple words. He asked:

"But what happens when people in childhood and adolescence cannot count on teachers

who are dedicated to the good and who are capable of acting as diligent orchard keepers for those who are returning to the human struggle?”

“Of course,” said the Minister, “childhood and adolescence are the most appropriate times for incarnate souls to build the moral fortress with which they must gradually weave the crown of victory they must attain. Nevertheless, it is crucial to understand that, for the conscious spirit, the will itself symbolizes the orchard keeper, and the fertilizing, watering and pruning represent the incessant work to which we must dedicate our will in the recomposing of our destinies. In light of this, every minute in life is important for our renewal, redemption, growth and purification. We can understand that the storm, as a symbol of crisis, will strike everyone at a particular moment, but those who can count on a safe harbor will overcome the danger with fearlessness and courage.”

The explanation pierced our minds like sunbeams penetrating a dark cubicle.

My colleague, however, raised another question:

“Action by action, we also have a lot of work to do after the death of the body. Since we commit wrongs while incarnate and thus often times suffer their consequences here, do we have to suffer while incarnate for the deplorable actions we commit here?”

“Absolutely,” confirmed Sanzio, kindly. “Our actions against the Divine Law, which is, invariably, the Good for Everyone, may be corrected wherever we are. So, there are expiations both on earth and in heaven. Many discarnates flounder in unruly passions that border on crime, especially obsession, despite being warned by their own conscience and the wise advice of benevolent instructors. They create for themselves heavy, afflictive debts toward life, and paying them off demands struggle and sacrifice for a long, long time. Speaking of which, we must remember that, in most cases, our efforts at readjustment in the spirit life before reincarnation mitigate our situation, guaranteeing us a childhood and adolescence full of hope and peace in preparation for the recapitulations of adulthood, except, of course, for issues requiring difficult and immediate expiation, when the soul is compelled to endure profound suffering, quite often while still in the maternal womb, as well as the disappointments, illnesses, humiliations and pains of old age or of protracted diseases before the grave. These various pains, anguishes and sufferings lessen our accounts as debtor spirits, granting us a blessed truce at the beginning of our stay in the spirit realm right after our pilgrimage through the physical arena.

“When they reach old age, most incarnates usually dedicate the last phases of their lives to meditation and reflection, serenity and tenderness. Childish minds, even in the waning of their physical strength, continue to be thoughtless and irresponsible, but minds that have matured in knowledge intuitively make use of old age or pain to think more securely, whether by devoting themselves to the faith in religious temples, thereby enjoying a broader inner balance, or by devoting themselves to charity, by which they dilute their less-than-desirable memories, thus preparing with praiseworthy judgment and admirable wisdom for the inevitable trip to the Greater Life.”

I concluded from Druso’s look that our discussion was about to end, but I risked one last



question:

“My dear Minister, understanding that there are debts that because of their nature and extent demand from us several lifetimes to pay off, how can we evaluate them from the memory point of view? I, for instance, feel that I still have enormous past debts to pay, although I cannot remember them at the moment.”

“Yes, yes,” he explained, “the problem is time. To the degree that we linger here in our perispirit faithfully fulfilling our obligations before the Law, the more our power of memory will be enhanced. By growing in lucidity we can encompass broader realms of memory. That is why, after many years of serving in earth’s spirit regions, we voluntarily access our less happy memories, thus identifying more extensions of our *karma* or our *account*. Although we may be grateful for the benevolence of the Instructors and Friends who forgive our unworthy past, we are never lenient toward our own weaknesses, and that is why we are compelled to ask the higher authorities for another difficult but invaluable reincarnation that can help in our re-education or bring us closer to the redemption we need. Understand?”

Yes, we did.

Sanzio looked at the director as if to tell him our time was up and Druso told us that we shouldn’t detain the helpful, generous Instructor any longer.

We thanked him humbly for the lessons. The Minister returned to the brightly lit screen, where the fog began once more to get denser, finally hiding the venerable figure from our sight.

After a few minutes, the room returned to its normal appearance and Druso’s moving prayer ended the unforgettable meeting.

## 8

# Preparations for the Return

Studying at Mansao Paz was fascinating, but it demanded time.

Nevertheless, the opportunity we had been offered was invaluable.

Hilario and I got permission from the proper authorities to begin a profitable course of work. We would be at the institute for a few months in order to learn and make observations.

Consequently, we offered to work with Silas on the “Antonio Olimpio case,” whose initial phase we had witnessed with fervent interest.

Six days after the gathering when we heard our esteemed Minister Sanzio, Alzira arrived at the institute to take part in the plan that Druso had mapped out regarding her future tasks.

Having been appointed by the director, Silas asked her to join us, stating that we would be working together on the case.

After the usual greetings, the noble spirit explained that she was being supported by friends from a particular assistance colony, and that she had been doing everything she could to help her son Luis, whom she had left behind on earth.

Luis’s spirit was in tune with his former father’s sentiments and had become too attached to material things – she told us – and was suffering an awful obsession in his own home. Under the obstinate watchfulness of his two discarnate uncles who were reinforcing his miserliness, he was holding on to a large fortune without using it for anything. He had developed an incredible lust for money. He was subjecting his wife and two children to all kinds of hardships because he was afraid of losing the wealth that he was doing everything to protect and increase. The two uncles Clarindo and Leonel weren’t satisfied with merely tormenting his mind, and in order to increase his greediness, they had brought to the plantation discarnate misers and rural tyrants, whose thoughts were still entangled in earthly wealth. Luis was thus living in a world of strange images, in which money was the dominant feature. Consequently, he had lost sight of his social integrity. He had become an enemy of education and believed only in the power of a safe full of money to solve life’s problems. He had acquired an unhealthy fear of all situations in which unexpected expenses might arise. He kept large sums in bank accounts that his wife did not even know about, as well as an enormous stash at home. He deliberately avoided spending time with his family, neglected his personal appearance, and had become mired in a deplorable misanthropy, obsessed by the wealth-related nightmare that was consuming his existence.

Next, in an effort to guide our future activities, Alzira told us that her brothers-in-law had drowned shortly after she had gotten married, when her son was just starting to walk, and that six years after the tragic event, she too had discarnated in that awful lake. Antonio Olimpio had survived her in the physical realm for almost fifteen years, and for exactly twenty more years he had been suffering in the darkness. Hence, Luis was now a fully grown man with forty years of the physical existence under his belt.

When the Assistant asked Alzira about her attempts to help her discarnate husband, she said that it had been practically impossible because the two victims had become fierce guardians of the unfortunate delinquent. And since she wasn't being shielded by any teams doing assistance work, the tormenters weren't allowing her near her son. Even so, on fortuitous occasions she had managed to offer some assistance to him, her daughter-in-law and her two grandchildren, but doing so had proven extremely difficult because the obsessors were constantly on the lookout and were determined to fight her influence.

During a momentary pause in our conversation, Alzira humbly asked Silas if Mansao could arrange for her to visit her husband before going to look for her son as planned.

The Assistant kindly agreed and the three of us took her to the room where Antonio Olimpio was resting.

Approaching his bed and seeing that he was still prostrated and unconscious, I noticed that Alzira's face had changed considerably. Uncontrolled tears streamed from her grief-filled eyes. She stroked his head and it seemed to me that his face was slowly changing back to normal. She spoke his name several times.

The patient finally opened his eyes and stared at us with an expressionless face while mumbling incoherently.

Realizing his deplorable mental state, Alzira asked Silas for permission to pray with us for her husband, a request that was gladly granted.

To our surprise, Alzira bent down over the bed and held him close to her like a loving mother holding her sick child. She looked up tearfully to heaven and pleaded humbly, in accordance with her faith:

“Most Holy Mother!

“Guardian angel of all those shipwrecked on the earth, have mercy on us and extend your sweet and pure hands to us!

“I know, dear Lady, that you are not deaf to our pleas and that no one has ever gone unanswered when addressing you in affliction and pain.

“We know that your compassionate heart is a light for those who have gone astray in the darkness of crime, and love for all those immersed in the abysses of hatred.

“You forgave those who crucified your Divine Son on the cross, and besides the patience with which you bore their insults, you even came down from heaven, offering them your protective arms!

“Kind Mother, you who have uplifted the fallen along the roads of so many earthly generations; you who mercifully heal the wounds of all who have become hardened in cruelty, cast your merciful gaze upon my husband and me, yoked as we are to the consequences of two murders that make our hearts bleed. We are entwined together in the webs of our moral delinquency. Although I was not with him on those ghastly waters as he waited for his brothers to drown, I too am partly responsible for the crime.

“Dear Mother of Heaven, my husband’s heart must have been enveloped in a dark cloud when he made the insane decision that has stained our consciences.

“To others, he may have been a criminal who stole other people’s money and caused the death of his own brothers, but not to my son and I, who have always enjoyed the highest expressions of his love... To others, he is a defendant before the law... To us, however, he is a companion and faithful friend... To others he may seem a selfish man without any right to forgiveness, but to us he is a benefactor who watched over us on earth with immeasurable tenderness.

“How can I not be a selfish criminal too, dear Mother, if I enjoyed the result of his deed and fed on the love in his heart? How can I not be responsible too if all his guilt was tied to the objective – however insane – of ensuring my status as a wife and mother?!

“Plead our case, O Heavenly Mediator!

“Enable us to return together to the flesh in which we erred so that we may expiate our wrongs!

“Grant me the grace of following him as a happy, grateful servant, once again linked to the person to whom I owe so much happiness!

“Bring us together again in the world and help us to faithfully restore everything we stole from others.

“Divine Angel, do not allow us to even dream of heaven before we have paid all our debts on earth, and help us to accept with dignity the pain that rebuilds and saves!

“Dear Mother, help us!

“Star of our lives, rescue us from the darkness of the valley of death!”

Right in front of us, something unexpected happened that led us to ecstasy.

As she spoke in tears, Alzira was crowned in sapphirine splendor.

The gentle light radiating from her heart inundated the entire room, and as soon as her halting and gasping voice went mute, a magnificent outpouring of silvery light came down from Above onto all of us, particularly the patient, who let out a long moan of humanized and conscious pain.

Alzira’s prayer had produced a result that even Druso’s magnetic procedures had failed to achieve.

Antonio Olimpio suddenly opened his eyes wide, his face showing the lucidity of those

awakening from a long, tortured sleep... He stirred, feeling his wife's tears on his face as she kissed him tenderly. Then he shouted with wild joy:

“Alzira! Alzira!”

She held him close to her with even more tenderness as if she wanted to allay his tormented spirit, but obeying a signal from Silas, two nurses stepped forward to put him back to sleep.

I tried to say something to the sublime woman whose prayer had lifted us to such peaks of emotion, but I was at a loss for words.

Only those who have traveled for many, many years in the mist of longing and anguish for their loved ones could understand the emotion that had irresistibly touched us all. I tried to look at Hilario's face but my friend had immersed his head in his hands, and looking at the valiant Assistant, I saw that Silas was wiping the tears from his eyes.

I felt comforted.

The great hearts of that house of love were weeping as much as I was – miserable sinner that I am, struggling to eradicate my deficiencies. Looking at Alzira, now standing and stroking the wretch's hair, I got the impression that an angel from heaven was visiting a penitent in hell.

Silas broke the silence, offering his arm to the selfless woman as we left, explaining kindly:

“Your prayer did him a lot of good, but it is advisable to awaken him only gradually. Natural, reparative sleep is still necessary for a full recovery.

Alzira seemed calmer, despite the mental strain of the reunion.

We enjoyed many more minutes of invaluable conversation in the various work sectors of the vast institute, until the time came for the four of us to set out eagerly on the road that, for our sister, represented the way back to her old home.

On the terrestrial landscape, the dawn was filled with a thin, cold fog.

Back at the old sites that had meant so much pain, Alzira couldn't hide her emotions.

Lightly supported on Silas's arm, she pointed here and there to this or that field or stretch of road that brought back the most powerful memories.

Suddenly, on a narrow plain we saw the buildings where Alzira had lived out her tragic drama.

The moonlight revealed a well-built complex in obvious decay. Extensive courtyards exhibited large gardens ruined by the constant trampling of grazing cattle. Broken gates, fallen fences and dirt-covered porches silently spoke of the residents' negligence.

Strange spirits, hidden in large dark hoods, were walking to and fro as if unaware of each others' presence.

Visibly scared of being heard, Olimpio's wife whispered:

"Those are discarnate misers surreptitiously brought here by Clarindo and Leonel in order to fortify the greediness in my son's spirit."

"Can't they see us?" asked Hilario, understandably intrigued.

"No," confirmed Silas. "Of course, they are aware of our presence, but from what I can tell, they are so obsessed with their thoughts that they aren't concerned about us being here, provided we don't penetrate their mental field or share their interests."

"In other words," I commented, "if we said something to them about earthly wealth, exciting their love for human possessions, they would readily give us their full attention."

"Exactly."

"Well, why don't we?" asked my companion, curiously.

"We shouldn't waste our time," answered my friend, "especially because our job is at hand and we are still not sure how it will play itself out."

We went inside the house and were appalled by what was going on. Horrific-looking discarnate spirits were coming and going down the long hallways, mumbling crazily to themselves.

I tried to make out some of what they were saying and discovered that gold was the main topic of all the soliloquies that were crossing the air haphazardly.

As if perceiving the drama more acutely, Silas suddenly stopped. Leaving the three of us in a distant corner of an old room, he disappeared after telling us to cautiously wait for him to return.

He planned to examine the prospects of the work ahead of us.

After a few minutes, he returned.

He led Alzira to the room where the lady of the house, Adelia, was relaxing with her children. He told us that it wouldn't be appropriate right now for Alzira to meet the two brothers-turned-tormentors. So we left her in the care of Hilario, who obviously would have rather come with us than stay behind, tending to the imperatives of protection.

When the Assistant and I were alone, he explained that, in order for our help to be profitable, we needed more than anything else to know how to listen. Therefore, I shouldn't get in his way in case I found anything strange about what he was doing.

I understood what Silas meant, and prepared myself to observe, learn and contribute quietly.

We went into a small room, where someone was fondling large packets of currency with a malicious smile.

To provide me with as much information as possible, the Assistant whispered in my ear:

"This is Luis. Freed from the physical body during sleep, he has come to fondle the

money that nourishes his passions.”

Luis was a mature, unkempt man with a still-young looking face. As his eyes lingered over on the bills, he had a strange expression of triumphant cupidity.

He glanced around hastily with the indifference of someone who couldn't see us. After about a minute, as if he were guarded by unseen, monstrous dogs, two very unpleasant looking discarnate men entered the room. Looking at us, one of them asked rudely:

“Who are you? Tell me who you are!”

“Friends,” replied Silas mechanically.

“Well,” the man continued, “the only people allowed in this house are those who know the value of money...”

And pointing at Luiz:

“... so that he doesn't forget to safeguard our fortune.”

Intuitively, I concluded that the two were Clarindo and Leonel, the brothers robbed in the past.

Because we obviously owed them some sort of explanation, considering the menacing expectation with which they followed our slightest movements, Silas continued:

“Yes, yes... Who wouldn't appreciate his own fortune?”

“Rightly said! Rightly said!” answered both persecutors, happily rubbing their hands together in the joy of supposedly having found more fuel for the fire of revenge to which they had surrendered with frightening madness. Clarindo, the more brutish of the two, immediately trusted us due to the Assistant's assuring words, and began by saying:

“We were the victims of terrible treachery and lost our bodies at the hands of a wretched brother who pilfered our fortune. Now we are here to serve justice.”

Laughing strangely, he added:

“That bastard thought that death would erase his crime, and that we, the wretches who died at his hands, would be reduced to ashes and dust. He stole everything we had after faking the spectacular accident in which he murdered us without mercy. But what good has it done him to enjoy what was ours, since there is no death after all and since criminals, whether in or out of the body, are chained to the consequences of their deeds? That thief will suffer the results of his villainy against us. His son lives here, and we will control his slightest movements until the day our rightful fortune is restored to us.”

For a considerable amount of time, they both rattled off a long list of complaints, reinforcing the colors of the sinister mental picture into which they had settled. And perhaps tired of hammering at the same accusations without any response on our part, they made a lengthy pause. Clarindo finally broke the silence, addressing the Assistant in a bitter tone:

“Well, don't you think we're right?”

“Yes,” Silas approved enigmatically, “we all have our reasons; even so...”

“Even so?” interrupted Leonel, a bit cynical. “Would you perchance be thinking about interfering with our plans?”

“No, not at all,” my friend assured them jovially. “I just wanted to say that I too used to fight a lot for money, believing that I was in the right.”

Maybe because this rather dubious remark startled them, Silas took advantage of the natural expectation and asked:

“My friends, we have noticed that this house is largely occupied by demented brothers of ours. Are they all creditors of this unfortunate family?”

The knowing look that Silas gave me told me that his friendly questioning was meant to gain the trust of the puzzled avengers.

Leonel, who seemed to be the leader of the criminal enterprise, promptly answered:

“Well, until now,” he said impassively, “we have had to split our time between father and son, and in order to do so, we temporarily brought in insane misers. As discarnates, they can only think about the gold and assets they used to adore in the world, thus making our task easier. They follow the miser around and force him to live as much as possible with his mind shackled to the money he loves with crazed passion.”

“However, for the time being,” stated Clarindo, visibly hurt, “the criminal we had confined in the darkness has been snatched from us. No matter. That gives us more time to strengthen our revenge. The son shall pay double, since the actual murderer has been hidden from us.”

Instead of rushing to the defense of the truth and the good, the Assistant said calmly:

“What you’ve said leads us to believe that, besides his sickly attachment to precarious human wealth, this man,” and he pointed to Luis, who continued to seem fascinated with the stacks of currency in the over-stuffed drawer, “also suffers the pressure of other minds as delusional as his own in the illusions of material possessions. In this case, the sick desire that has seized him has increased to the maximum.”

Realizing that Silas was getting to the core of the issue with surprising ease, Leonel explained enthusiastically:

“Yes, we learned in the schools for avengers<sup>[1]</sup> that, besides our ordinary, immediate desires at every phase of life, we all possess a *central desire* or *basic theme* in our innermost interests. Therefore, besides the normal thoughts that bind us to our daily routines, we more frequently emit the thoughts that originate in the *central desire* that characterizes us. These thoughts eventually comprise the dominant reflection of our personality. This makes it easy to perceive anyone’s nature on any plane just by analyzing their occupations and places of preference. Thus, cruelty is the reflection of the criminal, covetousness the reflection of the miser, defamation the reflection of the slanderer, sarcasm the reflection of the cynic, and anger the reflection of the disturbed person, just as moral elevation is the reflection of the



saint... Once we discover the reflection of the individual we want to rectify or punish, it is very simple to overwhelm the person with unceasing stimuli, reinforcing the impulses and images already in his mind and creating new ones to superimpose over the old ones, thereby continually feeding his mental fixation. With this objective in mind, all we have to do is bring the pernicious individual we want to correct into contact with others that adapt to his manner of feeling and being, especially when we ourselves don't have the time to create all the appropriate mental screens through hypnotic procedures. Using such processes, we can easily create and maintain his *psychic delirium* or *obsession*, which is nothing more than an abnormal state of the mind that is dominated by the excess of its own creations pressing in on the sensorial field. This can be infinitely added to by the direct or indirect influence of other incarnate or discarnate minds that are attracted by their own reflections.”

And smiling, the intelligent persecutor stated sarcastically:

“Everyone is tempted on the outside by the temptation they feed on the inside.”

As for me, I was astonished. I had never heard an apparently common obsessor with so much knowledge and awareness about his role.

It seemed like I was taking a quick course on cold and uncanny mental sadism.

Silas, who had much more experience than I in dealing with spirits in that condition, didn't express any sentiments of pity or dread on his serene face.

Nevertheless, displaying a great interest in Leonel's discourse, he considered:

“Your explanation is, without a doubt, perfect. Each of us lives and breathes in our own mental reflections, collecting the happy or unhappy influences that keep us in the situations we seek out... Heaven or the higher realms are comprised of the reflections of sanctified spirits, whereas hell...”

“...is the reflection of ourselves,” completed Leonel with a peal of laughter.

I think that Silas was remembering my interest in learning as much as possible, because he asked Leonel to give us a practical demonstration of what he had stated theoretically. He gladly agreed:

“This miser here has plans to buy or extort a nearby plot of land at any cost, even if it is an illegal transaction. His aim is to increase the value of the existing water reserves on our land. Since it is an issue concerning the essential theme of his existence, i.e. greed, he will easily receive the images I want to send him. I just have to access the appropriate mental wave in which his thoughts are usually expressed.”

And putting his words into action, he placed his hand on Luis's forehead with the deep attention of a hypnotizer commanding his subject.

We saw our poor friend, disconnected from his physical body, open his eyes wide with the lust of a starving person who sees a savory dish from a distance. Displaying a look of satisfied maliciousness, he said to himself:

“Now! Now! The land will be mine! All mine!! Nobody will compete with my prices!

Nobody!”

He immediately hurried from the room with the unmistakable look of a madman.

We followed him outside, and from the broad porch we watched him walking quickly and finally disappearing into the nearby woods on his way to the adjoining plantation.

“Did you see that?” asked Leonel happily. “I transmitted a fantastic image to his mental field, making it look like his neighbor’s land was about to be auctioned off, at long last falling into his hands. All I had to do was visualize a mental picture of the farm being for sale and he took it as being absolutely real, because, when it comes to our fundamental reflection, we tend to believe in what we want to happen... As soon as I stop the controlled flow of my hypnotic suggestion, he’ll return to his physical body, drooling at his dream of the bankruptcy of the farm he wants to possess.”

With obvious intentions, Silas added serenely:

“Ah, yes!... This is an example of the transmission of images, somewhat similar to the principles used in television transmission in the field of electronics, so much in vogue on the terrestrial plane at the moment. We know that each of us is a creative fulcrum of life, with specific traits of transmission and reception. The mental field of the hypnotizer, who creates in his own imagination the thought-forms that he wants to exteriorize, is similar to the video camera of the ordinary broadcaster, and this device, in turn, is intrinsically similar to the darkroom in photography. The hypnotizer molds the image from which he proposes to extract the best effect and projects it over the mental field of the person being hypnotized, who then acts like the TV mosaic or the film in the camera. We know that in the transmission of images from afar, the mosaic collects the scenes that the camera is viewing and acts like a sensitized mirror, converting the luminous traces into electrical impulses and sending them to the receiver, which receives them through special antennas and reconstitutes the images through video signals and projects them onto the screen of the ordinary receptor. In the case at hand, Leonel, you created the images you wanted to transmit to Luis’s mind, and using the positive forces of your will, you colored them with the resources of concentration in your own mind, which worked like a video camera. Then, you used mental energy – which is more potent than electronic power – to project the images like a true hypnotizer onto Luis’s mental field, which in turn worked like a mosaic, transforming the impressions received into magnetic impulses, reconstituting the thought-forms molded by you in your brain centers with the help of the nerves that played the role of specialized antennas, fixating their particularities in the realm of the senses in a perfect hallucinatory game, where sound and image mesh harmoniously, as happens in television, where image and sound mix with the efficient support of suitable equipment, presenting on the receptor a sequence of pictures we might call *technical illusions*.”

The two avengers, as much as I, listened to this explanation in awe.

A true psychologist, the Assistant made use of an argument that was on the same level of the one expressed by Leonel, obviously to make it clear to him that he, Silas, also knew the processes of obsession in all its details.

Leonel looked at him with admiration and exclaimed:

“My friend, my friend, which school do you come from? Your intelligence interests us.”

Silas pronounced a few monosyllables, and under the pretext that we had work to do, said that it was time to leave.

Familiar with rebelliousness, the two brothers exchanged a strange look as if telling each other that we belonged to some distant infernal group, and that it would be best not to upset us.

However, they insisted that we come back the next day in order to exchange ideas, an invitation Silas accepted with obvious satisfaction.

A few minutes later, the Assistant and I picked up Alzira and Hilario and headed back to Mansao.

The esteemed Assistant kept quiet on the way back, just thinking, thinking...

Nevertheless, noticing my perplexity, he clarified fraternally:

“No, Andre. It’s still too soon to introduce Alzira to the wretched persecutors. From what Leonel said, I can see that we have crossed paths with two powerful minds, whose initial modification must be done with love in order to proceed safely. We will return tomorrow without Alzira for a more solid and therefore more worthwhile understanding.”

And so I anxiously looked forward to the next day.

[1] The spirit is referring to organizations maintained by criminal intelligences, temporarily hiding out in the lower zones. – Spirit Auth.

## 9

# Silas's Story

The next evening, Hilario and I accompanied the Assistant back to Luis's house.

Antonio Olimpio's brothers gave us a warm welcome.

The family and two farmhands had gathered in the large kitchen for a quick meal.

The clock showed 9:00 p.m.

Luis's facial expression was much like that of the day before, despite the difference on his physical mask.

As Adelia cuddled the sleepy children, her husband commented on the radio news program, which was reporting on alarming topics regarding the economic sector. His listeners were highly concerned as Luis brought up public problems, talked about imaginary calamities, criticized politicians and administrators, referred to coffee and manioc plagues, and focused most especially on epizooties<sup>[1]</sup>.

Lastly, since he wasn't satisfied with listing all of earth's calamities, he spoke irrationally about the supposed wrath of heaven, affirming his belief that the end of the world was near and clamoring against the selfishness of the rich, which was only making matters worse for the poor.

We were all quietly listening to him, when the more-confident Leonel remarked to the Assistant:

"See that?" and he pointed at Luis, whose discussion dominated the small family gathering. "That man is defeatism in the flesh. He sees everything in terms of ashes and mire. He has a strong opinion about social disasters and he knows all about the poorest areas of collective indigence; even so, he can't let go of just one cent of his millions in order to help those who suffer from nakedness and hunger."

And after an ironic smile:

"Do you still think he deserves the fortune of a physical body?"

Silas contemplated the characters of the domestic scene with immense compassion on his kind face and remarked:

"Leonel, all your comments would seem logical and true at first. On the surface, Luis is a prime example of pessimism and miserliness. However, deep down he is very sick and in need of compassion. There are diseases of the soul that can ruin the mind for a long, long

time. But what kind of person would he be if he were supported by other influences? Spiritually suffocated by the visions of the earthly fortune with which his mind is being assailed, the poor wretch has lost all contact with good books and worthy friends. His only help has been the Sunday religion of believers who think they are free of any obligations having to do with their faith so long as they worship God on weekends. Who could say what beneficial changes he might make if he could receive a different type of assistance?"

Clarindo and Leonel registered Silas's comments as if they had received a blow, evidenced by the expression of displeasure in their smoldering eyes.

"Just the same, both he and his father owe us... They robbed us, murdered us," justified Leonel with the tone of a spoiled and intelligent child contradicted in his whims.

"And what would you like them to do about it?" asked the unruffled Assistant.

"Pay up!... They have to pay up!" shouted Clarindo, clenching his fists.

Silas smiled and argued:

"Yes, pay up is the right verb... but how can someone pay up if his creditor eliminates every possibility for doing so? There's no doubt that we must right our wrongs... Nevertheless, if our duty today is to repair a road we damaged yesterday, how can we if they've chopped our hands off? Christ himself said, 'Help your enemies.'<sup>[2]</sup> I often think that such a statement, if correctly interpreted, means: 'Help your enemies so that they can pay the debts they have entangled themselves in, thereby restoring the balance of life; you and they both will be benefited with peace.'"

One could see that, with the sympathy he had won the day before and with his unpretentious and clear arguments, the Assistant had acquired unquestionable moral ascendancy over the hardened obsessors. Nonetheless, Leonel asked apprehensively:

"What are you talking about? Are you some kind of priest in disguise? Are you going to try and change us?"

"No, my friend," replied the Assistant. "If I want anything from our fraternal communion, it is my own renewal."

And maybe because there was a long pause, Silas continued:

"During my last passage on the earth, I too fell prey to the seduction of money. The passion for possessions dominated all my thoughts... My fascination for gold had such a hold on me that in spite of having received a medical degree from a reputable university, I refused to work as a doctor so that I could keep a close eye on my old father. I wanted to keep him from getting too free with our assets. The attachment to our properties and chattels made me a reprobate within our family paradise. It made me ill-tempered and inhuman, and of course I was loathed by all the subordinates living within the vast circle of my temporary domination... In order to pile up money and easy profits, I began with cruelty and wound up in the web of crime... I loathed friendship, despised the weak and the poor, and because I was afraid of losing the fortune whose total possession I desired, I didn't hesitate to adopt moral delinquency as an infernal partner on my horrific journey."

As I listened to the Assistant's story, I was suddenly taken with enormous surprise.

Was Silas telling the naked truth or was he taking extreme measures at that moment, unduly incriminating himself in order to regenerate the two persecutors?

At any rate, Hilario and I had promised we wouldn't compromise his work, and so we tacitly limited ourselves to listening to him attentively.

Obviously sensing that Leonel and Clarindo had been touched somewhat and were thus open to new thoughts, Silas invited us all outside.

He said that he wanted to tell us a little about his own experience, but that he preferred to do so before the blessed altar of the night so that his memory could serenely recall all the facts.

Outside, the stars shone like suspended homes of the creation, and the scented breeze seemed to be offering to take our prayer or our words swiftly to the Glory of Heaven.

Unable to grasp the true meaning of the Assistant's unexpected attitude, I could see that he was indeed deeply moved, as if he were setting the eyes of his soul on far-off scenes.

Naturally overcome by the sympathy radiating from Silas's face, Clarindo and Leonel gazed at him submissively.

Silas began in a halting voice:

“As far as I can remember regarding my last journey through the physical realms, I surrendered to the love of money early on in childhood, which makes me certain that I had been a hateful, avaricious miser many, many times before. From what my selfless instructors have told me, I know that in my last existence, just as on other occasions, I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth so that I could experience the temptation of abundant wealth and conquer it through a strong will applied in the incessant cultivation of fraternal love. But to my misfortune, I failed completely. I was the only son of an honest man who had inherited a considerable fortune from his grandparents. My father was a respectable lawyer who, because of his personal wealth, never practiced his profession. However, he was profoundly studious and kept himself constantly surrounded by rare books and societal obligations, which, to a certain extent, kept him from thinking about faith. My mother, however, was a devout Roman Catholic of noble conduct, and although she never tried to force her religion on us, she tried to teach us the duty of beneficence. I remember – with late regret – her reiterated invitations for us to join her in the tasks of Christian charity, but my father and I always refused indifferently, encased in our conceited and smiling irreverence. My mother quickly perceived that my poor spirit had brought with it the poison of greediness, and realizing that it would be very hard to work for the inner renewal of my father – a full-grown man accustomed since early childhood to financial control – she focused her plans of spiritual growth on me. To do so, she encouraged me to like medicine, telling me that I would find the best opportunities to help my neighbor alongside human suffering, and would thus make myself pleasing to God, even if I was incapable of storing up the resources of faith. Deep down, I scorned the sacred hopes of that spirit who was the dearest to my soul. Even so, I was

unable to resist her loving insistence, so I dedicated myself to a medical career, but I was much more interested in exploiting rich patients, whose ailments would, of course, offer me ample material advantages. However, a few days before my anticipated graduation, my relatively young mother left the physical realm, the victim of a heart attack. Our grief was enormous. I received my medical diploma as if it were a hated memory, and in spite of my dear father's encouragement, I didn't practice the profession I had earned. Now more than ever mired in greed, I withdrew into the close quarters of the home and only left it for places of amusement and relaxation. I followed the disposition of my mother's estate so closely that my strange attitude surprised even my father, who may have been selfish and careless, but never as miserly as I was. To my moral ruin, I understood that if I didn't waste it, the fortune I had inherited would set me above any financial needs of a material nature for years to come... Even so, when I found out that my father was getting married again at almost sixty, I did everything I could to dissuade him indirectly. However, he was a man who stuck to his decisions and he married Aida, a young woman my age, barely thirty years old... I regarded my stepmother as an intruder in our family circle, and taking her for an ordinary gold digger looking for an easy fortune, I swore revenge. Despite the kind invitations from the two, and notwithstanding the gentle treatment the poor girl gave me, I always had an excuse to avoid her company. The new marriage, however, started to demand from my father broader sacrifices in the societal world that Aida had no intentions of forsaking. Consequently, after a few months he had to seek medical help and to accept the advice for some rest. I followed his organic decay with great concern. It was not my father's health that worried me but our family's immense financial resources. In the event of the sudden death of the man who had brought me into existence, there was no way that I would agree to share the inheritance with a woman who, to my mind, unduly occupied my mother's place."

The Assistant made a long pause as we looked at his melancholy face.

Astonished by what I was hearing, I kept asking myself if all that had really taken place... Was he really talking about himself, Silas, or was he just making the story up in order to change the persecutors' behavior?

I wasn't able to ask any questions, however, because Silas, as if longing to punish himself with his dolorous confession, continued with more details:

"Without offending my sick father, I began constructing criminal plans as to what would be the best way to keep Aida from any future access to our assets. Of all the schemes that came to mind, I even considered my stepmother's death as a possible solution. But how could I get rid of her without causing more suffering to the man I wanted to save? Above all, wouldn't it be better to make her look blameworthy in his eyes so that he would not miss the woman I would be condemning to destitution? I was plotting in silence and darkness, when the opportunity I was hoping for finally presented itself... My father and his wife were invited to a public ceremony and he asked me to go with Aida in his stead... For the first time, I gladly agreed... My intention was to get a firsthand look at what she liked... Pernicious plans took root in my mind... Thus, at a festive banquet, I got to know Armando, my stepmother's cousin, who had courted her when she was still single. Armando was a young man a little



older than I, a spendthrift and bon-vivant, who spent his time on women and glasses of sparkling wine. Contrary to my habit, I offered him my premeditated friendship... Dominating my father's disposition, from then on I included him in our domestic circle as often as possible, helping him get as close as he could to the woman he had fallen in love with years before. The beach, the theater, the movies, as well as various kinds of outings, were now our usual destinations, in which I practically threw the two cousins into each other's arms... Aida didn't have a clue, and although she resisted her cousin's gallantry for more than a year, she wound up giving in to his ceaseless advances... I pretended not to have noticed their relationship until I could enable my father to see for himself what was going on... I invented games and leisure activities to keep the seducer at our home. I won his complete trust so as to use it as an important tool in my criminal plot. One night, I had carefully made it clear to everybody that I was going out for a while, and knowing that the lovers were by themselves in a room next to mine, I went to my father in his sick bed. I pretended that my dignity had been offended, and as I gave him an account of the facts, I told him he had to do something... Pale and shaking, he demanded proof, and all I had to do was to lead him in unsteady steps to the door of the room, whose lock I had disabled. All it took was a strong push and my forlorn father had the proof I was hoping for... Condescending, despite the disappointment, Armando left in a hurry, knowing that he had nothing to fear from an ailing sexagenarian... My stepmother, however, was deeply hurt in her self-esteem and hurled humiliating accusations at her old husband as she ran off to her private room in an outburst of anguish. To put the finishing touches on my dreadful deed, I doubled my care for the inwardly devastated man. Two endless weeks dragged by... As Aida was lying in bed and was being assisted by two trustworthy doctors who had no inkling about the household's secret tragedy, I comforted my father with my grief and suggested indirectly that most of our assets should be put in my name since his second marriage could not be legally dissolved.[\[3\]](#) My criminal behavior was proceeding right along, when one day my stepmother turned up dead... Our doctors identified the cause of death as a deadly poison, and embarrassed, they told my father that she had committed suicide, obviously motivated by the unbearable neurasthenia[\[4\]](#) she had been suffering from. My father was very downcast at the stately funeral; however, in my destructive objectives, I was rejoicing... Now, finally... the entire family fortune was mine... But my satanic joy didn't last long... Shortly after the death of his second wife, my father became completely bedridden... Doctors and priests tried to help and console him, but it was no use... Two months later, my father, who never smiled again, was on his deathbed. In dolorous agony interrupted by tears, he confided to me that he had poisoned Aida by lacing her tranquillizers with a powerful poison... That fact – he told me in defeat – had imposed on him his own death too, since he could not forgive himself as he bore the burden of constant, unbearable remorse... For the first time, my conscience hurt very deeply. My attachment to material things had destroyed my life... The dear old man died in my arms, believing my tears of repentance to be tears of love. As I left his wasted body in the cold earth, I went back to our manor house feeling like the most wretched of beings... All the gold in the world would not offer me the least bit of consolation. I was alone... alone and... infinitely miserable. Every corner and thing in the house spoke to me of crime and remorse... Many times, the darkness of the night seemed populated by horrendous ghosts who scorned



my pain, and amid the throng of insensitive demons attacking me, I thought I could hear the unmistakable voice of my father clamoring to my soul, 'My son! My son! Get a hold of yourself while there's still time!' I became withdrawn, suspicious... During an appalling moral crisis, I traveled to Europe on a long recreational trip, but the charm of the great cities of the Old World failed to allay my internal wounds. Everywhere I went, the best meal tasted bitter in my mouth and the most beautiful artistic works only caused me anxiety and sadness. I returned to Brazil but didn't have the courage to return to our old house. Supported by the friendship of an old friend of my father, I accepted his invitation to stay at his place for a while until my health allowed me to consider a radical change in my life... In the care of that friend, I let long months go by in my attempt at an undeserved mental escape... until one unforgettable night, when my gastralgia<sup>[5]</sup> had become a scourge of pain, I drank a vial of arsenic from my host's wine cellar believing it to be the sodium bicarbonate I had left there the day before. The poison expelled me from my body, imposing terrible suffering... Like my stepmother who had died in terrible agony, I died in the same way. Unaware of my mistake, the friends who shared their domestic sanctuary with me believed beyond a shadow of a doubt that I had sought in suicide an end to the mental suffering that had punished my soul as a 'rich young man, bored with life,' according to the version they disseminated."

Silas looked at us sadly as if trying to measure the affect of his words on us, and then continued:

"However, that was not enough to pay for my terrible wrongs... Demented after death, I went through cruel months of terror and imbalance among the living pictures projected by my mind shackled to its creations until I was rescued by friends of my father, who was also on his way to recovery. Joining him, I began to spend all my energies preparing for the future."

After a few minutes of heavy silence, he concluded:

"As you can see, the fascination for gold was the reason for my downfall. I have a great need to work for the good and a strong faith not to fall again, because it is indispensable that I devote myself to a new existence on the earth."

Leonel and Clarindo were no more surprised than Hilario and I. We were used to seeing Silas as an admirable colleague without any apparent afflictions or problems.

Leonel broke the silence and asked the Assistant, who had fallen silent as if overcome by the force of his memories:

"So are you going to reincarnate any time soon?"

"Oh, how I long for the fortune of returning as soon as possible!" sighed the head of our expedition, somewhat anxious. "The debtor is inescapably linked to the interest of his creditors... Thus, before anything else, I must find my stepmother in this vast country of darkness in order to begin the difficult task of my moral deliverance."

"How so?" I asked, very moved.

"My friend," answered Silas, embracing me, "My case is not only profitable for Clarindo

and Leonel as they seek justice by their own hands, which so often simply means violence and cruelty, but also for you and Hilario as you study the law of karma, that is, of action and reaction... Here, we are compelled to recall the Lord's lesson: 'Help your enemies,' because if I do not help the woman in whose heart I created a powerful enemy of my peace, I cannot receive her fraternal help, without which I will never regain my serenity... I took advantage of Aida's weakness to throw her into the abyss of perturbation, making her more fragile than she already was. Now, my father and I, who complicated her pathway, must look for her, uplift her, help her, and restore her to a relative balance on the earth so that we can pay at least a small fraction of our immense debt."

"Your father? You referred to your father?" asked Hilario, cutting in.

"Yes, I did and why not?" replied the Assistant. "Assisted by my mother – now our guardian in the Higher Spheres – my father and I are partners in the same enterprise: our moral regeneration in striving to uplift Aida; otherwise, we won't be able to disintegrate the viscous poison of remorse that imprisons our mental field in the lower zones of earthly life. That is why we must find her for our own sake... As soon as Divine Mercy grants us such happiness, my father, enveloped by my mother's love and selflessness, will return to the struggle of the flesh, clothed with a new corporeal envelope in the realm of physical forms. During their youth, both of them will retake the human bonds of marriage and accept Aida and I as their blessed children... We will be brother and sister by blood... In light of Divine Magnanimity, in keeping with our desire for heaven to watch over us, I will become a doctor again, but at the cost of much effort, and I will dedicate myself to beneficence as a means to recoup the invaluable opportunities I lost in the past... My stepmother, who at the moment is surely suffering a deplorable poisoning of the soul in the horrendous abysses, will be rescued in due time. Despite the long-term assistance she will demand from us on this plane for her recovery, she will be reborn in a frail physical body in our household in order to cleanse the difficult psychoses she is acquiring in the domains of darkness – psychoses that will taint her existence in the flesh in the form of strange mental disturbances. I will not only be her brother at home but also her nurse and friend, her companion and her doctor, paying in sacrifice and goodwill, love and tenderness, the balance and happiness I stole from her."

The Assistant's confession had the value of a living compendium of priceless experiences, and perhaps that is why we all entered into deep thought.

Hilario, however, did not want to lose the thread of the lesson and asked:

"My friend, you said that you and your father are both waiting for the joy of meeting your stepmother again... What do you mean by that? In spite of all you know, are you having problems finding out where she is?"

"Yes, yes..." confirmed the Assistant, sadly.

"And the spirit benefactors currently guiding your paths? Wouldn't they know where she is and guide your steps to her?"

"Of course they could," replied Silas kindly. "Our instructors are not as ignorant as I am on the matter... However, just like in the world of humans, teachers cannot fulfill the duties

of their students without denying them the merit of the lesson. As much as our mothers love us, they don't take our place in prison when we have to pay for a crime, and our best friends cannot claim the right in the name of friendship to suffer the mutilation that our imprudence has inflicted on our own body. Of course, the blessings of our guides' love have brought immeasurable resources to my soul... They have given me insight so that I can feel and acknowledge my weaknesses, and they have supported me in my renewal so that I can more decisively and easily reach my objective... but truth is, the work of redemption is personal and non-transferable."

Leonel and Clarindo listened to him dumbfounded.

By talking about himself, the Assistant, without wounding their self-esteem, had worked indirectly for their surrender to readjustment. And by the look in their eyes, the two persecutors now revealed an admirable inner change.

Hilario reflected for a few moments and then considered:

"But all this tragedy must be connected to causes in the past."

"Yes, of course," confirmed the Assistant, "but in our tormented region there is no mental period for any wonders of the memory. We are bound to the remembrances of causes close to our anguishes, making it difficult to enter the domain of remote causes. The condition of our spirit is that of a patient who is seriously ill and in need of immediate surgery for his readjustment. Hell, the lower zones of earth, is full of dilacerated and suffering souls clamoring for help from Divine Providence against the ills they created for themselves. And Divine Providence gives them the blessing of working with the spears of guilt and repentance piercing their hearts on behalf of their victims and of any spirits whose wrongs are in tune with those they committed so that they may restore their balance as quickly as is possible with the Infinite Love and Perfect Justice of the Law... If we pay our debts, which are responsible for the thick darkness in our souls, then wherever we are, the mirror of our mind will reflect the light of heaven, the country of Divine Remembrance!"

We understood that Silas was helping Clarindo and Leonel, identifying them as brothers in the struggle and learning experience, an attitude that would certainly enhance his own merit.

Many questions exploded in my mind, in my narrow, inner world... Who was his father? Where was his selfless mother? Did he think it would take a long time to find his unfortunate stepmother?

However, the Assistant's spiritual posture didn't seem to be favoring any indiscreet questions.

I only had enough courage to state respectfully:

"Oh, my God! How long it so often takes to repair the folly of a single minute!"

"That's right, Andre," replied Silas kindly. "The law is one of action and reaction... The action of evil may be quick, but nobody knows how much time the work of reaction will demand, which is indispensable for reestablishing the sovereign harmony of life that has

been broken by our attitudes contrary to the good.”

And smiling:

“For that very reason, Jesus recommended to incarnate souls: ‘Reconcile quickly with your adversary while you are still on the way with him.’ That is because no spirit will get into heaven without a peaceful conscience, and while it is easier to eradicate our quarrels and to correct our mistakes while we are on the same path as our victims on earth, it is very difficult to provide a solution to our criminal enigmas when we are already immersed in the mists of hell.”

The conclusion was conceivable and fair.

However, we were not able to continue the conversation.

To our great surprise, the always-impassive Leonel’s eyes were wet with tears.

Silas raised his eyes On High, thanking God for the blessing of the transformation that had just begun, and then he opened his arms to Leonel.

Clarindo’s wretched brother wanted to say something.

We perceived that he wanted to talk about Alzira’s death on the lake, but the Assistant promised that we would be back the next night.

Shortly thereafter, we headed back, but neither Hilario nor I felt like talking to our brave companion, who, downcast, had fallen into a deep silence.

[1] Epidemic among animals of a single kind within a particular region. [www.websters-online-dictionary.org](http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org). – Tr.

[2] Andre Luiz puts on his character’s lips a synthesis of Luke 6:27, 28 to be more easily understood by the two hate-filled spirits, to whom the verb “to love” would be too repulsive. They would have rebelled against the complete text. It would have been unsuitable to talk about “love” at that moment, but “to help” to pay was well received because they wanted to be repaid. – Publisher.

[3] There was no divorce in Brazil at that time. – Tr.

[4] A virtually obsolete term formerly used to describe a vague disorder marked by chronic abnormal fatigability, moderate depression, inability to concentrate, loss of appetite, insomnia, and other symptoms. Popularly called nervous prostration. *Dorland’s Medical Dictionary for Healthcare Consumers* [www.mercksource.com](http://www.mercksource.com). – Tr.

[5] Pain in the stomach or epigastrium, especially of a neuralgic type. [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com). – Tr.

# Understanding

After our routine chores the next evening, Silas came looking for us to continue the task at hand.

On our return to Luis's house, we talked casually, without mentioning the night before. Since Clarindo and Leonel were tuned in to our mental wave of mutual respect, they greeted us with discretion and warmth.

Both of them seemed to have been strongly affected by the ideas the Assistant had indirectly offered their minds.

The picture was still the same inside the house.

Luis and his friends were chatting cordially, commenting on the plagues in the fields, animal diseases, the cost of living, and failed businesses... However, the two brothers clearly demonstrated their detachment from such a gloomy picture.

They greeted us with glowing kindness, as if they felt comfortable with our being there, and they eyed Silas with unusual interest.

It seemed clear that they had used the Assistant's confession as a basis for invaluable reflections.

Noticing their metamorphosis with unmistakable satisfaction, our expedition leader didn't even mention Luis's problem, and cordially invited them to join us.

Displaying the renewal that had come over them, they promptly joined our small group, and at Silas's suggestion, the two brothers joined hands with ours and were able to volitate rather easily and securely.

A few minutes later, we arrived at a huge hospital in a busy city on earth.

At the entrance, one of the spirit guards greeted Silas respectfully and our guide introduced him:

"This is our friend and colleague, Ludovino. He is in charge of watching over a number of patients whose reincarnation is being prepared by our institution."

We embraced each other fraternally.

The Assistant asked Ludovino:

"How's our sister Laudemira? We received some bad news about her today."

“Yes,” confirmed the guard, “it looks like the poor woman will have to undergo a dangerous operation. Enveloped in the anaesthetizing fluids hurled at her by her persecutors during sleep, the life in her womb has been badly harmed by extreme apathy. The surgeon will return within the hour, and if other treatments don’t work, he will have to give her a C-section.”

Our friend revealed deep concern on his usually calm face and added:

“That will result in serious harm in the future. According to what is planned for her, she will have to receive three more children into her home in order to utilize her current human experience as effectively as possible.”

With a gesture of respect, the guard stated:

“Then, I don’t think there’s any time to waste.”

Silas took us inside and led us to a small ward, where a young girl was complaining in pain.

A sympathetic grey-haired woman, whose tenderness led us to believe she was the mother, was at her bedside stroking her restless hands.

I could see the expression of fear in the patient’s tear-filled eyes, so I asked Silas about the cause of such agonizing suffering.

“Our sister,” he explained, “will be a mother again in the next few minutes. However, she is bound to difficult trials. She was at Mansao Paz for a long time before returning to the physical body. She was constantly hounded by enemies that she created for herself in the past, when she used her physical beauty to act as an accomplice in crime. A beautiful woman, she influenced political decisions that ruined the lives of a lot of people. She suffered many years in the infernal darkness until she finally earned the blessing of reincarnating with the task of renewing herself by renewing a few of her partners in cruelty. They will be her children and will grow spiritually with her in a far-reaching regenerative endeavor.”

Silas gave me a significant look and added:

“We’ll talk about her story later, but right now we need to get to work.”

As the surprised Clarindo and Leonel looked on, the Assistant asked Hilario and me to join him in the task at hand.

He told us both to pray, placed his right hand on the patient’s head, and began applying magnetic procedures with the purpose of stimulating the uterus.

A milky white substance like a thin mist radiated from his hands and spread over the entire genital area.

After a few minutes of heavy expectation, the contractions began, gradually getting more intense.

Silas carefully controlled the progress of the delivery until the doctor arrived.

Unable to register our presence, he smiled happily and called a nurse to assist him.

The C-section was canceled.

The Assistant invited us to leave, informing us more calmly:

“Laudemira’s organism responded wonderfully. Let’s hope she can continue her work with the success she needs.”

We set out again.

Leonel’s sharp mind didn’t miss our slightest movement, and with an air of respect he asked Silas if the work to which he was devoting himself entailed some sort of preparation for the future. The Assistant answered promptly:

“Yes, it does. Just yesterday I told you about my wrongs as a doctor – which in actuality I never was – and I commented on my plans to study medicine again in the future while with our incarnate brothers and sisters. But in order to deserve the happiness of such an opportunity, I have been devoting myself to administering relief in the lower regions that serve as my home, thereby creating beneficial causes for my future work to come.”

“Causes? What causes?” asked Clarindo somewhat surprised.

“By endeavoring to willingly help beyond the duties imposed on me in my struggle for moral regeneration, the Divine Blessing will enable me to expand the sowing of sympathy in my favor.”

Giving us a meaningful look after a brief moment of reflection, he continued:

“According to the debts I still have to pay, I’ll be returning to the physical realm some day, and in order to right my wrongs, I myself will have to endure obstacles and doubt, sickness and affliction... May charitable and kind hands help me from here in God’s name, because no one can succeed alone... And if loving arms are to open up to me later, I have to use mine right now in the willing exercise of solidarity.”

The teaching was invaluable not only for the two perplexed persecutors but for us too as we recognized once again the Unbounded Goodness of the Supreme Lord, who, even in the most dreadful corners of the darkness, allows us to work for the incessant expansion of the good as the blessed price of our happiness.

As we were volitating back, Hilario anticipated my curiosity and steered the conversation to Laudemira’s case.

Was she an old acquaintance of Silas? How had she assumed such grave commitments involving motherhood? What role would her children play? Were they her creditors or debtors?

Silas smiled complacently at this volley of questions and explained:

“I have no doubts that our friend’s redemptive process fits in very nicely with your studies on the law of cause and effect.”

He paused at length to consult his memory and then proceeded:

“We cannot all of a sudden go into a lot of detail about Laudemira’s past, nor can I

commit any indiscretion that might betray the trust that Mansao has granted me for carrying out my obligations. However, for the sake of our spiritual edification, I can tell you that Laudemira's present suffering is the consequence of heavy debts she contracted a little over five centuries ago. At that time, she was a woman of high standing in the Court of Joanna II, Queen of Naples from 1414 to 1435. She had two brothers that supported all her insane plans of vanity and power. She got married, but realizing that her husband was an obstacle to the irresponsible behavior that marked her character, she forced him to face the daggers of her two minions, thus causing his death. As a widow and owner of a considerable fortune, her prestige grew for having favored the queen's remarriage: Joanna, the widow of William, Duke of Austria, married James of Bourbon, Count of la Marche. From then on she was even more closely associated with the queen's affairs and she surrendered to pleasures and debauchery, corrupting the behavior of a lot of good men and wrecking the worthy homes of several women. She scorned the sacred opportunities for education and beneficence offered to her by the Heavenly Goodness, and used her precarious status as a noble to lose herself in recklessness and crime. Thus, when she discarnated at the peak of material opulence in the middle of the 15th century, she fell into the horrendous infernal depths, where she suffered the persecution of fierce enemies who had not forgiven her for her crimes and desertions. She suffered for over a hundred years in thick darkness with her mind still fixated on her delusions and she returned to the flesh four times due to the intercession of friends from the Higher Realms. She reincarnated with excruciating expiatory problems in which, as a woman with new commitments, she experienced awful shame and humiliation at the hands of unscrupulous men, who suffocated all her dreams."

"But," asked Hilario, "each time she left her body after her four lives, was she still hooked to the darkness?"

"Why wouldn't she be?" replied the Assistant. "When the fall into the abyss lasts for such a long time, no one can get out with only one leap. She entered it through the door of the grave and left it through the door of the cradle, bringing along inner maladjustments that she was unable to resolve from one time to the next."

"If she was so resistant to change," asked my colleague, "what was the point of her reincarnating? Wouldn't it be enough for her to suffer in dolorous purgation here on this side without having to reincarnate in the corporeal realm?"

"Your question is quite understandable," replied Silas patiently. "However, with the support of dedicated friends, our sister returned to pay her debts in installments, reuniting with reincarnated creditors, albeit still yoked to the lower planes. The blessing of temporary forgetfulness enabled her to obtain an invaluable renewal of her strength."

"But did she manage to pay at least some of the debts she had accumulated?"

"Yes, to a certain extent, because she suffered tremendous blows to the pride crystallized in her heart... But she acquired new debt at the same time because, on certain occasions, she could not overcome her instinctive aversion toward the enemies to whom she owed her work and obedience. She even went to the extreme of drowning a small child who had barely taken its first steps so that she could afflict the woman of the house where she was serving as a



nanny, seeking revenge for cruelties inflicted on her. After each discarnation, she returned to her usual place in the purgatorial zones with a little credit to her account, but without any of the virtues needed for final liberation from the darkness – it seems that we always put off our decision to pay off our debts...”

“Even so,” continued Hilario, “whenever she returned to the spirit world, she must have had help from the benefactors who were endeavoring to restrain her excesses.”

“Of course she did,” confirmed Silas. “No one is condemned to abandonment. You’re fully aware that God helps people through other people. Everything belongs to God.”

“Even hell?” asked Leonel, worried.

The Assistant smiled and clarified:

“Actually, hell is our own doing – genuinely our own – but let’s imagine it as being an unworthy and calamitous construction on the terrain of life, which is God’s creation. Having misused our minds and knowledge to generate such a monster in Divine Space, it is our duty to destroy it in order to build heaven in the same place that hell now unduly occupies. To do so, the Heavenly Father’s Infinite Love helps us in many ways so that Perfect Justice manifests itself. Understand?”

The explanation could not have been clearer. Nevertheless, Hilario seemed bent on having all his questions answered, so perhaps that is why he asked further:

“Do you think we could find out about Laudemira’s lives before her reincarnation in the Court of Joanna II?”

“Yes,” answered Silas tolerantly, “that would be easy enough, but it wouldn’t be advisable in our simple study because the subject would take a large amount of time and effort. It’s enough to study the past situation we’ve been talking about in order to define her present redemptive struggles. Our learning experiences in any social standing, whether in the field of influence or finances, culture or ideas, serve as living reference points for our worthy or unworthy behavior when temporarily using the abilities that the Lord has loaned us. By means of virtues acquired or debts assumed, they clearly indicate our progress in the direction of the light or our greater or lesser imprisonment in the circles of the darkness.”

Silas’s illuminating explanation was a true burst of sunlight for my comprehension.

Even so, my companion insisted:

“Notwithstanding your valuable explanations so far regarding memory in the lower regions, it would be interesting to know whether or not, before her present reincarnation, Laudemira accurately recalled the stages she had gone through during the difficult trials you mentioned.”

Our friend clarified with enormous patience:

“I have lived at Mansao for forty years and have monitored her case for exactly thirty. She finished up her latest existence in the physical realm at the beginning of this century and had endured awful suffering in the lowest zones. She arrived at our institute terribly

demented, and under hypnosis she revealed the facts I have just told you, and which are included in her personality file. Our instructors, however, didn't think that a more in-depth memory regression was necessary in order to assist her – at least for the time being. But I knew that, as troubled as she was, Laudemira didn't have the strength to articulate any reminiscences while awake, especially because under the auspices of the benefactors who supervise our organization, she had been led to her present reincarnation while still mentally attuned to the unworthy connections of the path she had chosen. This time, in a long and blessed condition as their mother, she must accept five former accomplices in her moral downfall in order to guide their sentiments toward the light. To finally free herself from the darkness that still taints her spirit, she will have to succeed in her present reincarnation because the fruits she hopes to reap in the future depend on it. If she manages to graduate five souls from the school of the good, she will have won a huge prize before the loving and just Law.”

Our discussion of Laudemira's case on our way back represented an invaluable contribution to our study of the topic “cause and effect.”

Realizing that our curiosity had been satisfied, Silas turned more attentively to Leonel and Clarindo to probe their thoughts. Undoubtedly, in order to discover their hopes, Silas referred to his own eagerness regarding his medical work in the future. He had no intention of wasting any time. He now had a thirst for learning and serving that would enable him to return to the earth with better spiritual qualities, which would be expressed in his mind, when incarnate, in the form of inclinations and abilities in his so-called “inborn vocation.”

The two brothers had been profoundly touched by the words of the friend who had won their trust, and they now felt much more at ease.

The Assistant's confession and the example of humility he had willingly shown us had affected them deeply.

Impulsive and frank, Clarindo talked about the thoughts that had inflamed him years before. He loved the land passionately, and when he was younger, he had planned an agricultural organization where he would be able to devote himself to ennobling experiments. He would have loved to live for a long time on the family property, creating an area of personal work. However – he stated somewhat sadly but without the tone of his former rebelliousness – Antonio Olimpio's criminal decision had shattered all his dreams. He saw himself stripped of his ideals and greatly frustrated, which, after the grave, drove him out of his mind. He couldn't find the mental disposition to rebuild his hopes... He felt like despair itself, like someone irredeemably tied to a degrading whipping post.

Clarindo now displayed a trace of lamentation in his voice, showing himself immensely transformed.

Encouraged by Silas, Leonel, whose refined intelligence inspired us with cautious respect, started talking about his fondness of music.

When he was a boy, he believed he was cut out for the sublime art. As an adolescent, he fell in love with Beethoven and knew his biography by heart. Consequently, he had hoped not

only to work on his bachelor's degree but also to earn accolades as a pianist, which would have made him intensely happy.

However – his voice expressed unbearable bitterness – being murdered had clouded his vision. Inside, he now harbored only the hatred that had come to rule his existence, and with such hate in his heart, he was unable to reconstruct his earlier dreams.

Leonel paused at length and then remarked, to our pleasant surprise:

“But during our fellowship over the last few days, I have begun to realize that, if our physical existence was cut short in the fullness of our youth, we must have had debts that justified such a dreadful ordeal. Just the same, that doesn't excuse our ungrateful brother Antonio from his guilt. He's still responsible for the horrible murder with which he cast us into the darkness.”

“Exactly,” added Silas emotionally, “your argument reveals enormous renewal.”

The Assistant was unable to continue because Leonel put his head in his hands and complained in tears:

“Dear God, why do we discover the lofty virtue of forgiveness only after we have already stained ourselves in crime? Why does it take so long for us to want to restore the field of our aspirations, when revenge has already burnt our life in the fires of evil?”

As Clarindo followed his explosion of pain and remorse with signs of approval, and as Silas embraced him kindly, we had the intuition that Leonel was referring to Alzira's death due to the obsession that obviously had been provoked by him and his brother.

Silas promptly consoled him:

“Weep, my friend! Weep, because tears purify the heart!... But even so, don't let your tears suffocate the seedlings of hope...Which of us here can say he has no guilt? We all have wrongs to redeem, and the Lord's Treasury never runs short on compassion. Time is our blessing... We have congealed the darkness around us, and with time we will change it into sublimated light... But to do so, we must persevere in courage and humility, in love and sacrifice. Let us grow in the direction of the future, determined to reconstruct our destinies.”

We could see that Leonel wanted to pour his heart out to us. He wanted to unburden himself, to confess...

Leading him back to reflection, however, Silas invited us to leave and promised to return the next evening.

Completely changed, the two brothers went back to Luis's house while we headed back to Mansao Paz.

On the way, the Assistant rejoiced. The Antonio Olimpio case entrusted to us was proceeding well.

The obsessors' renewal had been crowned with success.

Silas stated that the meeting of understanding between Alzira and those who would be

her children in the future would take place the next evening. After that, the two brothers would be admitted to Mansao on their own free will to start preparing for the future... At the institute supervised by Druso, they would work and re-educate themselves, finding new mental interests and new stimuli for their recovery.

Once Silas had finished, Hilario asked, very concerned:

“How much time will Clarindo and Leonel need to smooth the way for their return to the physical body?”

“Probably a quarter of a century.”

“Why so long?”

“They will need to reconstitute their ideas in the field of the good and mold them indelibly in their minds in order to dedicate themselves effectively to their new plans. They will take refuge in active work, helping others and thus creating invaluable seeds of sympathy that will help them in their earthly struggles tomorrow... While working and studying, as well as while being involved in enterprises of the purest fraternity, they will amass incorruptible moral qualities, and such a re-education will improve their tendencies, predisposing them to the victory they need in their redemptive trials.”

“What about Antonio Olimpio?” insisted Hilario. “As far as I can tell, he will have a much shorter stay at Mansao.”

“That’s right,” confirmed the Assistant. “After a quick reconciliation with his two brothers, Antonio will most probably reincarnate within two or three years.”

“Why such a big difference?”

“We mustn’t forget,” explained Silas patiently, “that it was Antonio who began the criminal drama in the first place. Consequently, out of the group that is reincarnating, he’ll be the one that is least favored by the Law during his stay in the human realm, due to the aggravating circumstances that mark his individual case. With his spirit still darkened by anguish and remorse, he’ll be born into the family that he harmed through his greediness. He’ll live within a very narrow mental horizon since, instinctively, his primary concern will be to give back to his brothers the physical existence, money and land he stole from them... As a result, he’ll only have the inner resources for his self-education and spiritual growth after he reaches middle age, and only after he has set his children on the road to the triumph they are supposed to achieve. “

“Be that as it may,” said Hilario, “Clarindo and Leonel are also murderers.”

“And they shall pay for it, but we can’t overlook the mitigating circumstances in their regretful crime. Antonio coldly planned his crime in order to enjoy the material advantages that would come his way through cruelty and violence, whereas the two unfortunate brothers acted in the nightmare of hatred, traumatized by horrific pain... No doubt, Clarindo and Leonel have suffered anguish and remorse, and they’ll have to endure a dolorous redemption when the time is right, but even so, they are creditors of the brother who delayed their evolutionary progress.”

“What about Alzira in all this?”

“She has managed to accumulate enough love to understand, forgive and assist... Thus, she has acquired the right before the Law to help not only her husband but also her two unfortunate brothers-in-law, her still-incarnate son Luis, and all the descendants of her family circle, because the purer the love in the spirit, the more resources the soul has before God.”

And giving us a meaningful look, he emphasized:

“Those who really know how to love govern life.”

I was satisfied. The concepts couldn't have been any clearer.

Hilario, however, apologized for his insistence and raised yet another question:

“Why did Alzira have to go through the afflictive discarnation in the lake?”

Silas replied:

“Considering that our sister has already earned the happiness of unconditional forgiveness – the offspring of love that does not concern itself with being loved in return – it wouldn't be advisable to delve any deeper into the past. That would make our study too fastidious.”

And he added, smiling:

“Alzira already has a broad strip of heaven in her heart... So matters related to her should be analyzed in heaven.”

We arrived at Mansao and each of us began to digest the lesson we had just learned... The examples of love and hate, suffering and revenge from the Antonio Olimpio case were the same as our own stories, highlighting the need for love and forgiveness in our lives. It would be through the purity of our sentiments that we would proceed from the darkness to the light.

With these serious thoughts in mind, we eagerly awaited the next evening.

When the blessed time for our lesson arrived, the Assistant had a long private talk with sister Alzira, asking her to meet us at a set time at the lake where she had discarnated. He then asked two coworkers to go with her and told them that Alzira should come to us only when called.

After the usual trip, we entered Luis's home, where Clarindo and Leonel were waiting for us with warm attention.

Silas took us back to the hospital we had visited the day before and administered magnetic passes to Laudemira and her newborn son. When he had finished these quick tasks, he took us to an enormous house, where an amiable discarnate old man greeted us kindly.

“This is our brother Paulino. He has been supporting his son's work as an engineer,” explained the Assistant.

Paulino led us inside to a large study where a middle-aged man was hunched over a book.

Our kind host introduced him as his incarnate son, whose technical mission he was watching over with unflinching zeal. Asking Silas what he could do for us, Silas asked him to inspire his son to give us the pleasure of a few minutes of music – if possible, something special by Beethoven.

To our surprise, our new friend approached the engineer and whispered something in his ear. Completely unaware of our presence, and as if it had been his own idea to listen to some music, the gentleman put down his book, walked over to the record player, browsed a small collection and took out Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony.

In a few moments the room was filled with enchantment and joy, sonority and beauty.

Silas listened with us in heart and soul to the marvelous symphony, all of it based on the blessings of sublimated nature.

Together with Clarindo, who was attracted by activities related to the land, we mentally felt the presence of the woods, filled with singing birds flying over a crystalline stream flowing over small milky pebbles; and as if the imaginary landscape were obeying the melodic narration, we saw a sudden transformation coming over it, giving us the impression that the formerly-blue sky was now covered with heavy clouds, with thunder and lightning, only to return to the flowery scene, amid canticles and prayers... Along with Leonel – passionately in love with the divine art – we registered the power of the music in its supreme majesty, as it lifted us to the most sublime emotions.

Those minutes for us were like a blessed prayer.

The different parts of the magnificent symphony led us upward in harmonious spirals of unknown beauty and we all shed abundant tears because the magical chords had the ability to miraculously wash the innermost folds of our souls.

When the music ended, we set out, enraptured.

Our thoughts vibrated in a purer attunement, and our hearts seemed more fraternal.

At Leonel's request, which seemed to instinctively answer Silas's mental suggestion, we headed for the lake on the Olimpios' land.

The full moon crowned the fields with silvery radiance.

It was late at night.

Leonel took the initiative and began telling us what we already knew. He broke into copious tears as he referred to the death of his sister-in-law, who had received the lance head of his rage.

Hilario and I were surprised to see Silas's patient attention to Leonel's confession as if it were all new to him.

After more than an hour of listening to our suffering companion, the Assistant privately

asked Hilario and I to be very understanding, explaining that our friend felt the need to purge his wounded heart of all its pain, and that we didn't have the right to interrupt him even if we already knew about his inner tragedy. On the contrary, we needed to help him fraternally, sharing his burden of affliction so that the wounds in his mind could be relieved.

Immediately afterward, Silas involved the two brothers in an interesting conversation, proposing their readjustment by means of reparative trials.

Didn't they want to set out again on the physical journey? Why not embrace a new endeavor by reincarnating into the same family from which they had come? Wouldn't it be more pleasant and easier to win reconciliation, and thereby recover all their former aspirations, progressing with them in the physical realm toward the precious steps that lead to the Higher Life?

Almost simultaneously, however, Leonel and Clarindo bemoaned what had happened to Alzira. In fact, the desperation of their cause had led them to accept the suggestions of madness and they had spent long years practicing cruelty in the darkness. However, nothing pained them more than the violence they had committed against Antonio Olimpio's wife, who, terrified by their persecution, had thrown herself into those waters of dreadful memories.

But... what if Alzira herself were to bring them the embrace of understanding and help?

And as they smiled with hope in the torrent of their own tears, the Assistant left for a couple of minutes and returned with the generous sister. Dressed in a radiant garment, she offered them her hands and her maternal lap, resplendent with love.

As if mortally wounded, Leonel and Clarindo fell to their knees, crushed with fear and joy.

Alzira caressed their submissive heads and said in a moving tone:

"Children of my soul, let us render thanks to God for this blessed hour!"

And because Leonel tried in vain to beg for her forgiveness, uttering monosyllables interrupted by sobs, Luis's mother pleaded humbly:

"I'm the one who should kneel down and implore your mercy!... My husband's crime was mine as well. You were robbed of your dearest dreams when youth was just starting to smile upon you. Our unbridled ambition robbed you of your resources and potential, including your lives... Forgive us!... We shall pay our debts. The Lord will help our house to recover... Soon, Antonio and I will return to the physical realm, and with the support of Divine Mercy, we will give you back the land that isn't ours... Honor my soul with the privilege of becoming your loving mother... I'm offering you my heart to give you back your hopes and ideals... The Lord will grant me the blessing of sheltering you in my bosom, of raising you with the breath of my kisses and the dew of my tears... But to do so, the forgetfulness of our wrongs must be born pure from the love we owe each other... Let us forget resentments and God will give us what we need to pay our debts... Stand up, beloved sons... Jesus knows that I wish to hold you to my heart and keep you in my arms!"

Alzira couldn't continue. Copious tears streamed down her face and something seemed to stick in her throat, suppressing her voice.

Even so, in those few moments we saw the glorious victory of love... Scintillating sparks emerged from Alzira's chest in successive waves of sapphire blue, giving us the impression that her inner nobility had been transformed into a fount of intense light. With her support, Clarindo and Leonel stood up like two children attracted by their mother's tenderness, and they embraced her with moving tears.

Our friend caressed them gratefully and graciously received them as if holding two treasures of the heart.

At a silent signal from Silas, we helped her as necessary, and after some time, we took our two new friends to the large institute.

After settling them in the appropriate department, Silas told us happily:

"Thank God, our task is over. Now, let's hope they will all prepare themselves for the new battles on the earth, for the redeeming work in which affection and aversion, joy and pain, struggle and difficulties will all be mixed together."

Various questions were rising in my mind, but I understood that the law of cause and effect would act tirelessly on the characters in our story. That led me to think about my own debts... Instead of asking more questions, I respectfully kissed the Assistant's hands in the condition of the student grateful to his generous instructor. Turning to silent prayer, I thanked Jesus for the invaluable lesson I had received.



## The Temple and the Parlatory<sup>[1]</sup>

As the culminating events related to the Antonio Olimpio case came to an end, Hilario and I were still interested in continuing our studies, so we went to see instructor Druso, who advised us kindly:

“I know that by now Mansao must have provided you with the basic elements for serious conclusions relating to the law of cause and effect... At Mansao, most of the problems have to do with the concrete fruits of action, and we witness up close the reaping of suffering in all of its difficult and dolorous phases.”

And smiling, he added:

“The infernal region is packed full of accounts that have come due. Here, avarice bears the torment of atrocious afflictions; crime is faced with all kinds of belated, remorseful anguish, and moral delinquency is caught unawares by the darkness that increases its torment. The population of guilty sowers responsible for planting so many thorn bushes does not have the courage to reap the poisonous fruit of their sowing. Disoriented and demented, they rebel against the scourges they have created and fall into the depths of rebelliousness and despair... In nearly every circumstance, one can easily see that, around this place of readjustment and assistance, everything is in constant darkness and conflict, a vast field inflamed by improvident individuals who must now endure the fire and smoke they used to damage their lives.”

Druso finished. He walked over to a large window that opened to the gloomy mists outside and gazed sorrowfully at the sad landscape. He then returned to our side and stated:

“That being said, it would still be a good idea for you to continue your endeavor by focusing more widely on the principles of compensation. Along those lines, we consider the actions carried out on the physical plane to be of the utmost importance because they become the determining factors for finding the heaven or the hell that individuals are looking for. That is why we predict that you’ll both profit greatly from the activities in which you’ll be involved in the region of relations between our institute and the ordinary humans close by. We must realize that we all create or renew our destiny each and every day. Learning this lesson takes longer here, because our institution is more like a way station, where one comes to terms with one’s guilt very slowly. Among incarnate spirits, however, the mechanics of the Law are revealed more easily since the soul has to live in what it has built for itself. In the physical vessel, the tree of existence grows, blossoms and bears fruit. Physical death accomplishes the great harvest. Thus, the natural selection of the fruit takes place in our

realm. Those rare souls that can show that they have grown spiritually are led to the harvest field of the Divine Light in the celestial planes for a fuller ascent toward the great future. However, by far, most of the arrivals are either worse off or are still too soiled and must remain at a standstill in the repositories of darkness in the lower zones, where we are at the moment, waiting for a new sowing in the soil of the earth. The reason for this lies in the fact that all individuals cross the threshold of the grave carrying the images they have molded within themselves with the tools of sentiment, thought and action that life loaned them and they emit the forces they accumulated in space and time on the earth. Therefore, we think you should delve into the subject amid incarnate spirits in order for you to enrich your experience more fully.”

Conveyed in such a fatherly tone, Druso’s remarks moved me greatly.

He spoke them with affability and sadness, despite the smile on his face.

As usual, I was captivated by his overall hard-to-access personality, so I kept quiet, accepting his recommendations. But the ever-restless Hilario took advantage of a short pause to ask:

“How would you suggest that we get started on our studies?”

The instructor promptly replied:

“There is always new material to study in the institution’s outer temple and parlatory. They are usually frequented by individuals from the physical plane who are temporarily freed from their physical vessels during sleep, as well as by discarnates who wander around Mansao looking for comfort. Many of them are linked to the institute through the threads of reincarnation, while others come to us in search of assistance. There are a large number of assistants stationed there to collect their complaints and register their problems so that we may direct our work of peace and cooperation effectively. It would be interesting for you to join one of our service teams for a few days, collaborating with us and taking notes.”

“May we count on Silas’s help?” asked my colleague, referring to the companion whose presence for us represented sheer joy and courage.

The Instructor gazed at us expressively, surprising us by saying:

“If it weren’t for the purpose of the information you’re gathering here, we wouldn’t allow Silas to guide your research. But we know that your work is meant to instruct our incarnate fellow spirits, and such an endeavor obliges us to grant your request. In fact, you shouldn’t waste either time or opportunity. Even though Silas’s responsibilities here are currently enormous, I don’t see how I can deny you his company, especially because he deserves our fullest trust.”

Soon thereafter, as we were immersed in silent thought regarding the trustworthy, intelligent manner in which our benefactor was leading us towards our goal, Silas was called in and was asked to give us all the help we needed.

Both Instructor and Assistant engaged in a quick and private conversation, whose full meaning we couldn’t guess.

Once they finished, Silas set the exact time for us to meet up, and with that our interview with Mansao's director came to an end.

The Assistant kindly met us at the time agreed upon. We were going to visit Mansao's Temple.

We went down long hallways until a small door led us into a large, well-lit room.

The place looked like a big chapel, much like the ones on earth. With its face turned outward, a cross made of a shining, silvery material on a simple white table in the center of the back wall was the only religious symbol there, but both of the snow white sidewalls had shallow recesses in the form of niches.

The predominant light enchantingly matched the caressing melody echoing softly throughout the nave.

What invisible hands were producing the velvety, tender music that inclined us toward reverence and meditation?

More than two hundred diverse spirits, forming a pious group divided into rows more or less of the same number, were praying in front of the empty niches.

I don't know what strange emotion gripped my soul.

The simple faith of my childhood resurfaced... I remembered my mother teaching me my first prayer, and as if the vibrations of that hour were a blessed rain washing over every corner of my spirit, I forgot about my former experiences for a few minutes and thought only about the Supreme Lord, our God and Father...

Hot tears moistened my face.

I wanted to ask Silas a few things; however, during that first contact with Mansao's outer sanctuary, I could do nothing but pray and weep copiously. For that reason, even though I could have said something, I didn't. I just kept contemplating the luminous cross with a combined feeling of respect and gratitude... I remembered the Divine Messenger who had sacrificed himself on it to show us the way to our victorious resurrection, and I repeated in the depths of my soul:

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.*

*Thy kingdom come.*

*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

*Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*

*Do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil,*

*For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.*

*So be it.*

I noticed that Silas was following my smallest gestures, because when I had finished the Lord's Prayer, he said:

“It’s true, Andre. Very few can enter this room without shielding themselves in prayer.”

And glancing at Hilario, who was also wiping away spontaneous tears, and wanting to include him in his explanation, he continued:

“This small arena of thought is sublimated by the remorse and pain of thousands... Countless legions of souls built up through suffering and faith have come here in tears of repentance or hope, gratitude or anguish... Our inner temple, whose services you have already attended, functions as if it were the living heart of the institute, whereas this outer sanctuary is the symbol of our hands in prayer.

I nodded toward the individuals praying silently in front of the empty altars and dared to ask my kind friend:

“What is the meaning of the cross and these empty niches?”

The assistant promptly explained:

“The cross reminds all visitors that the Spirit of Our Lord Jesus Christ is present here, despite the fact that we are in the infernal abysses. The empty niches give everyone the opportunity to talk to heaven according to their faith. Until the soul acquires Infinite Wisdom, it must travel the long road of the symbols of learning and culture that guide it along the pathway of intellectual growth. Before it reaches Infinite Love, it has to tread the long roads of charity and religious faith in the many sectors of comprehension that ensure its access to the Higher Life. The Divine Powers that govern us have determined that every kind of honest and respectable faith should find loving veneration here.”

Noticing that the small group of souls in prayer had aligned themselves in various positions – some standing or sitting comfortably, while most were kneeling – Hilario proffered some questions, which Silas answered in summation:

“Yes, as long as mutual respect is observed, anyone can pray as they see fit.”

Responding to our healthy curiosity, he nodded toward a woman who was weeping on her knees in front of a nearby niche:

“Let’s observe that sister in prayer, for instance. We’ll stay behind her so as not to disturb her with our presence. By enveloping her in our vibrations of empathy, we’ll be able to tune in to her mental field and perceive the images she creates in her personal way of praying.”

We followed his guidance, and as I focused my attention on that white-haired, bowed head, I could see the changes in the narrow space of the niche.

To my surprise, I saw a beautiful picture take shape little by little, as if it were emerging from the lily white wall. It was the living reproduction of the lovely sculpture by Teixeira Lopes<sup>[2]</sup> representing the Most-Holy Mother mourning her dead Divine Son.

The venerable woman’s unspoken prayer resounded in my ears:

“Most-Holy Mother, Divine Lady of Mercy, take pity on my children wandering in the

darkness!

“For the love of your son, sacrificed on the cross, help my suffering spirit so that I can help them.

“I know that, because of their sinister attachment to material possessions, they didn’t hesitate to fall into crime.

“Dear Lady, in reality they are wretched murderers that terrestrial justice never discovered... For that reason, they are more intensely suffering the drama of their own consciences ensnared in guilt.”

At this point in the prayer, Silas touched our shoulders lightly, reminding us of the lesson at hand:

“This poor discarnate mother is praying for her children lost in the darkness. In keeping with the memories she brought from earth and the faith that her heart can harbor for the time being, she is invoking the watch-care of the Most-Holy Mother in the form of Our Lady of Mercy.”

“That means the image we’re seeing...”

This comment, however, was left hanging in the air, because Silas quickly finished it:

“... Is her own creation, the reflection of her own thoughts with which she is weaving the prayer, thoughts that adjust to the sensitive material of the niche to form the colorful, vibrant image that corresponds to her desire.”

Automatically answering the questions suggested by the problem, he continued:

“But that doesn’t mean that the prayer is being answered by the Holy Mother herself. Petitions like this one rise to the Higher Realms and are received by emissaries of the Virgin of Nazareth in order to be examined and answered according to the criteria of true wisdom.”

Glancing around at the other worshippers, he continued:

“Devotees of various great figures of a number of Christian denominations are gathered here.”

With his broad experience, he looked around and indicated another woman in prayer:

“This woman is asking for the protection of St. Thérèse of Lisieux<sup>[3]</sup>, the gentle Carmelite nun, who discarnated in France.”

“Does her prayer actually reach the famous nun’s heart?” asked Hilario as optimistic as ever.

“Why wouldn’t it?” answered Silas. “After the death of the body, truly sanctified individuals are entrusted with the highest quotas of service in the expansion of the light or charity, knowledge or virtue, of which they were the living source of inspiration during the human learning experience. A beatific and impassive heaven exists only in the idle mind of those who intend to grow spiritually without work and to have peace without effort. Everything is creation: incessant beauty, improvement, joy and light in the divine and infinite

work of God expressed through those who grow spiritually toward Infinite Love. Thus, the soul that leaves a sowing of faith and self-denial behind on earth begins to nourish on the spirit plane the crop of ideas and examples it left to its brothers and sisters of the evolutionary struggle. This crop expands among those who continue its sacred ministry, thereby increasing, in work and influence for the good, the illuminative and sanctifying action the Lord has entrusted to it.”

Hilario was following this explanation as closely as I was and asked:

“What about the hypothesis that the souls that people regard as saints are not saintly at all in the Realm of the Truth? Are the prayers addressed to them heard, even if they are enduring painful experiences in the zones of darkness?”

“Yes, Hilario,” clarified the Assistant. “Such prayers may not immediately reach the spirits invoked, but they do reach others who represent what these spirits stand for. In the name of God, these other spirits act lovingly as their substitutes in the assistance work of the good, since all love in the Eternal Creation is, in fact, from God. Let us imagine, for example, that Sister Thérèse was not in an immediate position to lend her aid... If that were the case, then great souls purified in the discipline of the institution in which she distinguished herself would be charged with acting in her stead until she could carry out her ministry in person.”

“Nevertheless,” pondered my colleague, “are we to believe that the principles of the many religious congregations are still present in the Highest Spheres?”

The assistant smiled and added:

“Not in the narrow sense of earthly sectarianism. The more a spirit ascends toward the higher notions of life, the more it abandons human conventions because it understands that Providence is light and love for all. However, until the soul identifies itself with the sublime factors of cosmic consciousness, the circles of study, faith, spiritual growth and solidarity, through the good they do wherever they are, deserve the highest respect of the Higher Intelligences in charge of carrying out the Divine Plans.”

Immediately thereafter, as if he wanted to set the merits of the lesson in our minds, he directed his gaze toward another woman who was praying nearby. After a short observation, he invited us to approach her.

We tuned in to her mental field and were surprised to see in the niche the living and kindly image of the selfless Dr. Bezerra de Menezes.[\[4\]](#) At the same time, we could hear our disconsolate sister’s prayer:

“Dr. Menezes, for the love of Jesus, please don’t abandon my poor Ricardo to the darkness of desperation!... My poor husband is going through such a harsh ordeal!... O kind friend, help us!... Please don’t let him fall into the abyss of suicide!... Give him courage and patience and uplift his spirit!... The problems and tears that afflict him in the world are falling on my soul like drops of acid!”

Silas interrupted our observation, pointing out:

“As we can see, the sanctuary is used for worthy prayer regardless of denomination. Over

there, someone is calling for help from the nun of Lisieux; here, a poor soul is beseeching the help of the noteworthy friend of Brazilian Spiritists.”

I observed the great doctor’s face according to the memory of the sister faithfully praying before us and I noticed the perfection of the mental photograph she was exteriorizing.

We saw Dr. Menezes’ picture there as we had known him: serene, simple, kind, fatherly...

Anticipating our usual questions, the Assistant informed us:

“Upon discarnating after more than fifty years of service to the Spiritist Cause, Adolfo Bezerra de Menezes had the right to assemble a large team of collaborators who serve under his banner of charity. Hundreds of studious and benevolent spirits follow his directives in the sowing of the good, which he performs in the name of Christ.”

“That’s why,” Hilario added, “it’s easy to understand how he can be working in so many places at the same time.”

“Exactly,” agreed Silas. “As happens in radiophony, where one broadcasting station with several receiving stations is like one thinking brain with millions of arms, great missionaries of the light, working for the good, can reflect themselves to dozens or hundreds of workers who follow their guidance in working for the Lord. Lovingly invoked in so many Spiritist institutions and homes, Bezerra de Menezes helps all of them, either personally or through the spirits that faithfully represent him.”

“In that sense,” added my colleague, “he has his own field of activity, just like persons in command of human work have administrative headquarters from which they forward the organization’s directives to their subordinates.”

“Precisely!” confirmed Silas, smiling. “The Lord has every means to install any suitable director of human work – even in the most insignificant circumstances of societal life on the planet – and he would not forget the missionaries of the light in the Spirit Realm.”

Saying this, Silas quietly led us to the door to the outer courtyard.

When we reached the exit, we noticed that the ambient light grew dimmer almost immediately a few yards from the threshold, giving us the feeling that it endured a tremendous impact from the surrounding darkness.

A huge crowd was clustered in the enormous courtyard.

Various groups talked loudly... Some were weeping; some were pleading; some were moaning...

Our eyes had not yet adapted to the darkness and we could barely make out the silhouettes of the great number of people gathered there; however, we could clearly hear their words and cries, their ardent prayers and their disconsolate appeals.

Noticing our surprise, the Assistant remarked:

“This is Mansao’s parlatory, where ranks of sincere and suffering souls gather. They are usually in the depths of profound despair, which keeps them from the benefits of peaceful



prayer.”

And with an expressive gesture he added:

“This large space dedicated to free expression truly defines our vibratory borders... Beyond it is the rebellious, terrible suffering that causes monstrosity and madness depicting the hell of ordinary religious interpretation. However, inside our walls, the suffering is patient and understanding, creating renewal and readjustment for the pathway to heaven.”

Looking at the disheartening scene in front of us, we couldn't find the words to describe its impact on our sentiments. That is why we instinctively kept still in light of the Assistant's own silence, which, to our minds, was quietly resorting to the power of prayer.

[1] A room set aside specifically for conversation. – Tr.

[2] Antonio Teixeira Lopes, famous Portuguese sculptor. – Spirit Auth.

[3] In the Catholic Church, Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus disincarnated in the Carmelite Convent of Lisieux, France on Sept. 30, 1897. – Spirit Auth.

[4] Dr. Adolfo Bezerra de Menezes, Apostle of Christian Spiritism in Brazil, disincarnated in Rio de Janeiro on April 11, 1900. – Spirit Auth.



## Increased Debt

As other workers of the institution dashed past us with the obvious intent of assisting others, Druso's friend came down the temple's stairway with us, explaining:

“A lot of our coworkers use this time to offer their willing service of fraternal love. They listen to the desperate and downcast, and as far as possible, they provide them with medication and consolation, not only exhorting them to understanding and serenity but also going with them to the dark regions or to the sphere of incarnates, where they assist the loved ones who trouble their souls.”

At that moment, we came into closer contact with the noisy groups. By now, our eyes were accustomed to the dim light and we were able to make out the pitiable and exotic figures in distress all around us... There were women with hard-looking faces disfigured by misery, and men with faces tortured by hate and affliction.

It would be hard to guess their ages on a human scale. Their wretchedness had turned them into ghosts of bitterness, making them all look very similar. Many of them had hands that looked like withered claws, and in almost all of them a look of anger or fear revealed the dolorous characteristics of a mind that had descended into the abyss of madness.

Moving prayers were mixed together with sinister clamors of rebelliousness.

Heartbroken, we observed the crowd milling around ill-manneredly before the open doors of the peaceful sanctuary, and I asked the Assistant why none of them sought shelter inside the hospitable temple, which was almost empty by now.

Nodding toward the entryway we had just left, Silas gazed at the lit reception area, which, from the overwhelming darkness, seemed more like a tunnel opening to the light, and clarified:

“Your suggestion would certainly be the ideal solution. However, only those who can bear its light with due respect can enter the sacred room. Almost all the brothers and sisters in this square exhibit disfigurement caused by their perversity, or they harbor fierce sentiments that their moving prayers fail to hide. With such dispositions they cannot bear the impact of the light inside because it is made up of special photons characterized by a particular electromagnetic content that is indispensable for the institute's security. Many of these disturbed brothers and sisters may be clamoring with their lips that they long for the benefits of prayer inside the sanctuary, but in reality, once there they would love to trample the sublime name of our Heavenly Father in a display of sarcasm and blasphemy. So, in order

to keep them from disturbing the divine atmosphere that we must provide for pure and comforting prayer, our guides have ordered us to keep the light gradated against easily avoidable disturbance and harm.”

Hilario was surprised and considered:

“That means that only the sincere repentance of the soul can tune in to the electromagnetic forces permeating the room.”

“Precisely,” confirmed the Assistant. “Our institution offers open arms to pain and suffering, but not to rebelliousness and desperation; otherwise, it would be condemned to destruction and discredit in this tormented place.”

At this point of the conversation, we were interrupted by dozens of withered arms begging for help.

Silas looked at them compassionately but didn’t stop until we were met by a hurried woman shouting anxiously:

“Assistant Silas! Assistant Silas!”

Our friend recognized her, because he stopped abruptly and held out his friendly hand, asking:

“What is it, Luisa?”

Both showed curiosity and concern.

Displaying irrepressible signs of anguish, the discarnate woman cried out without further ado:

“Help!... Oh Help!... My daughter, my poor Marina is about to give up... I’ve fought with all my might to keep her from committing suicide, but now I feel weak and incapable...”

Sobs suffocated her throat, inhibiting her voice.

“Speak up!” said Silas assertively, as if the crisis were clouding the mental serenity he needed to grasp the situation.

Now on her knees, the wretched creature looked up with tearful eyes and begged:

“Assistant, forgive my insistence on talking about my misfortune, but I’m a mother... my poor daughter is planning to kill herself tonight, immersing her conscience even deeper into the darkness!”

Silas told her to go back to her earthly home as best she could, and joining hands, we set out quickly for the objective at hand.

On the way, the Assistant informed us:

“This is a matter involving a former ward at Mansao Paz who reincarnated almost thirty years ago under its auspices. As we give her assistance, you’ll be able to observe a case of increased debt.”

Noticing that Silas became silent, Hilario remarked:

“The number of women praying and giving assistance around here is really impressive.”

Worried as he was, Silas tried to smile but it didn't make it to his lips. He replied:

“Yes, it is... Very few wives and mothers can leave for happier regions without their loved ones... A woman's immense love is one of the most powerful forces in the divine creation.”

There was no more time for talk, however.

On the physical plane, we had arrived at a small house consisting of three untidy small rooms.

The clock indicated a few minutes past midnight.

Silas's mere presence scared off several spirits of the darkness lingering there with the clear intention of causing trouble, and we entered a simple room.

We could tell without words that the problem was grave.

Next to an exhausted and extremely troubled young woman, a girl two or three years old was whimpering restlessly... We could see in her glazed and listless eyes the stigma of those marked for irredeemable suffering upon being born.

However, judging from Silas's undisguised concern, we could tell that the poor woman should be the focus of our most urgent attention.

The wretch was on her knees, desperately kissing the little girl, revealing the indefinable anguish of someone who is saying goodbye forever.

Then she grabbed a glass containing an obviously highly poisonous liquid. But before she could raise it to her lips, the Assistant told her in an assertive voice:

“How can you think of the darkness of death without the light of prayer?”

The miserable creature didn't hear his question with her physical ears, but his words pierced her mind like a strong blast of wind.

Her eyes shone with a new glow and the glass trembled in her now undecided hands.

Our guide opened his arms to her, enveloping her in anesthetizing fluids of love and kindness.

Marina, the sister whose desperate mother had pleaded for help, was overcome with new thoughts and put the dangerous glass back in its original spot. Under Silas's vigorous influence, she stood up mechanically and went to bed and prayed:

“Dear God of Infinite Goodness!” she began aloud, “Have mercy on me and forgive me for my failure! I can't go on anymore... Without me, my husband will be better off in the leprosarium<sup>[1]</sup> and my poor little daughter will find generous hearts who can give her love... I'm out of money... I'm sick... Our unpaid bills are crushing me... How can I beat the disease that is killing me if I have to sew all the time, torn between my husband and my little girl who demand my assistance and care?”

Silas administered magnetic passes to sedate her, and inducing her to make a light movement with her arm, she knocked over the dangerous glass, which crashed to the floor, spilling its deadly liquid.

Weeping copiously, the poor creature insisted disconsolately:

“O Lord, have mercy on me!”

In her thoughtless gesture she recognized the manifestation of an outside power that had kept her from taking her own life and she began praying silently with obvious signs of fear and remorse, a mental attitude that increased her passivity and enabled the Assistant to put her to sleep.

Silas emitted a strong jet of fluidic energy over her encephalic cortex, and unable to explain what was happening, the young woman fell into a torpor that spread over her nervous system and left her sleeping heavily, as if she had drunk a powerful sedative.

Silas interrupted his assistance and explained to us kindly.

“This is an overwhelming example of increased debt.”

Nodding toward the young mother lying there, he continued:

“Marina came from Mansao to help Jorge and Zilda, her creditors. In the last century, she came between the two newlyweds and induced them to commit deplorable acts that resulted in anguished madness in the spirit world. After all involved had endured a long time of suffering, the Lord allowed several of their friends to intercede for them before the Higher Powers so that they could emend their destinies, and all three were reborn into the same social environment for their work of regeneration. Marina was our sister Luisa’s eldest. She received the task of watching over her little sister Zilda, who grew up in the warmth of her sisterly love. However, according to the plan traced out for them before their reincarnation, when they entered adulthood a few years ago, young Zilda met Jorge and they instinctively renewed their love interest from the past. They loved each other passionately and got engaged. But Marina didn’t live up to the promises she had made in the Greater World. According to those plans, she was to love the same man as before, but this time in the silence of constructive self-denial. She was to lend support to her little sister – formerly the rejected spouse – in the purifying struggles that her present life would offer her. Taken with intense passion, she devised a deplorable scheme. Completely deaf and blind to the warnings of her conscience, she started to involve her sister’s fiancé in a large web of seduction. For her secret objective she attracted the support of capricious, sickly spirits through her own sickly desires, and she willfully began hypnotizing the young man with the help of discarnate vampires[2], whose company she had attracted without realizing it... Thus unconsciously controlled, Jorge went from loving Zilda to having feelings for Marina instead, and he realized that his new affection was growing dangerously, totally out of his control... After a few months, they began to meet secretly in an intimacy that entangled them more deeply... Zilda noticed the change in Jorge but attributed his indifference to exhaustion from work and to family problems. However, only two weeks before the wedding, poor Zilda was surprised by an unexpected and heartbreaking confession: Jorge told her about what was tearing him

up inside... He didn't deny his great affection and admiration for her, but for a long time now, he had known that Marina was the one that should be his wife. The jilted bride stifled her heart-wrenching dismay and didn't react – apparently. But introverted and desperate, that same evening she poisoned herself to death. Mad with grief, Zilda discarnated and was rescued by our sister Luisa, who was already at Mansao due to her maternal merits. The distraught mother begged for the support of our Superiors. As a mother, she felt sorry for both women. In her eyes, the betrayer Marina was more unfortunate than the jilted Zilda, even though the latter had assumed the terrible debt of suicide. But in her case, it was mitigated because of her mental alienation after having been unduly condemned to supreme abandonment... After the facts were lovingly analyzed by Minister Sanzio, whom we knew personally, he determined that Marina was to be regarded a debtor of an account that she herself had increased. Immediately after his decision, he made arrangements for Zilda to be sent back to her former home to receive the treatment she deserved. Marina had failed the trial of self-denial on behalf of the sister who had been her generous creditor, but consequently she had condemned herself to sacrifice for that same sister, who, according to the Law's decree, was to live under Marina's roof as a suffering yet immensely beloved daughter. Thus, Jorge and Marina were finally free to get married, accomplishing on earth the loving communion they had longed for. Two years after the wedding, they received Zilda into an embroidered cradle as their beloved daughter. But... after the first few months, they became aware of her dolorous trial: Zilda – now called Nilda – was born deaf and mentally impaired as a result of the trauma caused to her perispirit by willfully poisoning herself to death. Unconscious and tormented in the depths of her being by the asphyxiating memories of her recent past, she wept continuously almost day and night. The more she suffered, however, the more love she received from her parents, who loved her with an extraordinary display of caring and compassion. Their life was proceeding normally despite the tribulations of the natural hurdles of their journey, when, a few months ago, Jorge had to leave his family and go to a leprosarium for treatment. Ever since then, between her sick husband and unfortunate daughter, Marina, due to her increased debt, has suffered the terrible distress we are witnessing today. She too is being assaulted by the temptation of suicide.”

The Assistant became silent.

Both Hilario and I were amazed and moved.

The problem was dreadful from a human point of view, but it entailed an invaluable lesson regarding Divine Justice.

Silas stroked the sleeping woman's head and added:

“The Lord will help us so that she recovers and finds courage to go on.”

Just then, Luisa entered the room, anxious and despondent.

She was informed about the latest events and thanked us, wiping her tears.

Silas, however, wanting to complete his assistance, applied additional magnetic passes to the debilitated mother. We then witnessed an unforgettable scene.

Marina's spirit rose from her sleeping body and looked at us with vacant, inexpressive eyes.

As if he wanted to awaken her perceptions, the Assistant touched her eyes with hands haloed in luminescent fluids, and suddenly, like a blind woman who has just recovered her sight, the poor creature saw Luisa, who held out her friendly and loving arms to her. With tears streaming from her eyes, she immersed herself in Luisa's bosom, crying out with joy:

“Mother! Dear mother! Is it really you?”

Luisa held her close very gently, as if she were a sick child, and barely holding back her emotion, said to her sadly:

“Yes, my dear daughter, it is me, your mother! Let us thank God for this short time together.”

Although afflicted, she kissed Marina tenderly and continued:

“Why are you so discouraged when the battle has just begun? Don't you know that suffering is our heavenly caretaker? What would become of us, Marina, if suffering didn't help us think of and feel the good? Rejoice in the fight that purifies and saves us for God's work... Don't make love a hell for yourself and don't think you can bring relief to your husband and your daughter with your illusion of thoughtless escape. Remember that the Lord transforms the poison of our errors into healthful medicine for the redemption of our wrongs... Our Jorge's disease and our Nilda's trial are a blessed pathway of spiritual growth not only for the two of them but also for your spirit, which has joined their lives in the redemptive plan!... Learn how to suffer with humility so that your suffering is not merely a matter of wounded pride... What has become of your courage as a wife and your dedication as a mother? Have you forgotten the value of prayer that you learned in our home? Have you deceived yourself so much that you would embrace cowardice as moral glory? There's still time! Wake up, get out of bed, fight and live!... Live to recover the feminine dignity that you tainted with the stain of betrayal... Remember your little sister, who left this world burdened by the affliction you imposed on her, and with devotion and sacrifice to your sick daughter, pay your debt to Eternal Justice... Humble yourself and redeem your conscience by paying the price of dolorous yet just expiation... Work and serve, trusting in Jesus, because the Divine Physician will restore your husband's health so that together we can lead sick little Nilda to the portal of renewal. Don't think you're all by yourself on those long, lonely nights when you are torn between sleeplessness and desolation!... We share the same dreams and the same struggles!... What kind of heaven is there for maternal hearts that weep beyond the grave, but the presence of their beloved children, even though they cause them long days of anguish? Take pity on me, your mother, for the time being condemned to suffering for her love for you!”

Luisa stopped, incessant sobs choking her voice.

Marina knelt down in tears and kissed her mother's hands while pleading:

“My dear mother, forgive me! Forgive me!”

Luisa stood the girl up with great effort, and giving us an idea of the maternal Calvaries that continue to bind great women to their families after death, she led her with unsteady steps back to the infirm child. Stroking the child's sweat-soaked brow, Luisa implored humbly:

“Dearest daughter, don't look for the false door of desertion... Live for your little girl, just as the Lord allows me to continue living for you!”

Feeling renewed, the young mother threw herself on the poor child, but as if the emotion of that moment suffocated her awakened mind, she was suddenly attracted by her physical body like a bit of iron to a magnet. She woke up bathed in tears, crying out half consciously:

“My daughter!... My daughter!”

The Assistant respectfully said goodbye to Luisa and affirmed:

“Praise be to God! Our Marina has reemerged, transformed.”

We left in silence.

Outside, distant clouds were crowned in the purplish light of dawn, and with my soul filled with gratitude and hope, I meditated on the Infinite Goodness of God, who makes the sun rise after each night, bringing the blessing of a new day.

[1] A hospital for leprosy [Hansen's disease] patients. [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com). – T r.

[2] “... a vampire is any idle entity that unduly uses others' potential...” Andre Luiz, *Missionaries of the Light*, Ch. 4, “Vampirism.” – Tr.

## Debt at a Standstill

We continued lending fraternal help to Marina's home, including assistance for her husband in the hospital. Thus, we found excellent opportunities for study and observation.

At each step we were able to draw conclusions and take notes.

Our tasks and trips were proceeding satisfactorily, when, one particular evening, Silas received a visit in the parlatory from a troubled coworker who said to him:

"Assistant Silas, it looks like our sister Poliana is about to succumb under the weight of her immense trial."

"Is she being rebellious?" asked our friend patiently and kindly.

"No," answered the visitor. "She is ill and her organic strength is declining by the hour... But in spite of it, she has been fighting bravely to stay by her unfortunate son's side."

Silas thought for a few seconds and said resolutely:

"There's no time to waste."

As on previous occasions, we used volitation to save time.

A few minutes later we arrived at a poor, desolate, rural setting. In a shack that was completely exposed to the night wind, a wretched woman covered with rags was lying on a straw mat on the floor. A few feet away slept a severely mentally impaired, paralytic dwarf. The sick woman was gazing at him, torn between affliction and despair.

"This is our sister Poliana and Sabino, the unfortunate son the Heavenly Power has entrusted to her," Silas informed us. "Spiritually, they are both wards of Mansao and they are on a harsh pathway of readjustment."

However, our kind friend seemed more interested in providing the two with practical assistance than in providing us with more information.

He carefully bent over the poor woman and listened to her breathing, stating somewhat worriedly:

"This is really serious."

He invited us to lend our assistance and we examined her closely. She was suffering from an alarming cardiac arrhythmia. Her heart was like a restless prisoner entwined in arteries constricted by strange calcifications.



As he examined the tormented circulatory picture, the Assistant stated:

“The weakened myocardial vessels are on the verge of rupturing because the patient is under the stress of extreme anguish. Her heart could stop at any minute.”

Having said that, he glanced at the man-child stretched out a few steps away and added:

“However, Poliana needs more time in the physical body because her son cannot survive without her. They’re not only bound together in the same trial, but are magnetized to the same fluidic atmosphere and are mutually fed by the energies they externalize in the field of pure affinity. Thus, the mother’s discarnation would have a fatal repercussion on her son. His existence at this stage of the segregation he has been confined to invariably gravitates around his mother’s tender care.”

A troubled expectation came over us.

The miserable shack lacked just about everything, but Silas seemed to be looking for something that could be used to assist them. He only found an old jug with very little water in it.

The Assistant told us that the patient needed immediate medication, but he knew that at this time of night it wouldn’t be easy to bring an incarnate soul to that forsaken place; besides, we had no resources available to us here.

Even so, we watched as Silas applied passes to her throat with devoted attention.

Next, he magnetized the water in the jug with fluidic resources.

We realized that he had incited the woman’s thirst, which compelled her to drink the plain water now converted into a medicinal liquid.

Poliana made an enormous effort, got up and looked for the simple jug.

After a few swallows, she became less anxious, as if she had been given a powerful calming potion.

Her overwhelming concern of the moment gave way to rest for her spirit.

The Assistant gently stroked her head as it lay on a pile of rags used as a pillow, and continued to transmit renewing energies to her.

A few minutes later, Poliana was completely outside her physical body, but her spirit didn’t have enough lucidity to discern our presence. Nevertheless, under Silas’s magnetic command, she stood up mechanically. He picked her up and the two of us followed them to a nearby wooded area.

Even though she wasn’t aware of our loving assistance, our patient, absent from her body as if in a consoling dream, felt calm and light as Silas carefully laid her on the soft carpet of grass.

Next, the Assistant asked us to pray, and looking up at the firmament twinkling with stars, he pleaded:

“Father of Infinite Goodness! You provide for the needs of the worm seemingly forgotten in the womb of the soil; You clothe nameless flowers, often giving them fragrance even in the slime of the marsh. Look mercifully upon us, for we have strayed far from Your love!

“Especially, O Righteous Father, have mercy on our defeated Poliana!

“Lord, she is no longer the woman eager for adventure and gold, ready to cast sludge and darkness onto the pathway of others, but an exhausted mother begging for new strength to bear her self-sacrifice! She is no longer the vain girl who used to laugh at her neighbor’s torments, but just a poor beggar, unable to work, weeping from door to door as she begs for a piece of bread to feed herself and her tormented son.

“O Father! Do not let her lose the blessing of a body at this moment on the redemptive road upon which she crawls!

“Grant her the resources she needs so that she does not break off her sublime experience...

“Through Christ you gave us the divine revelation of suffering as the route for our return to Your arms; help her renew her spent energies, so that she does not perish before she finds the new light that prepares her heart for the ascent to Glory Eternal!”

Touched with profound faith, Silas’s voice moved us to unstoppable tears.

Bluish scintillations haloed his head, and as an answer from Heaven, right there amid the wild vegetation of that isolated woodland, we saw, off in the distance and at different points, five flames quickly coming toward us.

When they reached us, the flames changed into fellow spirits who greeted us joyfully.

In a few minutes, imponderable energies of nature combined with substances derived from medicinal plants were brought to our patient, who inhaled them in long draughts. Soon, Poliana was surprisingly improved, ready to retake her physical body for the necessary recovery.

You, the rich of the earth – I thought to myself with tears – where is the power of your gold-stuffed coffers before the simple radiance of a prayer? What is the greatness of your palaces of splendor and jewels when compared to one single minute of the soul’s reverence in communion with God’s Paternity in the majesty of Heaven?

Incapable of understanding her metamorphosis due to the circumstances of her temporary trial, the patient still couldn’t see us, but she smiled happily, feeling much stronger and agile.

Supported by us once more, she returned to her grimy hovel, where we helped her retake her physical vessel.

Invigorated, she opened her eyes as Silas explained:

“The improvements in her perispirit will be quickly assimilated by the cells of her physiological organism.”

And he emphasized:

“Earth’s doctors know that sleep is one of the most effective agents of healing. The reason for this is that when the soul is absent from the body, oftentimes it can make use of prodigious resources for the recovery of the physical vehicle it uses for its experiences in the world.”

After this explanation, he stroked the poor woman’s graying hair and promised her out loud:

“Rest for now. When the day comes, our helpers will bring to you the assistance of fraternal charity by calling on any good Samaritan who happens to be nearby... The Lord will allow you to continue.”

Next, he invited us to examine Sabino’s organic field.

On the outside, yes, he was a dolorous mask of abnormality and malformation. He was very small – barely 36 inches[1]. He had a large head and a deformed body that emitted a fetid odor, inspiring both compassion and repugnance.

His face closely resembled that of a primate; his unconscious smile and semi-lucid eyes bore the expression of a sad clown.

The Assistant urged us to examine his mental field, and in just a few minutes of focusing closely, I was able to access it and observe his peculiar reminiscences.

Sabino’s memory showed that it was living far removed from present-day reality, immersed as it was in totally strange scenes.

His thoughts took on consistency as they materialized to our spirit sight, enabling us to see him as he felt himself to be. We saw him in the trappings of a prominent courtier, influencing well-positioned individuals to commit secret crimes that always resulted in the intense suffering of the common folk. Widows and orphans, humble workers and wretched slaves paraded on the screen of his complex memories. Aristocratic palaces and lavish tables were part of the ostentatious details of the memories populating his mind. And by his side, always the same woman, whose proud bearing revealed Poliana, the same Poliana now lying motionless on a mat of straw... We were stunned to see them both surrounded by luxury and gold, but also stained with blood, to which they were completely insensitive.

It was easy to see that they had heavy mutual debts to pay for in the realm of cruelty.

Sabino, the arrogant nobleman, was completely unaware of Sabino, the paralytic dwarf. In total introspection, he kept re-living his past at the deepest level of self-absorption, showing that he was a man deluded by false superiority before his fellow beings.

Noticing our perplexity, Silas remarked:

“Of course, we cannot hear his articulated words because he is completely hearing and speech impaired at the moment, but we can address him in thought; he can react in thought to our questions. But to do so, we’ll have to treat him like the personality he thinks he is still living as... We’ll address him as the Baron of S..., his title during his last lifetime, during

which he strayed ruinously in the darkness of crime and vanity.”

Noticing the reddish stains on the pictures of the living memories in which he was enclosed, I asked with the natural gravity that the moment demanded:

“Baron, why is there so much blood on your pathway? Were a lot of tears shed along its way?”

I saw very clearly that he did not hear my question with his physical eardrums, but that he grasped it in the form of an idea that he himself had formulated. He responded through the mental wires, with which we were communicating, without identifying me as his invisible interviewer: “Blood and tears, yes!... I needed a big dose of that for my undertakings... What conqueror does not have blood and tears at the bottom of his pyramid of fortune or political domination? Life is a system of battles, in which humankind is divided into two opposing camps: one for those who conquer and one for those who are conquered... I am a nobleman... My calling does not entail losing... Why should the suffering of the weak matter if death for them means rest and mercy?”

I disconnected myself from the mental field where Sabino was expressing his thoughts, and after a few moments, during which Hilario conducted the same examination, the Assistant explained:

“As we can easily conclude, according to ordinary medical science Sabino is merely a paralytic that has been hearing, speech and mentally impaired since birth... For us, however, he is a still-dangerous prisoner encaged in physical bones. But he is completely unaware of that fact for now, so great is the self-centeredness that still clouds his soul in a process of uncontrollable hypertrophy... His thirst for ill-gotten possessions and his virulent pride have perverted his inner life, fixating him in a dreadful maze of sinister delusions that have resulted in complete mental alienation as regards to time. The clock advances in the counting of the days, whereas he remains at a standstill inside the reminiscences where he believes that he is still a dominator on the earth, living inside the nightmare he has created for himself.”

In light of the problems the study was raising, a surprised Hilario asked:

“But... what good does such suffering do?”

Silas displayed a slight expression of sadness and explained:

“This is a case of a lamentable frozen debt. Our poor, deplorably downfallen friend has committed many, many crimes on earth and in the spirit realm as well, and for more than a thousand years, he has yielded again and again, proud and insensitive, to the claws of criminality... From one lifetime to the next, he has done nothing but waste his physical resources, disturbing the societal landscapes in which the Lord has allowed him to live. Down through the centuries, he has caused many, many calamities such as murder, rebellion, extortion, slander, bankruptcy, suicide, abortion and obsession, for the only thing he has ever been interested in has been the satisfaction of his enormous self-centeredness... Between cradle and grave, it has been unending folly, and from grave to cradle, only cold and reckless

cruelty despite intercessions by the selfless friends who support him during new attempts at regeneration and spiritual recovery. Almost always inspired by the opinions of Poliana, his partner on his many journeys, he has crystallized himself as a wretched entrepreneur of crime. During his last lifetime his imbalance grew to such an extent that he ended up committing suicide indirectly as a consequence of his addictions. There was no other remedy for him except total insulation in the flesh, in the fog of his present existence. That is how we see him: a wild beast caged in the armor of a deformed body, under the care of the woman who has been his accomplice in his successive falls, and who is now in the lofty position of the maternal nurse of his lengthy misfortune. The irresponsible and wayward companion who habitually chose criminal pleasures for herself, Poliana woke up in the spirit world to the realities of life before he did... She suffered immensely, and then accepted the task of helping him with his recovery, something that will obviously demand a long time from them.”

Through the blackish green aura of the self-absorbed dwarf’s perispiritual field, we could see that all the energies of his vibratory centers ebbed back to their starting points, giving us the impression that Sabino was completely tangled up in himself like a caterpillar isolated in its self-made cocoon.

Silas promptly answered the questions we could not help asking:

“Until he matures in spirit for the renewal he needs, our friend keeps his mind working in a closed circuit; that is, he thinks about himself constantly and is incapable of exchanging vibrations with anyone but Poliana, of whom he made himself the mute, expectant satellite, like a parasite on a succulent plant. Sabino is an example of debt at a standstill. He remains stationary in a state of spiritual hibernation. He has been compulsorily circumscribed within himself for the sake of incarnate and discarnate spirits, for his material and moral wrongs are such that his conscious presence either on earth or in the spirit world would provoke disturbances and chaos of unpredictable consequences. As he is now, he is benefiting from a pause in the struggle, under the exercise of forgetfulness so that in the future he can face the mountain of debt he has accumulated and find a fitting way to pay it off over the next few centuries through the efforts of an iron will in the practice of self-renunciation.”

“But,” asked Hilario, worriedly, “wouldn’t Higher Spirituality have a way to imprison him outside the physical body?”

“Yes,” confirmed Silas, “That would be possible. However, if there are pain-filled dungeons for the expiation of the crimes that darken the human mind – many of them represented by valleys of misery and horror – we must remember that the criminals segregated there attract and mutually contaminate each other with their moral sores, thereby creating their temporary hell. On the other hand, there are a lot of institutions that function like greenhouses, where discarnate spirits sleep peaceably for a long time, immersed to a certain extent in the nightmares they deserve after they cross over from the grave... Sabino, however, is an exceptional case of systematic rebelliousness and moral delinquency, in whose darkness, one day, he felt his strength wavering. Remorse pierced his heart like the deadly bullet that strikes a tiger on the loose... Prayer glimmered in his conscience, and before his new attitude could provoke reactions and vile vendettas among his former partners in evil, he

was taken to Mansao Paz, where he was magnetized and put under deep hypnosis. Later, he was received into the care of Poliana, who was experiencing her own regeneration through sacrifice. As you can see, our friend's connections in the infernal realms are so strong that, out of Jesus' mercy, he has been temporarily hidden in this monstrous body. There, he is not only kept cut off from them, but he is also unrecognizable for his own sake. Time and Divine Goodness must support him with his painful and complex problems.”

Gazing at us serenely, he added:

“Understand?”

Indeed we had.

As we saw it, this experience was harsh but logical, terrible but just.

And like someone who could give nothing else to this wretched friend except his heart, Silas stroked his feculent head, and deeply moved, he offered him the blessing of a prayer.

[1] Approximately 90 cm. – Tr.

## Interrupted Redemption

We went with the assistant to take part in re-harmonizing a small family living in the suburbs of a big city.

The head of the family was Ildeu, who was a little over thirty five years old. His selfless wife Marcela was the mother of their three children: Roberto, Sonia and Marcia. However, seduced by the charms of a thoughtless, irresponsible young woman named Mara, he was doing everything he could to get his wife to leave him.

Nonetheless, Marcela had been educated in the school of Duty, and was dedicating herself to her home and doing everything she could to hide her suffering.

From his rude manners and deplorable behavior at home, she was fully aware of the change in her children's father, and when she received insulting letters from her rival, she wept in silence after throwing them into the fire so that he wouldn't find them.

We took pity on her at seeing her praying next to the children every night.

The eldest, nine-year old Roberto, held her head, perceiving the sobs trapped in her throat, and in their childlike innocence, the two little girls mechanically repeated Marcela's prayers to Jesus on "Daddy's" behalf.

In tormented sleeplessness until late at night, her spirit agonized when Ildeu would come home smelling of alcohol and exhibiting signs of his deplorable adventures.

If she raised her voice, reminding him of something the children needed, he would reply angrily:

"What a miserable life! You're always recriminating, annoying and persecuting me with your criticisms and demands!... If you want money, go get a job! If I had known that marriage was going to be like this, I would've preferred a bullet in my brain to signing a contract that made me a slave for the rest of my life!"

As he shouted in anger, we could see on the screen of his memories the young seducer Mara appearing as the ideal woman. He compared hers with his wife's figure, which was worn-out by hardship, and under the control of Mara's image, he would put on a shocking display of rage in his longing to flee the house.

In tears, Marcela would beg him to be tolerant and to calm down, explaining that she was not averse to working.

In fact, she spent her available time working for very little money washing clothes, but her chores at home didn't allow her to do more than that.

“Hypocrite!” her husband would shout, transformed with rage. “What about me? What do you want me to do? Do you think I should do more? I'm up to my neck in unpaid bills!... I owe everybody!... It's all because you're blowing all the money... I don't know how much longer I can stand you! Wouldn't it be best if you went back to the place where you had the bad luck of being born? Your parents are still alive, after all.”

The poor creature would weep silently, but his shouting would almost always awaken little Roberto, who, half asleep, would run to his mother's rescue and embrace her.

Ildeu would leap towards the small defender and slap him, screaming with uncontrolled fury:

“Get out of here! Get out!”

And as if the boy were not his son but a familiar enemy, he would add with clenched fists:

“I'd love to kill you... kill you!... Every night the same performance! You little rat! You idiot!”

And clinging to his mother, the boy would endure blow after blow until he went back to bed, weeping convulsively.

On the other hand, if the little girls whimpered, Ildeu would melt even when completely drunk, saying kindly:

“My little girls! My poor little girls! What'll become of you? You're the only reason I'm still here, bearing the cross of this place.”

And very often, he himself would tuck them back into bed.

Silas, Hilario and I would get busy on behalf of Marcela and her children.

Then, from that tormented home, threatened with complete destruction, we would set out for other areas of service, so the Assistant never had the chance to give us a fuller explanation.

Nearly every night, however, we would spend a few minutes with them in tasks that were dear to our hearts.

But despite our efforts, the head of the family became more indifferent and distant by the day.

Bored and irritated, he wouldn't even grant his wife the kindness of a casual greeting. He was fascinated by Mara and had begun to loathe Marcela. He was planning to get rid of the burden of his commitment and set out on a new pathway.

But how to deal with his love for his little girls?

Frankly – he would say to himself – he didn't love Roberto, the son whose eyes silently



accused his deplorable conduct, but he adored Sonia and Marcia with undisguised tenderness... How could he leave them after the impending breakup? By law it was certain that his wife would retain her rights as the mother... A woman of upright conduct, Marcela could count on the favors of Justice.

He thought and thought...

He couldn't do without the love of Mara, whose influence had seized his sickly sentiments.

Wherever he went, he felt her subtle influence tearing up his character and undermining his dignity as a man who had been honorable and happy until he met her.

At times he would try in vain to free himself of her yoke.

Marcela represented the embodiment of the discipline that he himself ought to observe and the duties he should honor, whereas Mara, with her fiery eyes, promised him freedom and pleasure.

And thus a sinister idea was born in his sick mind: he would murder his wife and hide his crime, making it look like suicide.

To that end he would change the way he was acting at home.

He would try to drop his systematic incomprehension, put his anger on hold and feign tenderness in order to win everyone's trust... And then a few days later, when Marcela was sleeping soundly without any worries, he would shoot her in the heart, fooling the police.

We were able to follow the development of the insane plan. It is always very easy to penetrate the realm of thought-forms as they are slowly constructed by the individuals who, impassioned and persistent, build them around themselves.

The seeming serenity of the smiling Ildeu couldn't hide his dreadful plan from us as he mentally structured the crime detail by detail.

In order to defend Marcela, whose life was watched over by Mansao, the Assistant increased the vigilance at the house.

Two of our dedicated and selfless colleagues took turns looking after her day and night so as to prevent the awful crime.

Finally, as we were doing assistance work for some other patients, the brother on duty at Ildeu's house came running to inform us that events were coming to a head.

With his soul influenced by discarnate murderers who had picked up on his thoughts, Ildeu was planning to kill his wife that very night.

Silas didn't hesitate.

We immediately set out for the deeply troubled household.

Based on his considerable authority, Silas employed the help of friendly spirits doing routine work in the neighborhood. First, they expelled the discarnate alcoholics and moral

delinquents roaming around the house.

But in spite of this measure, the infernal plan in our poor friend's mind had ripened.

It was late at night.

His heart beating wildly and his frightened eyes glancing around at the bare walls of the room as if he suspected our presence, he was examining the clip of a gun, determined to commit the horrific act.

The scene of the premeditated murder had completely taken over his mind and was playing out in an astonishing sequence of frames...

Oh! If only incarnate spirits knew that their thoughts become visibly exteriorized, they would surely guard themselves against the domain of crime.

While the insane father was planning to go to the children's bedroom to lock it in order to keep them from witnessing the murder, Silas unexpectedly hurried to the girls' bed. Using magnetic resources, he had little Marcia in her perispiritual body hurriedly watch her father's thoughts.

On seeing the horrible scenario, the child felt a tremendous jolt and returned immediately to her physical vessel, screaming at the top of her lungs as if she had just awakened from a terribly frightening nightmare:

“Daddy!... Daddy!... Don't kill! Don't kill!”

By then, Ildeu was already at the door, holding the gun with his right hand and trying to lock the door with the other.

The child's screams echoed throughout the house, causing an enormous commotion.

Marcela jumped out of bed and surprised her husband at the girl's bedside, gun in hand, presaging a bad omen.

Incapable of suspecting his intentions, the kind woman cautiously took the gun from him. Believing that her husband had meant to kill himself, she begged him in tears:

“Oh, Ildeu! Don't kill yourself! Jesus knows that I have lived up to all my duties... I don't want the remorse of having added to such a madness that would make you a reprobate before God's laws! Do as you please, but don't disgrace yourself in suicide. If you really want to, go ahead and build a new home with the woman who makes you happy... I shall dedicate my life to our children. I'll work to earn our bread with the sweat of my brow... But please, I beg you, don't kill yourself!”

The woman's generous attitude moved us to tears.

Notwithstanding his hardened sentiment, even Ildeu felt touched with pity and was inwardly thankful for the version that his worthy, selfless wife was offering the chain of events, whose direction he had not foreseen.

Upon finding the escape he had been seeking for so long, instead of listening to the screams of his conscience warning him to watch out, he played the victim:

“I just can’t handle it any more... I have only two choices: suicide or separation[1].”

With the Assistant’s help, Marcela unloaded the gun, helped the children get back to sleep, and went to bed in grief. In the darkness, tears ran from her sad eyes as she prayed in the tortured silence of her suffering: “Dear God, have mercy on me, a poor, wretched woman! ... What am I to do with three needy children by myself?”

However, before the pungent pain could overwhelm her with discouragement, Silas applied balsamic passes and hypnotized her. Disengaged from her physical body, the afflicted woman stood in front of us highly distressed.

Taking us for messengers from heaven – in accordance with the habit of many incarnate souls – she knelt down and begged for support.

Silas kindly helped her up and explained:

“Marcela, we are merely your brothers... Be brave! You’re not alone! God our Father never forsakes us... Yes, grant your spouse his freedom, although we know that duty is a divine blessing whose desertion we will have to account for... Let Ildeu cut the respectable ties of his commitment if he believes that that is the only way to gain the experience he must acquire... But whatever happens, show him your tolerance and understanding. Do not wish him ill; instead, ask Jesus to bless and support him wherever he may be, because remorse and repentance, the longing and pain of those who flee from the duties the Lord has entrusted to them, become unbearable burdens. We know that you were bound to him in a sacred alliance for the work of redemption arising from a recent past life... Even so, if he succumbs before the struggle as a result of his right to choose, it wouldn’t be right for you to violate his free will by imposing on him a conduct that he himself must cultivate. By interrupting the repayment of his debts, Ildeu is turning his back on the contracts he assumed on his own behalf. Nonetheless, in the future he will have to revisit the debts that he is now ignoring and perhaps he will owe even more before the law... Don’t wallow in despair; continue on your way. Whatever the struggles that befall your soul, resign yourself and don’t be afraid. Consider your children a firm support along the way. Every edifying sacrifice on the earth enriches our souls in the Life Eternal... So let your beloved husband go free, respect the whims of his heart, and wait for the future with hope.”

And because Marcela was weeping out of fear for the future of material contingencies, Silas stroked her head and stated kindly:

“Honest hands will never lack honest work. Let us trust the Lord’s protection and press on without fear. Wipe your tears and rise in spirit to the Fount of the Supreme Good!”

At this point, some of the young mother’s discarnate relatives lovingly entered the room, holding out their arms to her.

The Assistant entrusted the tearful Marcela to them, asking for their help in order to restore her energies.

Then we left.

As soon as we were outside, our questions exploded unquenchable:

“Why did Ildeu loathe the honest and sweet Marcela so much? Why did he prefer his daughters and so strongly disdain his firstborn? What about the coming separation? Was it right for Silas to prepare the unfortunate young mother to separate from her husband instead of encouraging her to win back his love and devotion?”

The Assistant smiled with obvious disappointment and said:

“There’s a certain passage in the gospel of Matthew<sup>[2]</sup> where Jesus says that divorce on the earth is allowable because of the hardness of our hearts. Here, this measure is similar to a radical medicine applied in desperate cases of organic disharmony. When a patient has a high temperature or a malignant tumor, for example, the intervention demands drastic measures, so that the crisis does not culminate in insanity or untimely death. When it comes to marital problems, aggravated by one or both partners deserting their duty, then divorce is acceptable as a measure against crime, be it murder or suicide... However, just as the surgical shock to remove the tumor and the quinine used to alleviate certain fevers are emergency measures that are incapable of eliminating the underlying causes of the sickness, which continues to demand a long and laborious treatment, divorce doesn’t solve the problem of redemption. No one enters into human marriage or the endeavors of spiritual growth without connections with the past, and these connections almost always entail a debt for the spirit or a commitment that has been postponed. Thus, the man or the woman can ask for a divorce and obtain it as being the least of the evils that could happen to them... However, that doesn’t liberate them from their debt and they must return to pay it as soon as feasible.”

And because we still had so many questions, our kind guide continued:

“The case of Ildeu and Marcela – already studied meticulously at Mansao – involves two souls that have been undergoing readjustment for many centuries. In order not to get wrapped up in extensive explanations, it will be enough to recall only a few details of their last existence here in Brazil, when, as husband and wife, both underwent difficult experiences. After getting married, Ildeu was still restless, caught up in irresponsibility and adventure. Consequently, he ended up seducing two girls, daughters of the same family. He forsook the wife the law had given him and moved in with the first of the two, who was taking care of a little sister whom her dying parents had entrusted to her. However, as soon as the little girl reached puberty, Ildeu subjected her to his unspeakable caprices. Falling into blatant moral decadence, he forced both sisters into prostitution, in whose currents of darkness the poor creatures found themselves like sparrows imprisoned in mud... After five years, the suffering, forsaken wife – today’s Marcela – was unable to bear her loneliness any longer and accepted the company of an honest, hard working man, whom she started living with. Years passed and one day, Ildeu, still relatively young but wholly spent by his intemperance and debauchery, returned as a sick man to the town where he had gotten married, seeking the comfort of the wife whose loving faithfulness he himself had destroyed. Intending not to help or love her, but to enslave her as a nurse for his decaying body, he found her living happily with somebody else... Moved by incomprehensible jealousy – since he had left his home without just cause – he couldn’t stand seeing her happy and so he murdered her beloved companion. Shortly thereafter, the entire group that Ildeu had hurt –

including himself – gathered in the spirit realm, where the justice of the Law weighed the merits and demerits of each of them... With the support of Selfless Benefactors, the characters in our dolorous drama returned for redemption by means of reincarnation, with Ildeu facing the most responsibilities for being the guiltiest. Marcela agreed to help him and resumed her former post as his faithful wife. Roberto is her former slain companion, to whom Ildeu owes his life. Sonia and Marcia are the two sisters he dragged into vice and prostitution, and who today, as his beloved daughters, expect his love and support for their rehabilitation.”

The Assistant made a short pause and added:

“However, you both know that redemption through reincarnation is also exact recapitulation. If we do not work for our intense and radical renovation for the good, through edifying study that educates our mind and the love for our neighbor that perfects our sentiments, we will be tempted today by the same weaknesses as yesterday, since we have done nothing to suppress them; hence, we rekindle the same wrongs. As you have seen, Ildeu, reckless and deaf to life’s warnings, is the same man he used to be. He seeks supposed happiness outside the domestic temple, despising his wife, adoring the two little daughters, in whom he sees his companions from the past, and doing nothing to eliminate the instinctive aversion he feels toward his son, in whom he perceives his old rival, the former victim of his deadly rage.”

“But,” asked Hilario, “if he didn’t find in Marcela the love he longed for, why did he marry her again in this life? Isn’t youthful love a sign of trust and tenderness?”

Silas explained kindly:

“We need to remember that we are still far from acquiring true, pure and sublime love. Meanwhile, our love is an aspiration of eternity incrustated in selfishness and illusion, in the hunger for pleasure and in systematic self-centeredness, something we fantasize as being heavenly virtue. For this reason, during the springtime of our early dreams in the physical experience, our earthly affections may be a collection of mental states simply blending with our desires. And our desires change every day... Therefore, let us remember the imperative of recapitulation. At this or that physical age, men and women, under the supervision of the Law that rules our destinies, find the people and the situations they need in order to overcome the trials on their pathway, trials that are essential for the spiritual development they need in order to ascend to the Highest Spheres. Thus, we are attracted to certain souls and to certain issues, not necessarily because we prize them but because the past reunites us with them so that through them and with them we may acquire the experience needed for the assimilation of true love and wisdom. Thus, for the time being, that is why most human marriages comprise ties of learning and sacrifice, in which, very often, the partners mutually love each other and also mutually suffer terrible conflicts when living together. The resources of redemption are lined up in these struggles. The clearer and more precise we are in fulfilling the Law that commands us to aim for the good of all above anything else, the more liberty we find for eternal life. The more sacrifice we make, constantly working for the happiness of the souls the Lord has entrusted to us, the more we will ascend toward the glory of the Divine

Love.”

“So,” I said, “our friend Ildeu is interrupting the payment of his debt.”

“Exactly.”

“What about Marcela?” asked Hilario. “Will she be able to support herself and the children?”

“That is what we are hoping for and we will do everything we can to help her, since her husband has failed once more to honor his commitments.”

“Do you think we can count on her heroism as head of the family?” insisted my colleague.

“Who can predict someone else’s endurance?” asked Silas, smiling. “Marcela is in charge of herself, and with her husband’s desertion, she must shoulder a double burden. We sincerely hope that she is strong enough to overcome her life’s problems, but if she slides into an impious behavior that compromises domestic stability, wherein her children must grow toward the good, Ildeu’s debt will become even more complicated and extensive because the wrongs she commits will be mitigated by her husband’s unjustifiable abandonment. Those who make themselves responsible for our downfalls will feel in themselves the increase of their own crimes.”

After reflecting for some time, Hilario asked further:

“Let’s say that Marcela and her children manage to overcome the crisis, in due time overcoming all the needs of which they are now victims... Let’s see them at the end of their present reincarnation with a complete moral victory, as opposed to Ildeu holding himself back as an unrepentant debtor... If his wife and children are now definitely on their path towards the light and no longer in need of any contact with the darkness in their clear ascension to the higher realms of life, to whom will Ildeu pay the debt he has accumulated?”

Silas made a significant facial gesture and explained:

“Although we are all mutually undergoing processes of repairing reciprocal wrongs, in reality we are first and foremost debtors to the Law in our consciences. In doing evil to others, we commit evil against ourselves. If Marcela and her children ascend to the higher realms, and in case our friend Ildeu still remains on the earth, he will continue to see them in his own conscience, as sad and suffering as he made them. Tormented by the memories he built for himself, he will pay in service to other souls on the evolutionary pathway the debt that burdens his spirit. If we hurt others, in essence we are hurting the work of God. If we transgress his sovereign laws, we make ourselves unfortunate defendants who have to pay and make readjustments.”

“That means...”

Hilario was interrupted by the Assistant, who, reading his mind, said firmly:

“It means that, if Ildeu later on wishes to be with Marcela, Roberto, Sonia and Marcia, then redeemed in the Higher Spheres, he must have a conscience as dignified and noble as

theirs so as not to feel ashamed of himself, if we consider the possibility of triumph for his wife and children in the arduous trials reserved for them in the future.”

“Good God!” said Hilario sadly. “The amount of time it would take for such an enterprise!... And how difficult the reunion if loved ones do not decide to wait!”

“Yes,” confirmed Silas. “Those who willingly remain behind cannot complain about those who move onward. ‘To each according to his deeds,’ taught the Divine Guide. No one in the universe can escape the Law.”

Deeply touched by the lesson, Hilario and I became silent in order to pray and to think.

[1] Divorce was not legal in Brazil at this time, but there was something called “desquite”, which entitled separation without the possibility of re-marriage – Tr.

[2] Matthew 19:7, 8 – Spirit Auth.

## Opportune Remarks

Ildeu's family problems offered us an opportunity for a valuable study of the pure terrain of the soul.

For that reason, as we were heading back to Mansao with the Assistant, we used the time to probe his clear and sensible thoughts on a number of important questions boiling in our minds.

Hilario was the first to break the long pause:

“My dear Silas, isn't Roberto and Marcela's case a perfect example of the so-called Oedipus Complex that Freudian psychologists hold to in child psychology?”

Our friend smiled and said:

“The great Austrian doctor could have achieved significant advances in the realm of the mind if he had opened a door to the study of the law of reincarnation. Unfortunately, he was concerned with scientific pragmatism and did not have the courage to go beyond the rigidly structured physiological field. Consequently, he remained stuck in the obscure regions of the unconscious, where the 'self' stores its experiences, thereby turning its own impulses into automatic responses. As mother and son, Marcela and Roberto couldn't hide the sympathies they brought with them from the past to the present. By the same token, Ildeu, Sonia and Marcia couldn't escape the predilection that has linked them together since the past. The problem has to do with affinity in its essential structure: affinity with debts, demanding payment.”

I recalled the excessive emphasis we can attribute to the theory of the libido, the energy through which, according to the Freudian school, the sexual instinct is expressed in the mind. I made a few comments on the topic, focusing specially on child amnesia, which the famous scientist considered as being of utmost importance in explaining the workings of the unconscious.

Silas helpfully finished, without hesitation:

“Suffice it to say that, in reincarnation, a spirit is using a physical body, and consequently, these amnesias are the natural result of the temporary inadaptability between the soul and the instrument it is utilizing. During childhood, the 'ego' is still in the process of materializing and will express reminiscences and opinions, sympathies and antagonisms through instinctive manifestations that give it a glimpse of the past, which it will barely



remember in the near future, because it will begin to activate the developing cerebral machine that will serve it only for a period of time and for specific reasons. The same occurs in old age, when words seem to vanish from the frames of the memory, displaying alterations in the brain, which has been changed through wear and tear.”

“What about the theory of libido as the sex drive characteristic in all living beings?” I asked with curiosity.

“Freud,” considered Silas, “should be praised for the courage with which he embarked on the journey into the remotest labyrinths of the human soul in order to discover the wounds of our sentiments and diagnose them as accurately as possible. However, he cannot be completely approved of when he tries, more or less, to explain the human emotional field through the absolute measure of erotic feelings.”

The Assistant paused for a moment and continued:

“Creation, life and sex are themes that interact in their essence, and they find their origins in the bosom of the Divine Wisdom. Hence, there is no way that we can standardize them with technical, unchangeable definitions. Consequently, we cannot limit human folly to the function of sex, which would be as restrictive as someone who tried to study the sun by only examining a beam of light filtered through a small hole in the ceiling. Examined as an active force of life in light of incessant creation, sex, strictly speaking, is expressed in all things, from the communion of subatomic principles to the attraction of the heavenly bodies, thus manifesting the power of love generated by the infinite love of God. At the chemical level, the union between oxygen and hydrogen derives from this principle, forming the water that nourishes nature. The harmonious action of the sun, which stabilizes its family of worlds in the sidereal immensity and nourishes their existence, is the result of the same energy on the cosmic plane. Wouldn't the very influence of Christ – who let himself be crucified in his devotion to us, his wards on the earth, in order to fertilize our minds with light for our divine resurrection – essentially be the same principle applied at the highest level of sublimation? Thus, sex cannot be lacking in the spirit realm because it is of a mental substance that mentally determines the different ways in which it expresses itself. Sex is not an immutable energy of nature, which works upon the soul; rather, it is a variable energy of the soul, with which it works upon nature, in which it develops, perfecting itself. So, we can understand this energy as being a force of the Creator within the creature, and that it is meant to expand itself through deeds of love and light that enrich life. But it is also subordinate to the law of responsibility that governs our destinies.”

Hilario had been closely following this explanation and considered:

“Such reasoning would suggest that the sexual force is not meant only to produce children.”

I thought this remark was completely out of place, taking into account the elevation and transcendence with which Silas had touched on the topic, but the Assistant smiled benevolently and said:

“Hilario, my friend, on earth it is common to focus this important matter on the male

and female genital equipment. However, we mustn't forget that we have stated that sex is a force of love at the foundations of life, encompassing the glory of creation; it was Sigmund Freud who defined the sex drive as a quest for pleasure... Yes, the concept is reasonable when applied to the primitive experiences of the spirit in the physical world; however, one must expand its definition in order to move it out of the erotic field to which it has been confined. Through the creative energy of love, which ensures the stability of the whole universe, the soul, as it perfects itself, always searches for the noblest pleasures. Consequently, in accordance with the most sanctified stages of the spirit, there is the pleasure of helping, discovering, purifying, redeeming, illuminating, studying, learning, growing spiritually, constructing, and an infinite number of other pleasures. Thus, there are souls that love each other deeply, producing inestimable values for advancing the world but never touching each other physically, even though they are constantly exchanging the quintessential rays of love for accomplishing the works they enjoy. Certainly, the honest home, the sanctuary in which life is manifested in the formation of bodies blessed for the experience of souls, is a venerable institution, upon which Divine Providence focuses its attention. But besides the home, there are also associations of beings that are bound to one another by the purest sentiments on behalf of deeds of charity and education. The faculties of love give birth to sublime forms for the incarnation of souls on earth, but they also create the treasures of art, the riches of industry, the wonders of science and the marvels of progress... No one garners the patrimonies of evolution by themselves. In every enterprise aimed at moral development, there are attuned spirits who seek one another out in order to combine their individual abilities to accomplish the deeds that lift humankind from earth to heaven.”

After a short pause, he continued:

“In order to cement the foundations of his apostolate of redemption, Christ himself, our Lord, chose his disciples of the Good Tidings. Even though they failed to understand his sublimity at first, they became his courageous apostles, sealing with the Unforgettable Master a heart-to-heart contract, through which they set the foundations of God's kingdom on earth in an endeavor of selflessness and sacrifice, which, to this day, constitutes the most courageous deed of love the world has ever seen.”

At this point of his caring explanation, the Assistant became silent for a while.

However, realizing we would like to hear more from him on the matter of sex, as humans perceive it, so that we could reach adequate conclusions for our studies of cause and effect, he began once again:

“Our comments on such an extensive theme arise from the highest angle that our mind can grasp, but that does not exempt us from the duty of emphasizing the fact that people's emotional experiences need to be sublimated. Analyzed in its essence, we know that sex is the sum of the masculine or feminine traits that characterize the mind, which is why it is crucial to look at it from a spiritual point of view, picturing it in the sphere of the divine concessions that we must utilize respectfully and beneficially in the production of the good. I know that you would like to make a longer instructive foray into the subject, but we don't feel that we need to go into any more detail, because you know very well that the more discernment the

spirit has, the more crucial are its obligations in life. Sex in the human body is like an altar of pure love that we mustn't relegate to filthiness and subject to committing the most frightful mental cruelties, whose consequences inevitably follow us beyond the grave."

My colleague was anxious to ask more questions and continued respectfully:

"Silas, my friend, in the material world we witness all sorts of sentimental conflicts that sometimes culminate in horrible criminality... Men who refuse to honor their sacred commitments to the home; women who forsake their ennobling duties toward their family; parents who abandon their children; mothers who either reject unwanted babies or murder them like cowards... All this because of their thirst for sexual pleasure, which, very often, puts them on the dark pathway of crime... Do all these wrongs follow the spirit beyond the armor of flesh that death destroys?"

"Why wouldn't they?" the Assistant answered sadly. "Each conscience is a creation of God and each existence is a sacred link in the stream of life where God is present and manifests himself. We will have to answer for all the harmful blows we have delivered to the hearts of others, and we will not allow ourselves to rest until we have bravely finished our work of readjustment."

Impressed, my colleague persisted:

"Let's say that a man has seduced a girl for the sheer pleasure of it, promising her an honest marriage only to wantonly abandon her to her own despair after having satisfied his desires... The poor, distraught creature has no means for finding honest work and succumbs to prostitution. Is the man responsible for the madness his forlorn partner commits, since he wasn't the only one who indulged in the wrongdoing in the first place?"

"One must realize that we will all answer for our deeds," explained the Assistant; "but in your example, even if the man isn't responsible for the wrongs the unfortunate woman will succumb to, he is undeniably the author of her misery. Upon discarnating with the remorse of his betrayal, the more he comes to understand the implications of what he did, the more intense his feelings of guilt will be. Of course, he will work to pull her from the abyss she fell into for having trusted him, and he will accompany her in reincarnation, accepting her as his wife or daughter in order to give her the pure love he had promised as he endeavors to regenerate her disturbed mind and to redeem his guilt-darkened conscience."

"Along the same lines," added Hilario, "we see men in earthly society who have been ruined by disloyal women who drove them into crime and vice."

"The process of reparation is exactly the same. Upon awakening to the light of the good, the woman who led her companion into the darkness of evil will not rest until he has been restored to moral dignity before the Laws of God. How many mothers evolve through suffering and self-denial by 'dying' each and every day amid affliction and sacrifice as they care for the monstrous children who torture them in body and soul? Behind many of these horrendous, moving circumstances hides the divine endeavor of regeneration, which only time and pain can accomplish."

“All this, my friend,” said Hilario, clearly sorrowful, “forces us to realize that, in the flaws of the genetic field, we must consider above all the mental cruelty we practiced in the name of love.”

“That’s right,” confirmed the Assistant. “In our pursuit of pleasures, we usually set the worst traps for the imprudent hearts who listen to us... However, in breaking our word or our promises and vows, we disregard the law of correspondence, which returns to us in full all the evils we have committed, amid which the blessings of higher understanding increase our misery, because, in the splendor of spiritual light, we cannot forgive ourselves for the stains and wounds in our own soul, let alone the passion-related crimes we perpetrated on human society every day through abuses of the sexual faculties, designed to create families, education, beneficence, art and beauty. These abuses cause not only long, torturous stays in the infernal regions, but also the diseases and deformities that darken earthly life, because sex criminals who committed homicide or infanticide, or caused madness, suicide, bankruptcy and the destruction of others, return to the flesh under the impact of the destabilizing vibrations they set in motion against themselves. Very often, they are the victims of congenital deformity, mental alienation, paralysis, early senility, obsessions, childhood cancer, various types of nervous disorders, untreatable pathogenic processes and a whole array of ills deriving from perispiritual trauma, which causes maladjustments in the subtle fabric of the soul, and thus requires a long and complicated endeavor of reparation in the forms of anxiety, anguish, disease, hardship, misfortune, mental impairment, suffering and misery. Moreover, almost twenty centuries ago – long before the terminological pomp of modern psychoanalytic schools, which promulgate rash conjectures about mental diseases – Jesus taught that ‘those who do evil become slaves of evil,’[\[1\]](#) and we can add that, in order to cleanse the evil that has enslaved us, it is absolutely necessary to endure the purgation that roots it out.”

The conversation seemed about to end, but still interested in settling some of the issues that were burning in his mind, Hilario asked directly:

“What about the worrying problem of inversion?”

Silas promptly replied:

“That won’t take long to explain. Considering that, in essence, sex is the sum of the passive and positive qualities of the person’s mental field, it is natural for the predominantly female spirit to linger for centuries on the evolutionary pathway as woman; likewise, the predominately male spirit will tarry for a long time in the experiences of man. However, on many occasions, when the man tyrannizes the woman, denying her rights and committing abuses in the name of his supposed superiority, he distorts himself to the point that, unconscious and imbalanced, he is led by the agents of the Divine Law to a pain-filled reincarnation in a woman’s body so that, in extreme inner discomfort, he may learn to venerate woman as his sister and companion, daughter and mother before God. The same applies to the offensive woman, who, after dragging the man into lust and criminality, creates for herself a terrible mental alienation that she takes with her after the grave, thereby requiring internment in a man’s body so that, in the webs of her unhappy emotions, she may

construct within her the respect she owes to man before the Lord. However, in this explanation we do not include the great hearts and beautiful characters that, in many circumstances, reincarnate in bodies that do not correspond to their most recondite sentiments. This is a circumstance that they themselves requested for the purpose of working more surely not only for their moral development but also for the carrying out of specialized tasks through arduous learning experiences filled with loneliness on behalf of society, which accelerates its understanding of life and spiritual progress through their constructive renunciation.”

Silas had answered our questions brilliantly. In just a few words he had condensed a luminous synthesis of a vast topic that we realized would certainly require several books to be duly analyzed.

However, as if he didn't want to leave any stone unturned, my colleague went further:

“Since we have been dwelling on the topic of sexology in connection with the law of cause and effect, how are we to interpret the attitude of honest and respectable couples who do not want to have children and thus regularly use contraceptives?”

Silas smiled in a strange way and said:

“Even if they do not yield to the crime of abortion, in most cases they are unprepared workers who prefer to avoid sweat in their quest for immediate comfort. Unfortunately, they are only postponing sublime accomplishments, to which they will unavoidably have to return, because there are tasks and struggles in family life that represent the unavoidable price of our regeneration. They enjoy life, trying unsuccessfully to deceive themselves; however, time inexorably waits for them, making them aware that redemption demands our utmost effort. Refusing to accept the children that are almost always planned for them before reincarnation, they get entangled in the futilities and preconceptions of sub-par experiences, only to wake up after the grave feeling coldness in their hearts.”

“What about abortion, Assistant?” asked Hilario, extremely interested. “Considering the way you have alluded to the matter, we must assume that it is a serious wrong.”

“A serious wrong? It would be more appropriate to call it a dolorous crime. To snatch a child from the maternal womb is confessed infanticide. The woman who commits or whitewashes such a crime is constrained by irrevocable laws to suffer dreadful anomalies in the reproductive center of her soul's perispiritual envelope. She predisposes herself to dolorous infirmities such as metritis[2], vaginismus[3], metralgia[4], uterine infarction and uterine cancer, from which she will very often discarnate, thus returning to the spirit plane to answer for her crime before Divine Justice. She will find herself still alive, but sick and wretched, because, through the continuous, remorseful mental rehashing of her abominable crime, she will suffer the degeneration of her genital forces for a long time to come.”

“And how can she recover from such a lamentable situation?”

The Assistant thought it over for a few seconds and added:

“Try to imagine a mutilated or deformed mold on a potter's table. Of course, the potter

won't use it to make an expensive vase but might use it for second and third-rate productions... The woman who willfully corrupted her reproductive center will, in the future, receive souls who have damaged their human shape, and she will be the mother of reincarnating criminals and suicides, regenerating the subtle energies of her perispirit through the ennobling sacrifice for her tortured, unfortunate children, learning to pray, to serve worthily and to mentalize a pure and healthy maternity, which she will regain at the cost of suffering and upright work.”

Curiously, Hilario had nothing more to say. Considering the logic of Silas's remarks, I didn't have the courage to continue asking either. I was afraid of delving too deeply into an area where I might end up uncovering my own wrongs, and so I chose to keep my silence in order to think and relearn.

[1] John 8:34 – Spirit Auth.

[2] Inflammation of the uterus . <http://www.mercksource.com> – Tr.

[3] Painful spasm of the vagina due to involuntary contraction of the vaginal musculature, usually severe enough to prevent intercourse (ibid). – Tr.

[4] Pain in the uterus (*The American Heritage Dictionary*). – Tr.

## Mitigated Debt

In our studies of the law of cause and effect, we cannot leave out Adelino Correia, a brother of pure fraternity.

On the eve of a beautiful event that we would like to describe, we visited him with Silas, who introduced him to us at the activities of a Christian Spiritist center.

We listened to this brother's invaluable comments on the Gospel under the influence of illuminated instructors, whose mental currents he assimilated with the trusting pliancy of a man profoundly accustomed to praying.

He was a wonderful speaker and caused the tears to flow as he touched the innermost fibers of our sentiments. Simply dressed, he showed that he was a worker undergoing difficult circumstances. His trials, however, apparently loomed even larger. A large part of his exposed skin was covered with eczema. Part of his head, his ears and many parts of his face were covered with red blotches composed of tiny blood vessels, while the rest of his skin appeared cracked, indicating a deeply-set chronic skin disease. Moreover, shy and sad, he seemed to harbor acute hidden torments. His admirably lucid eyes, however, bore the mark of humility.

Several spirit friends were attentively assisting him.

A sweet discarnate old lady approached us, and because she knew Silas personally, she addressed him affectionately:

“My dearest Assistant, I would like to ask for your assistance on behalf of our Adelino's health. I've noticed that he has become more uncomfortable lately due to his open sores.”

“Yes, yes,” answered Silas cordially, “his case deserves our special attention.”

“Because he thinks about others' needs instead of his own,” added the woman very touched.

“Two of our doctors have been taking care of him when he leaves his body during sleep,” replied Druso's Assistant.

And caressing her gray hair, he added:

“Don't worry. Adelino will soon be completely healed.”

The multiple tasks at the center were moving right along, and in the midst of them, Adelino attracted our attention due to his spiritual confidence.

Surrounded by the radiant vibrations arising from his thoughts because he focused on the sacred purposes of the good, he seemed like a worker dressed in light.

A few moments after the elderly woman, we were approached by a friendly young discarnate man. After greeting us, he asked the Assistant respectfully:

“I would like to ask you a favor.”

“Please do.”

The young man explained with tearful eyes:

“My dear Assistant, our Adelino is having financial problems... Because he helps others so much, he has been neglecting his own needs. He is always helping my poor incarnate mother, so I would ask for your help on his behalf. Just last week, my widowed mother didn't have the means to get medical treatment for my two sick brothers, so I went to him in tears and mentally begged him to help us out. He didn't hesitate for a second. Believing he was obeying his own impulses, he visited our house and gave my poor mother the money she needed... Dear Assistant! For the love of Jesus, I beg you! Don't forsake someone who has helped us out so much!”

Silas answered the request with a smile of benevolence:

“Don't worry. Adelino is in a web of fraternal affinity that he has woven for himself. A lot of friends are supplying him with the resources he needs to faithfully carry out his caring task. Circumstances of a material nature will come together in his favor as a consequence of his acquired merit.”

The spontaneous and caring requests on behalf of the trusting and helpful Adelino were certainly an example of friendship and gratitude worth studying.

“It seems,” Hilario remarked, a bit intrigued, “that all the workers who come through this place are debtors to our brother Adelino.”

“Yes,” confirmed Silas patiently, “Adelino's credits are truly enormous, despite a few remaining debts... However, he cultivates the joy of a solid faith and the superior knowledge given by Jesus' Messengers, who have entrusted him with tasks of genuine fraternal love that have brought him a large recognition by others.

Our mentor suggested that we spend a little time offering fraternal assistance at that evangelical center until we could come into closer contact with Adelino, whose current reincarnation was being closely monitored by Mansao.

In light of the sympathy that Adelino inspired in us, we approached him in order to somehow offer a little help with the magnetic passes he was now applying to some ailing attendees.

It was interesting to note that, during our first casual meeting, we felt ready and willing to take part in his work simply because we were attracted by his radiant goodness.

Selflessness, wherever found, is always a sublime radiant star. All it has to do is show



itself and everyone gravitates around its light.

Once the evening's work had ended, Silas, Hilario and I followed Adelino home.

His mother looked to be over sixty and was waiting for him at the door.

Silas promptly introduced her:

“This is our sister Leontina, the loving mother and friend watching over Adelino during this lifetime.”

Noticing his mature age, my colleague asked:

“Isn't Adelino married?”

“Yes, our brother is married but his wife isn't here.”

This answer suggested that our friend was going through a trial that demanded our respectful discretion.

As mother and son conversed affectionately, Silas led us into an adjacent room.

By the door there were three beds in a row, occupied by small children.

A blonde girl of about nine or ten years old was flanked by two little dark-skinned boys, bringing to mind Snow White and the little dwarfs.

All three were peacefully asleep.

Nodding toward the girl, the Assistant informed us:

“That is Marisa, Adelino's daughter. Her mother ran out on her six years ago.”

Then indicating the little boys, he added:

“And these little ones are Mario and Raul, two waifs that Adelino adopted as sons of his heart.”

Guessing the hidden afflictions that were obviously swarming around Adelino's life, Hilario and I kept still in reverent expectation.

Silas grasped our attitude and began a more in-depth explanation:

“In order to praise the sacred effort of a friend and also to give us an opportunity to study a case of mitigated debt, I will give you some details of Adelino's last incarnation, which he is now working to redeem.”

Silas was silent for a moment in order to focus on the resources of his memory, and finally continued:

“In the middle of the last century<sup>[1]</sup>, Adelino was the illegitimate son of a very wealthy young man who received him from his slave mother's arms just before she died in childbirth. Martim Gaspar, the young landowner and single father, was a hard-hearted man. Very early in life he became filled with tyrannical pride due to his family's carelessness. He sexually molested the slave girls as he pleased, and on several occasions, he sold them and their bastard newborns so that he wouldn't have to listen to their weeping and appeals. Feared

around the manor, he ruled like a tyrant after the death of his old father, who had tried too late and to no avail to control his son's instincts. He made use of the whipping post without mercy. He was hated by the majority of the slaves, but was fawned over by those who obtained his favor in exchange for servile flattery. However, toward his son Martim Jr. – the current Adelino – his tenderness and devotion were boundless. Much to his own surprise, he loved the boy with unconcealed love, to the point of giving him the best education possible right there on the plantation. Consequently, the most sacred bonds of love were established between father and son. They were inseparable companions at play and study, at work and on the hunt. Notwithstanding his cruelty toward his other children in the miserable slaves' quarters, Martim Sr. didn't hesitate to legitimize Martim Jr. as his son before the authorities of the time, bestowing on him both his name and his inheritance. Father and son were forty-three and twenty-one years old, respectively, when the father, although a middle-aged bachelor, decided to go to the big city and marry Maria Emilia, an irresponsible twenty-year-old. When she arrived at the plantation, her stepson developed a strange fascination for her. Young Martim may have been dearly loved by his father but he was now attracted to his stepmother's feminine charms and started to experience tormenting emotional conflicts. He used to consider himself his father's best friend, but he began to detest him. He couldn't stand his father possessing the woman he desired, especially because he knew that Maria Emilia ardently returned his feelings. She used any pretext she could to find a way to be alone with him on the family's many trips, thereby stoking his youthful passion. They were able to avoid raising any suspicions, and totally entranced by the passion that consumed him, young Martim plotted the horrible crime of murdering his father. When the father became bedridden due to a liver ailment, the son got the help of two entirely trustworthy farmhands, Antonio and Lucidio – also abusers of slave girls – and one night, with Maria Emilia's approval, he gave Gaspar a strong sedative. As soon as he was asleep, and with the help of the two accomplices who hated their boss, young Martim soaked his father's bed with an inflammable substance and set it on fire. Poor Martim Sr. discarnated in horrible agony. After burying his father and taking possession of all of his assets, he tried to be happy with Maria Emilia. However, his discarnate father was aflame with rage and enveloped Martim in clouds of inflamed energies, against which the wretch had no defense... Leaning on his companion's love, Martim Jr. tried to anaesthetize his conscience and forget... forget... He entrusted the plantation to his two accomplices, and sailed with Maria Emilia to Europe in search of rest and leisure – all to no avail... After resisting for five years, he fell completely under the yoke of his father's spirit, who was constantly by his side, albeit invisible. His skin opened in sores as if burned by hidden flames. Bedridden with pain and constantly given to remorse, Martim Jr. mentally recapitulated his father's death in appalling cries of excruciating suffering... He could do nothing but weep and randomly scream out his repentance. He was considered to be mad even by Maria Emilia, who was quick to acknowledge his mental alienation so as to appear innocent to friends and servants. Bound to such torture, Martim Jr. ended up despised and abandoned by his own family circle and discarnated in dreadful suffering. The murdered Martim Gaspar Sr. was waiting for him at the grave and dragged him down into the infernal darkness, where he began to wreak his terrifying revenge... Incarcerated in darkness, the wretched son suffered horrific humiliation and indescribable torment for eleven years, until

one day, supported by Jesus' Messengers, he was brought to our institute in a deplorable state, from what I was told. He had gotten in tune with his revenge-thirsty father through the mental waves of belated remorse and repentance and had been hypnotized by evil spirits, who made him feel like he was immersed in torturous flames. With his imagination set on such a picture of anguish, young Martim's own thoughts of guilt nourished the flames that tortured him without destroying him until he was given some relief by our instructors through magnetic procedures that healed his dolorous imbalance. Once improved, he dedicated himself to the hardest work in our organization, winning, over time, noteworthy accolades that enabled him to return to the human sphere with the right to begin paying off the enormous debt he had recklessly taken on. Cultivating prayer with the renewal of his inner self, he was reborn with an inclination toward an active and ardent religious faith, and influenced by discarnate friends, he found in Jesus-centered Spiritism an invaluable arena for moral strengthening and worthwhile work. Making the most of his time, he has expanded his field of action between uplifting study and pure charity, thereby attracting great sympathy from incarnate and discarnate brothers and sisters, who owe him generosity and love. He grew up amid immense material difficulties and without a father because he had not valued his father's tenderness in his former life. He struggled constantly against extreme poverty and chronic bad health... However, watched over by benefactors from Mansao, he was led to a Spiritist center when he was still very young. There, he began treatment for his skin condition and was introduced to our Renewing Doctrine... The reading of Spiritist principles in the sunlight of the Lord's Gospel was the natural memory of the teachings assimilated at Mansao before his reincarnation. From that moment on, he willingly accepted the responsibility of living, and sought, above all, to apply to himself the regenerative principles of the faith he had embraced. He disciplined himself. He sincerely honored his commitments, and despite his physical handicaps, from a young age he has dedicated himself to various enterprises, by which he earns the blessed resources he shares with a great number of needy people, keeping for himself only what is absolutely essential. He is not a rich man in the world's eyes, but a fraternal worker who knows how to give his own heart in everything he gives to others. Walking the pathway of simplicity and edifying selflessness, he has changed the opinions of many of his former fellow companions, who, in the lower layers of darkness, had been his persecutors and enemies. As they observed his new behavior, these obsessors felt morally disarmed for the animosity they had intended to maintain. Thus, he is paying for his wrongs by feeling their torment within himself. However, due to the merit he has accumulated by devoting himself to the good of others, he is redeeming his past with as much relief as possible, gaining time and acquiring new blessings. By helping others, he is decreasing his mountain of debt by the day, for the Heavenly Father allows our creditors to mitigate the harshness of exaction whenever they see us offering our needy neighbor something of what we owe them."

Silas took a short pause, but Hilario was as fascinated as I was by his clear and sensible explanation, and eager to learn more, he pleaded:

"Please continue, Assistant. This living lesson illuminates us with hope... How can Adelino be gaining time?"

Our friend smiled and replied:

“He did not deserve the blessing of a peaceful home after having ruined his father’s. He did get married, but was deserted by his wife, who was incapable of understanding his heart.”

Approaching Marisa’s bed, he stated:

“Because of his useful life and his constant charity, he attracted as his daughter the former stepmother he had lured away from his father. She has reincarnated in order to re-educate herself in the warmth of his noble example while suffering the pain of being the daughter of a woman who deserted the conjugal bed just as she had done in her last lifetime. But... that isn’t Adelino’s only advantage.”

Silas touched the sleeping boys’ heads lightly and continued:

“Dedicated in body and soul to his renewal in Christ, our friend has received as his adopted sons the two accomplices in his father’s murder, the farmhands Antonio and Lucidio. Because of their past, when they abused humble slave girls whose children they either sold or killed, the two were reborn in brothels and came into the loving circle of their former companion with the African blood they had offended so much in order to receive from him the moral support for their regeneration.”

While we pondered this invaluable teaching, Silas remarked:

“As you can plainly see, through rightly felt and lived Christian-Spiritist responsibility, our brother has earned the joy of finding the bonds of his criminal past for the necessary readjustment. If he had deserted the struggle because of his wife’s lack of care, or if he had closed the door of his heart to these two unfortunate boys, he would have postponed for many centuries the beautiful work he is doing now.”

We were ready to ask more questions, but Adelino had bid his mother goodnight and had come to occupy a modest bed not far from the children.

Displaying praiseworthy habits, he sat down and prayed.

Silas asked us to join him; then he approached Adelino and applied a few magnetic passes, telling us afterwards:

“Because he spends his days so usefully, Adelino has merited the mitigation of his congenital disease. After suffering for so long the perispiritual trauma of remorse for having set his father’s body on fire, he fostered within himself strange mental flames which, as I have already said, punished him intensely beyond the grave... That is why he reincarnated with skin tormented by burning vibrations, expressed early on in his new physical form by an extreme type of eczema... Due to his extensive debt, the disease should have covered his entire body for many painful decades to come, but through the merit he is acquiring, it hasn’t taken on proportions that would keep him from working and learning, because he has won the joy of continuing to serve through his willing efforts in the constant sowing of the good.”

At this point, perhaps because Adelino was ready to go to sleep, the Assistant said we should go.

Back at Mansao, our kindly mentor was weaving brilliant comments on the Apostle's teaching "Love covers a multitude of sins," when Hilario, seconding my curiosity, asked unexpectedly:

"Assistant, after such a clear explanation, it would seem fitting to get a few more details. Can you tell us about the status of Martim Gaspar, the father who suffered the torment of being burned alive?"

Silas didn't say anything, so my colleague continued:

"Does he know about Adelino's efforts at renewal? Does he still despise and hate him?"

"Tireless as he was in his violence," the Assistant finally answered, "Martim Gaspar was also touched by our friend's conduct. When he saw his transformation, he abandoned his undesirable companions a few years ago and asked for asylum at our institution, where he accepted a very strict regimen."

"And where is he now?" asked Hilario eagerly. "Would it be possible to see him and observe his change?"

But at that instant, we entered the sanctuary of our obligations, and with no more time to spare, Silas patted Hilario's shoulder and said:

"Relax, Hilario. Maybe we can come back to the subject later."

We said goodbye, keeping our notes of the interrupted observations, waiting for their continuation.

However, a nice surprise greeted us the very next day.

When the clock chimed late at night in the extensive planetary region where we lived, the Assistant came looking for us.

We would be heading back to the physical realm, but this time with Druso, the institution's director.

We were elated, albeit curious.

It was the first time we would be traveling with the great mentor who had won our deepest respect. And if it is true that we were happy with this privilege, at the same time we wondered why he was leaving the institution that required his ongoing presence.

However, there was no time for long digressions.

In the company of Druso, who was followed by Silas and two highly experienced sisters from Mansao, and then Hilario and me, we utilized the fastest means for the trip, whose objective was unknown to us, because the highest ranking authority in the institutions' daily endeavors would obviously not have time for a trip that was not as quick as possible.

I had a burning desire to ask the Assistant about the subject addressed the night before; however, Druso's presence kept us from discussing any matter that he himself had not broached, not because his dignity kept us from freely expressing ourselves, but because he inspired enormous respect.

Thus, during our brief journey we listened to his wise and opportune thoughts regarding several issues related to justice and work, giving us even more reasons to admire his learning and benevolence.

I was astonished when our team stopped at the door of Adelino's house, which we had visited the night before.

Two familiar helpers were waiting for us on the doorstep.

After mutual greetings, one of them approached Druso and said respectfully:

“Director, the little one will be here in half an hour.”

The great mentor thanked him and invited us to follow him inside.

The clock on the wall indicated 2:20 a.m.

Expectantly, we followed the supervisor into the room where Adelino, as far as we could tell, had just fallen asleep.

Druso stroked his brow for a few seconds, and then we saw Adelino rise from his physical body as if he had been drawn out by powerful magnetic levers. He fell into Druso's arms like a trusting, happy child.

“My friend,” said Druso, seriously and affectionately, “the time for the reunion has come.”

Terrified, Adelino began to weep, unable to leave Druso's supporting arms.

“Let's pray,” added our kind friend.

Raising his eyes toward heaven as we listened attentively, Druso prayed:

“God of goodness, Father of Infinite Love, you have created time as the tireless guardian of our souls destined for Your bosom; strengthen us for the necessary renewal!

“You know our crimes and desertions; grant us the blessing of pain and time to redeem them, and anoint us with the understanding of Your laws, so that we do not waste any opportunity to pay our debts!

“You have lent us the treasures of work and suffering as favors of Your mercy so that we may dedicate ourselves to our dolorous but just regeneration.

“We are prisoners of guilt, but we are working for our freedom, helped by the breath of Your love.

“O Father, infuse us with courage so that our weaknesses may be forgotten; inflame our spirits with sacred enthusiasm for the good, so that evil does not destroy our good intentions. And lead us along the pathway of self-denial, so that our minds do not stray from you!

“May we pray like Jesus, the Divine Master whom you sent to our hearts in order for us to accept your designs entirely!”

After a short pause, in tears he said the Lord's Prayer:

*Our Father, Who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. So be it.*

When he finished, we were all overcome with deep emotion.

When he was back in his physical body, Adelino woke up with tear-filled eyes.

We could see his inner joy, even though he was unable to fully recall our meeting.

After a few quick minutes of expectation, we heard the convulsive crying of a baby outside.

Supported by Druso, Adelino got out of bed and promptly opened the front door. There on the doorstep was a newborn baby crying helplessly, watched over by friends from Mansao.

Taken aback, Adelino fell down on his knees while Druso spoke to him assertively:

“Adelino, this is the father you harmed. He has just been rejected by the maternal love he does not yet deserve, and he has come to you, his regenerated son!”

Adelino didn't hear Druso with his physical ears, but he did hear him in his mental temple as a loving appeal from heaven bringing him one more abandoned, unfortunate child... Taken with inexplicable joy, he embraced the baby in a spontaneous gesture of love, and holding him to his chest, he went back inside, shouting jubilantly:

“My son!... My son!”

Highly moved, Silas informed Hilario and me:

“Martim Gaspar has returned to the physical experience, seeking refuge in the arms of the son who disdained him.”

We didn't get the opportunity to prolong the conversation, however. Druso dried his tears and said aloud as if talking to himself:

“When we are once again in the misty realm of the flesh, let us hope that we too may open our hearts to Jesus' sublime love so that we may not fail at our necessary trials!”

There was so much depth and so much sorrow in that look, which had always inspired in us the sweetest tenderness and deepest respect, that, on the way back to Mansao, none of us dared break his pain-filled, expressive silence.

[1] The 19th. – Tr.

## Expiring Debt

Silas had a new lesson for us in a sad hospital ward for indigents.

We entered the building and were kindly greeted by several fellow spirits. One of them, Attendant Lago, approached Silas to inform him:

“Assistant, Leo seems to be spending the last reserves of his endurance.”

Silas thanked him for the information and told us that we had come specifically to help Leo with the rest he deserved.

Walking past a long line of simple cots, on which ailing patients were being assisted by discarnate aides, we came to a squalid, anguished man.

In the dim glow of a small night light, we saw Leo, whose pulmonary tuberculosis had brought him to the brink of death.

Despite his dyspnea, his eyes were clear and lucid, revealing total acceptance of the suffering that was leading him to the end of his existence.

Silas suggested that we observe his body; however, there was nothing special that stood out except for the lungs. They had been almost completely destroyed by the successive formation of cavities and had caused so much organic damage that the physical vessel before us was nothing more than a piece of flesh that was now open to the multiplication of voracious bacilli and an army of various types of microbes gathering within the tissues like implacable enemies fighting for what was left of him and taking over the key posts of his defenses.

In such a state, Leo was a man irremediably condemned to be expelled from his own home.

All the symptoms of death were obvious.

His exhausted heart seemed like a worn-out engine incapable of circulating the blood, and all the elements of his respiratory system were shutting down under inescapable asphyxia.

The dying Leo was a traveler ready for the big journey, just waiting for the signal to leave.

Even so, he was calm and brave.

His mental acuity was so clear that he could almost detect our presence.



Silas stroked his brow gently and told us:

“You are here to study a case of expiring debt, so you may ask our friend a few questions. His memory is as conscious and alert as possible.”

“But can he hear us?” asked Hilario, surprised and compassionate.

“Not with his physical ears, but his spirit will register it,” explained the Assistant kindly.

With intense sympathy, I bent over that brother suffering from his harsh trial. Recognizing the faith displayed in his eyes, I embraced him and asked aloud:

“Leo, my friend, do you realize that you’re on the threshold of the real life? That you’ll be leaving your body in just a few hours?”

Believing that he was talking to himself, Leo registered my questions, word for word, as if it they were transmitted to his brain by an invisible wire. As if he were conversing with himself, he *spoke in thought*:

“Oh! Yes, death!... I know that tonight I shall probably meet my just end.”

Continuing our dialog, I added:

“Aren’t you scared?”

“Nothing to be afraid of,” he answered very calmly.

He made an effort to move his eyes and tried to focus his gaze on the white wall of the ward where a small statuette of Christ crucified had been placed, saying to himself:

“There is nothing to be afraid of in the company of Christ, my Savior... He too was despised and forgotten... He tasted his own blood on the cross of martyrdom; he, who was pure but pierced by the wounds of ingratitude... Why shouldn’t I resign myself to the cross of my bed and bear without complaint the gulps of blood that foretell my death from time to time, I a sinner in need of divine indulgence?!”

“Are you Catholic?”

“Yes.”

I reflected on the sublimity of the living and true Christian sentiment, whatever the religious denomination in which it is expressed. Stroking his oppressed chest, I continued:

“At this time of such significance for your journey, I see that none of your family is here.”

“Ah! My family... my loved ones,” he answered, *speaking mentally*. “My parents would have been my only friends in the world had they lived... but they both died when I was still a sickly child... Without my mother, my health deteriorated. Immediately thereafter, my brother Henrique didn’t hesitate to have me declared incompetent... As an heir, he was entitled to a large chunk of the estate, but he took advantage of my misfortune, and with my consent, he was appointed as my legal guardian... However, as soon as that measure was in place, he became my cruel tormenter... He confiscated all my money... and put me in an

asylum, where I languished for many years in isolation... I suffered immensely... I nourished myself with the bile-filled bread meant for those who enter the world's gates guilt-ridden, for my mental instability had pursued me since childhood... When I improved somewhat, I had to leave the asylum. I ran to my brother's door, but he slammed it in my face without compassion... I was frightened, defeated... O my God, how could one be so cruel to a sick, unfortunate brother? I tried to get help from the court but couldn't; Henrique was the sole owner of all our assets, legally speaking... Ashamed, I sought out other venues... I looked for an honest job but found only that of a night guard posted outside a large office building. I was given the job by a man who felt sorry for my condition... However, I was exposed to the cold of the night, and soon an insidious fever began slowly consuming me... I don't know how long I was like that, defeated by an indefinable apathy... One day, I fell exhausted into a puddle of the blood that had come out of my mouth, and merciful people brought me to this hospital."

"How do you feel about Henrique? Are you bitter toward him?"

Seeming to immerse his memory in waves of tenderness and longing, Leo allowed tears to fill his eyes in dolorous mental quietude.

Then he said to himself:

"Poor Henrique!... Shouldn't I pity him? Won't he have to die also? What good is all this illegitimate inheritance doing him if he too will have to leave his body one day? Why would this be an issue if he is even unhappier than I?"

And turning back to look at the statuette of Christ, he continued:

"Though mocked and scourged, Jesus forgave offences and desertions... Nailed to the cross, he didn't complain about the friends who had turned him over to humiliation and suffering... He didn't utter a word condemning his cruel executioners... Instead of blaming them, he asked the Heavenly Father to lovingly watch over them all... And Jesus was God's Ambassador to men... So how can I judge my own brother if I, a soul in need of light, cannot grasp the Divine Judgments of Providence?"

In tears, Leo quieted his mind and tried to make it a temple of loving prayer.

His humility touched my heart.

I straightened up with tears in my eyes.

I needed no more questions to realize the greatness of his soul.

Hilario was also in tears and had no further questions either. He only asked the Assistant if the dying man had reincarnated under the auspices of Mansao. Silas replied promptly:

"Yes. Leo is a ward of our institute. Although materialized in the flesh, there are hundreds of souls that remain connected to it through the roots of their debts. They are usually transgressors in difficult stages of regeneration and are undergoing readjustment. They may reincarnate under the auspices of our institute, but to a certain extent they are still bound to associations from the past. They come in contact with their influence, consolidating the necessary moral qualities through the inner conflicts that we could call the forge of

temptation.”

“How wonderful it is to recognize the paternal love of God, who watches over everything in its proper place!” exclaimed Hilario.

“Yes, it is,” considered Silas. “God’s Law determines progress and dignity for all. You know that, in general, the discarnates sheltered at Mansao comprise a vast group of criminals and addicts...”

And modifying his tone of voice, he added:

“... just like me. While there, we receive attention and love, assistance and kindness as we re-educate ourselves, sometimes for many years... Even so, one must realize that, by accepting the generosity of the instructors and benefactors who offer us that refuge of love, we are only accumulating even more debt for having received such undeserved care, and we will have to repay it in service to our neighbor. However, in order to prepare properly for the tasks of genuine goodness, we must purge our guilt-aggravated inferior state. The lofty knowledge received at our institute serves as a valuable theory that has to be put into practice in order to be incorporated into our moral heritage. So, after a shorter or longer learning period at the institute, we must return to the physical realm, and there, in spite of our mentors’ watch-care, we must endure meeting our former partners in crime to demonstrate utilization and absorption of the support we have received.”

At our side, Leo was breathing his last. We could see that the Assistant didn’t want to stray from his case so that we could learn the lesson.

Perhaps that is why Silas infused his exhausted chest with new energies by means of restorative passes. Then he told us:

“You have heard the mental statements of our friend who’s about to discarnate...”

Burning with as much curiosity and as eager for more explanations as I was, Hilario asked respectfully:

“To what extent can we classify Leo’s present discarnation as an example of an expiring debt?”

Silas made a significant gesture and replied:

“Of course, I won’t divulge our friend’s entire debt before the Law. I myself do not have access to the information relating to all his debts and credits down through time, so I’ll refer only to the guilt that was tormenting him when he was brought to Mansao, according to the written record.”

The dying man was now serene after the magnetic assistance and seemed like he could almost hear us.

Touching Leo’s sweat-drenched forehead, Silas continued after a brief pause:

“Leo has mentally listed for us his recent bitter memories, dwelling particularly on the disease that has tormented him from birth, his suffering in the asylum and the hardness of a

brother that condemned him to extreme poverty... Now, let's take a look at the causes of the pain with which he has punished himself and why he deserved the fortune of rescinding his personal debt forever... At the beginning of the last century, Leo was the beloved son of a wealthy noble couple living in the city. They disincarnated very early after having entrusted him with his sick younger brother, Fernando, who was severely mentally impaired. However, the moment his parents were no longer around, Ernesto – Leo's name at the time – quickly jettisoned his brother, eager to get his hands on the inheritance that belonged to the two of them. Moreover, as a young man accustomed to the sophisticated soirees of his time, he loved the elegant galas, when the mansion would open its stately doors to elegant guests. And because he was proud of the scene, he was ashamed to be seen with his brother, and so forbade him from attending. However, since Fernando was mentally impaired and thus unable to grasp his brother's orders, he didn't obey them. Consequently, at the back of the house, Ernesto built a prison cell where Fernando was excluded from the rest of the family. Imprisoned and alone, having only the company of a few slaves, Fernando lived like a caged animal. Meanwhile, Ernesto, now married, satisfied all his wife's whims on long excursions and squandered his wealth on gambling and extravagances. After a while, his funds were almost gone and he realized he would only be able to get back on his feet if Fernando were to die. However, although mentally ill, the boy proved to be physically strong, except for chronic bronchitis, which caused him much discomfort. Noticing Fernando's respiratory problem, Ernesto plotted to transform it into a more serious condition, hoping to send him more quickly to the grave. He ordered his servants to leave Fernando free every night in a large courtyard where he would have to sleep outside. But the boy displayed enormous resilience, and despite suffering constant bouts with his sickness as a consequence of exposure to the cold, for almost two years he managed to bravely endure the trial to which he had been submitted. Meanwhile, Ernesto was suffering from his ever-worsening financial situation, which could be solved only with Fernando's portion of the fortune, which their parents had entrusted to the care of old family friends. Thus, debased by his hunger for gold, one night Ernesto promised two shackled, morally delinquent slaves that he would set them free on one condition: they would flee to distant lands. After watching them leave in the mist of the night, Ernesto went to his brother's bed and stabbed him in the heart... The next morning when distraught servants showed him the body, he led them to believe that the runaway slaves had been the perpetrators. Shrewdly feigning innocence, he inherited his brother's assets with the blessings of earthly magistrates. And so it was that, after a lavish life in the flesh, he arrived in the afterlife to begin a long period of expiation. Fernando, the unfortunate brother, magnanimously forgave him; however, tormented by his remorse, Ernesto became attuned to merciless agents of darkness, who subjected him to indescribable tortures due to his refusal to take part in their evil practices. Because he kept the memory of his victim in the core of his soul, he went mad with grief due to the mental repercussions of remorse on his perispiritual centers. He wandered aimlessly for many years in horrible darkness until he was rescued by our institution and received the appropriate treatment for his readjustment. But in spite of having recovered, the memories of the crime consumed his spirit so much that, in order to resume his normal evolutionary progress, he begged to return to the flesh in order to experience the same shame, the same poverty and the same trials he had inflicted on his

defenseless brother, thus pacifying his anguished conscience. Supported in his intentions by eminent instructors, he returned to the physical arena, carrying in his soul the imbalances he had assimilated after the grave; consequently, he reincarnated mentally impaired like Fernando, and as Leo, suffered all the misfortunes that he had imposed on his debilitated and unhappy brother. Thus, he was reborn unfortunate and sickly into the physical realm. Orphaned early in life, he was caught by surprise by the coldness and villainy of an insensitive brother who isolated him to the dark environment of an asylum, and to make sure that no details of his expiatory existence were left out, in his job as a night guard, he experienced the cold and inclement weather to which he had exposed his defenseless brother... Now, due to the humility and patience with which he accepted every reparatory blow, he has won the fortune of having finally paid off all his debt.”

Because Silas stopped talking, concerned with attending to the dying man bathed in the characteristic sweat of death, Hilario asked:

“Assistant, how can we know for certain that our friend has paid off his debt?”

“Can’t you see?” asked Silas, surprised.

And pointing to the fatal hemoptysis<sup>[1]</sup> just starting, he added:

“Like Fernando, who discarnated with his chest pierced by an assassin’s knife, Leo too is leaving his body with his lungs in shreds. However, due to the correct conduct he adopted before the Law, he is going through the same ordeal, but on a bed and with no destructive agent except his illness, even though blood is spewing from his mouth, just as had happened with his despised and defeated brother. Justice has been served, with the difference that, instead of a dagger, there are battalions of murderous bacilli...”

Maybe because he saw how surprised we were by the lesson, Silas, in spite of his attention to the dying man, concluded in a grave tone of voice:

“Whenever our pain doesn’t cause new pain and whenever our affliction doesn’t cause affliction in those around us, our debt is in the process of expiring. Very often, the bed of pain is the blessed altar where we can extinguish ominous commitments and settle our accounts without harming anyone else. When patients yield to the Heavenly Designs in conformity and humility, they bear the sign of an expiring debt.”

But Silas couldn’t continue.

Leo, in prayer, was in the throes of death.

The Assistant embraced him tenderly and asked for Divine Support, as if the unfortunate man was a son of his heart.

Enveloped in the soft radiations of prayer, Leo fell asleep in front of our tears.

When we asked Silas why we couldn’t remove him from his remains immediately and take him back to Mansao Paz, the Assistant replied promptly:

“We don’t have the authority to free him from his body. That isn’t our job.”

After informing the guards that missionaries of deliverance would come in a few hours to assist our resting friend, a thoughtful and emotional Silas suggested that we return to Mansao.

[1] Hemoptysis is the coughing up of blood or bloody sputum from the lungs or airway. It may be either self-limiting or recurrent .  
[www.medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com). – Tr.

## Collective Expiations

We were talking to Silas about a number of issues when we got a call from Druso to meet with him in his private office.

The director of Mansao went straight to the point.

An urgent appeal from earth was asking help for the victims of a plane crash.

Without wasting time on details, he told us that the request would be repeated in a few minutes and that it was better to wait in order to examine the matter with the necessary efficiency.

In fact, he had barely finished speaking when we heard sounds similar to Morse code coming from a curious-looking machine. Druso turned on a nearby switch and we saw a small projector with a powerful lens that began projecting live images onto a screen skillfully set into one of the walls a short distance away.

As if watching the news, we were surprised to see the earth's landscape.

Near the peak of a steep, jungle mountain, the wreckage of a large plane contained the victims of an accident. One could guess that the pilot must have been blinded by the heavy mist coming in from the ocean and couldn't avoid crashing into the granite peaks, which, silent and implacable, protruded from the mountain like gloomy turrets of a strong fortress.

In the midst of this disturbing scenario, an elderly discarnate man of noble and dignified bearing was making a moving appeal, asking Mansao to send an experienced team to remove six of the fourteen spirits that had left their bodies in the dolorous tragedy.

While Druso and Silas discussed measures to offer assistance, Hilario and I were astonished by the unfamiliar display.

The heartbreaking scene seemed to be unfolding right there.

Eight of the discarnates were lying in a state of shock, bound to their mutilated or un-mutilated bodies; four were moaning, yoked to their remains, and two others, still shackled to their corpses, screamed desperately in and out of consciousness.

However, selfless and valorous spirits were watching over them, calmly and attentively.

Like a waterfall of light from Heaven, help from On High was arriving solicitously in a blessed stream of love.

The dismal picture was so real that we could hear the moaning of those who were awakening very weakly, the prayers of the helpers, and the conversations of the spirit nurses rendering first aid.

We were greatly distressed as the screen went blank, while Silas began carrying out Druso's orders with remarkable efficiency.

In a few minutes, several workers from the institution were on their way to the accident.

We were waiting for Silas when he returned to Druso's office, where he and the director continued discussing the task at hand.

Hilario and I asked if we could take part in the relief effort, but Druso kindly explained that this work was highly specialized and required trained workers.

When we saw that the kind mentor could dedicate a little more time to us, we took advantage of the opportunity to address the issue of collective trials.

Hilario spoke first, respectfully asking the reason for the request for help in the removal of only six of the discarnates when there were fourteen in all.

Druso replied firmly and serenely:

“Help at the plane crash is given indiscriminately; however, we must remember that, even though the disaster is the same for all who have died, death is different for each one of them. For the time being, only those whose inner life warrants their immediate deliverance will be removed from their bodies. As for the others, whose present situation does not warrant a quick separation from the physical armor, they will stay attached to their remains for a longer amount of time.”

“For how long?” asked my colleague, incapable of containing his emotions.

“It all depends on the degree of animalization of the fluids that are holding their spirits to their bodies,” answered our mentor. “Some will remain for a few hours; others for several days, perhaps ... Who knows? A lifeless body doesn't always mean that the soul has been set free. The kind of life we nourish in the physical realm determines the true conditions of our death. The more we wallow in the currents of lower illusions, the more time we will need to exhaust all the vital energies that bind us to the heavy, primitive matter that comprises our physiological instrumentation as we flounder around in the lower mental creations to which we have become accustomed, finding in them the fuel for extensive wrongs in the darkness of the corporeal realm. The more we submit ourselves to the disciplines of the spirit, which recommend balance and sublimation, the easier it will be for us to leave the flesh as the result of any emergencies that we cannot avoid due to debts contracted before the Law. Thus, ‘physical death’ is not a synonym for ‘spirit emancipation’.”

“However,” I considered, “that doesn't mean that the other victims won't be assisted while temporarily confined to their remains.”

“Not at all,” added our kind friend. “No one is without help; God's infinite love embraces the whole universe. Those who stay behind, entangled in the lower tiers of the physical



experience, will slowly realize the help they are capable of receiving.”

“But,” said Hilario, “won’t they be at the mercy of perverse discarnates if they cannot be rescued immediately?”

With a significant facial expression, Druso considered:

“Yes, if they are deaf to the good, it is possible that they will yield to suggestions of evil so that through the torments of evil, they may return to the good. However, one must remember that temptation is always a shadow tormenting our lives from the inside out. The communion of our souls with the infernal powers is directly related to the hell we harbor within us.”

The explanation could not have been clearer.

Perhaps that is why Hilario, somewhat disconcerted by this direct clarification but as eager as I was not to miss the opportunity to discuss the matter some more, pointed out humbly:

“Noble instructor, of course we do not have the right to question any determination that derives from your authority; nonetheless, I would very much like to delve deeper into the reasons as to why we cannot take part in the work of assistance in collective expiations. Couldn’t we help the institute’s workers on their rescue expeditions to the victims of various accidents so that we can research what caused them? Surely, Mansao’s responsibilities must include assistance of this type every day...”

“Well, almost every day,” Druso corrected him promptly.

And gazing at Hilario in a singular way, he continued:

“You must realize that you are collecting didactic material involving the awakening of our incarnate brothers and sisters, almost all of whom are undergoing an important stage of their struggle to pay their debts to Divine Justice. If you were to analyze expiations of this kind, you would inevitably be compelled to examine in detail situations and problems that could create destructive images in the minds of many of those you intend to help.”

Half smiling, revealing the humility that adorned his admirable spirit, he added:

“I don’t think we could comment on a large disaster in the human realm without imparting the virus of fear, so often the bearer of discouragement and death.”

Our instructor’s serene and evangelical words readjusted our unconstructive impulses.

No doubt, the earth is full of souls just like us, chained to their difficult commitments, yet not committed to persistently working on recovering their balance. It wouldn’t be just to torment them with thoughts of fear and affliction, when, by constantly practicing the heartfelt good, we can hour by hour remove the clouds of probable suffering from our horizons.

Noticing our unmistakable attitude of understanding and obedience, the institution’s head paused briefly and continued:

“Let’s suppose that you were to analyze what caused the ordeal of today’s accident victims ... You would discover moral delinquents who, in other lifetimes, pushed defenseless brothers or sisters from the top of high towers so that their bodies would smash on the ground; fellow spirits who, in the past, committed heinous crimes at sea by drowning precious lives; or suicides who jumped from tall buildings or high peaks in a supreme display of rebelliousness before the Law, and who, at that moment, could find no other recourse than such a dreadful act to change their situation. How many thousands of incarnate brothers and sisters there are now, whose debts before the Divine Tribunals are of such kinds? As indebted consciences, we know that we can improve our credit every day. How many earthly travelers, whose roadmaps include awful surprises, are duly watched over so that sudden death does not assault their body due to their praiseworthy acts!... How many ardent, intercessory prayers win timely moratoriums for individuals who are close to the grave? ... For the souls who graciously accept them, how many sacrificial duties win them precious advantages in the Greater Life, where measures are taken to mitigate the rigors of the trials they have to endure?! We know very well that if a sound wave meets another in such a way that the ‘peaks’ of one overlap the ‘valleys’ of the other, there is no vibration and the result is silence. Likewise, by generating new causes with the good we do today, we can interfere in the causes of evil we set in motion yesterday, thereby neutralizing them and restoring our equilibrium. Thus, I think it better to encourage working for the good with all the resources at hand. Charity and worthwhile learning, faith and good will, optimism and work, art and constructive meditation are renewing themes, whose merit we must not neglect in the rehabilitation of our ideas, and consequently, our destinies.”

Druso made a longer pause, and eager to learn more, I asked him if he himself had ever taken part in a process of collective expiation, in which the spirits in question had no other recourse except a violent discarnation as the conclusion of their days in the physical body. He answered promptly:

“I can recall a few significant cases like that, but I will tell you about just one because we have pressing work to do.”

After a few seconds of calling upon his memory, he began benevolently:

“Thirty years ago, I enjoyed the company of two selfless benefactors, to whom I owe a lot at this shelter of light. Ascanio and Lucas, two highly respected Assistants in spheres higher than this one, were part of a team of valorous and beloved mentors. When I first met them, they had already spent many years helping wayward, suffering brothers and sisters. Enlightened and kind, they were tireless coworkers in our best endeavors. However, after decades of struggle in the battles of sanctifying fraternity, they longed to be admitted to the higher realms so that they could develop their ideals of sanctity and beauty, but they didn’t display the conditions needed for the flight. Since they were completely absorbed in the enthusiasm of teaching the pathway of the good to others, they hadn’t even thought of delving into their own past. It just so happens that quite often, while enthralled with the splendors of the summit, we are not always inclined to examine ourselves in the mists of the valley... Accordingly, they began to ardently desire ascension, but they felt somewhat

disappointed by the lack of support from the authorities, who failed to acknowledge the merit they needed. Since this impasse couldn't be broken, one of them requested a decision from General Oversight, to which we are all subject. The petition went through the ordinary channels until at a certain point both of them were called in for a hearing. Their lack of merit was kindly analyzed by authorities from the Higher Planes, who regressed their memories to very remote times. Several individual records were extracted from their mnemonic field in a manner similar to radioscopy in today's earthly medical field, and through them important conclusions came to light ... Indeed, Ascanio and Lucas had earned extensive credit over nearly five centuries of worthwhile learning experiences, including their last five incarnations in the flesh and their stays in the spirit world's assistance stations close to the earth. However, when the probe reached their activities in the 15th century, something emerged that brought back a painful remembrance ... Wounding them deeply in their spirits, the magnetic procedure extracted from their memory archives the scenes of a dreadful crime committed by both in 1429, soon after the liberation of Orleans, when they were members of Joan of Arc's army ... Eager for influence before their brothers-in-arms, they didn't hesitate to murder two fellow soldiers. While in the territory of Gatinais, they pushed them off the top of a fortress into the filthy mote, thus feeling exhilarated by the honors that later would bring them awful remorse after the grave. At this point of the disquieting investigation, due to the respect they inspired, they were asked by the competent authorities if they wanted to continue the probe. They both declined, preferring to pay off their debt before delving any further into the depositories of the unconscious. Hence, instead of continuing to insist on ascending to higher levels, they asked to return to the physical realm, where they have just recently finished paying off their debts."

"How?" asked Hilario, intrigued.

"Due to the inner moral resources they had accumulated, they were able to choose their trial, and so they opted for careers in the field of aviation, offering their lives to its development. Two months ago they returned to our plane of service after having suffered the same mortal fall they had inflicted on their companions back in the 15th century."

"Did you visit them while they were preparing for their latest reincarnation?" I asked respectfully.

"Yes, I met them several times before their departure. They were associated with a large community of spirit friends in a department specializing in reincarnation, where hundreds of spirits with debts more or less similar to theirs were also preparing to return to the physical realm, embracing redemptive tasks in collective expiations."

"Were all of them able to choose the kind of trial in which they would balance their accounts?" I asked with natural interest.

"Not all of them," said Druso with certainty. "Those who already had a lot of moral credits – as was the case with these two benefactors – had that right. Thus, I saw many of them preparing themselves for a violent death to help the progress of aviation, engineering, maritime and ground transportation, medical science and industry in general. I could see, however, that because of their debts and according to the imperatives of their own

consciences, most of them didn't have such a prerogative. They had to willingly accept bitter trials in childhood, adolescence or old age, involving various kinds of accidents that ranged from light mutilation to death in order to redeem grave wrongdoings."

"What about the parents?" asked Hilario anxiously. "What is the situation of the parents of those who have to be immolated in the name of progress or justice for their redemption? Won't their suffering be duly considered by the powers that control our lives?"

"Most certainly," replied the instructor. "The spirits in need of such expiatory struggles are led to those who were their accomplices in crime, whether in the recent or the distant past, or to parents who failed their children in times past, so that, in cruel longing and unspeakable anguish, they may learn the respect, devotion, honor and love that we all owe to the institution of the family on earth. Collective suffering is the medicine that corrects our mutual wrongs."

There was a long pause.

The lesson compelled us to take a quick look at our own inner worlds.

Hilario, however, as curious as ever, pressed the issue:

"Dear Instructor, let's imagine that after their victory, Ascanio and Lucas continue to aspire to ascend to higher spheres ... Will they have to consult the past again?"

"If they do not display the specific condition required, they will be submitted once more to the process of examination and the selection of any new expiatory trials that may be necessary."

"Does that mean that no one may ascend to heaven without having fully paid all their debts on the earth?"

Druso smiled and concluded:

"It would be more accurate to say that no one can ascend to the fullness of heaven without having paid everything in full on earth, since gradual ascension can happen, although it invariably depends on the merits of accomplishments already achieved. The principles of relativity suit the topic perfectly. The more heaven we have within our soul through the sublimation of life, the broader the soul's incursion into the heaven outside, until it achieves final communion with God our Father. We know that to do so it is essential to comply with justice, and Divine Justice is unquestionably connected to us, since we cannot be truly happy without the implicit approval of our conscience."

The teaching was profound.

We had no more questions, and because Druso had urgent matters to attend to elsewhere, we headed back to Mansao's Temple in order to pray and ponder.

## Sanctions and Assistance

After tending to patients, Instructor Druso agreed to give us a few more minutes of his time for instructive conversation.

He had spoken brilliantly about the problems of trials in the earthly experience. He had also warned us about the need for mental renewal regarding patterns for the good, pointing out the importance of study in order to assimilate higher knowledge, and service to our neighbor in order to harvest goodwill and sympathy; otherwise, all the pathways of evolution will be complicated and difficult to travel.

As he was speaking, a singular sculpture was placed next to him – a remarkable, transparent figure reproducing the human body. It seemed so real that the only thing lacking to make it come alive was a spirit.

We could see all the organs and elements of the physical vessel under the protection of the nervous and circulatory systems.

The heart looked like a large bird in the nest of arteries entwined in the tree of the lungs; the liver, like a vibrant condenser; the stomach and intestines, like technical digesters; and the kidneys, like complex filtering equipment – eliciting profound admiration from us. However, our greatest interest focused on the endocrine system, where the glands looked like sparkles of light. The pineal gland, the pituitary, the thyroid, the parathyroid, the thymus, the suprarenal, the pancreas and the gonadal glands were perfectly characterized upon the living background of the perispiritual centers<sup>[1]</sup>. These centers were linked to each other by very subtle nerve branches that were remarkably adjusted through the various plexuses, with each center emitting its own radiations, constituting a harmonious whole that compelled us to awed contemplation.

Noticing our surprise, the director said kindly:

“Usually, we call our patients’ attention to the vehicle of our manifestation – the physical body – by showing them, as far as possible, the correspondence between our condition as a spirit and the form we use while on earth. It is crucial that we understand that all the evil we knowingly do somehow creates a lesion in our conscience, and that every such lesion causes a disturbance or malformation in the organism that exteriorizes our mode of being. On every plane of the universe, we are spirit and manifestation, thought and form. That is why medicine has to consider the patient as a psychosomatic whole if it really wants to invest itself in the art of healing.”

And touching the beautiful sculpture, he continued:

“From the mind made clear by reason – seat of the higher principles that govern the individuality – radiate the energies that ensure organic balance by means of rays that are still inaccessible to human examination. These rays vitalize the perispiritual centers, in whose webs the so-called endocrine glands are located. These glands, in turn, secrete substances that guarantee the stability of the cellular field. Obviously, in incarnate individuals all these elements materialize in the various hormones that act on all the organs of the physical body through the blood. Those who already know about the tyrosine and the adrenaline – energies produced by the thyroid and the suprarenal glands with a visible influence on the circulatory system, nerves and muscles – also know that all the other glands of internal secretions produce substances that determine the health or illness, balance or imbalance of the incarnate individual. As is easy to see, in essence all the temporary states of the form we utilize in space and time thus depend on our mental command. That is why justice, as a fundamental foundation of order in creation, invariably starts within us whenever we defraud its principles. Evolving toward God can be compared to a divine journey. The good is a signal of free passage to the summits of the Higher Life, while evil represents a sentence of interdiction, forcing us to stopovers that are more difficult or less difficult to readjust.”

Taking advantage of a short pause, Hilario remarked:

“The educational work performed in the lower zones regarding reincarnation is really quite remarkable.”

“Yes, it is,” replied the Instructor. “It is important to inform all our brothers and sisters who are about to return to the human realm that the physical body, with all the responsibilities that pertain to it, must be considered as the true award of Divine Goodness, and must be prized as such. Here, in the purgatorial realms, there are veritable multitudes of discarnate spirits that have left the earth in deplorable hallucinatory states after having wasted the benefits of human life. Due to the misfortune of their own ignorance, many were not able to adjust to any sort of religious concept, and millions of others, far removed from the faith they were born into and the commitments they accepted before God, consciously gave in to mental cruelty, carving out ruin and bitterness for themselves. The evil they inflicted on others was inevitably the evil they brought upon their own heads. As a consequence, as soon as they were free of dense matter, they arrived here consumed by remorse and repentance, suffering terrible frustrations. Many a time, they linger for a longer or shorter period in expiatory caves, where, imprisoned by former enemies or old co-conspirators in crime, they undergo heartrending changes in their centers of force, expressed in the mind as disastrous instability. After they are assisted in our shelter of love, they recover little by little... Rectifying reincarnation, i.e., being interned in the flesh in a painful condition, appears as the unavoidable alternative. They will have to reincarnate and confront with tremendous obstacles, caused by the perispiritual disharmony, what they themselves have created. Even so, before returning to the cradle, they must improve their credit as much possible... Hence the reason why institutions like ours work in various areas of the infernal regions, which in the old theology are the equivalent of hell... But what exists, in fact, is the

immense Umbral situated between heaven and earth, a dolorous region of darkness, created and cultivated by the generally rebellious and indolent, insane and sick human mind. The discarnates who wake up slowly to the responsibilities of life, bravely facing the need to return to a difficult rebirth, begin to work tirelessly here to surmount terrible obstacles, overcoming all kinds of storms in order to acquire the merits they neglected during their stay in the body, so as to implant in their spirit the moral qualities they will need in order to endure new and blessed struggles on the material plane.”

His eyes shining with understanding and caring like a noble and good teacher who wants his students to progress, the Instructor made a long pause and asked us:

“Do you understand?”

“Yes, yes...” we answered at the same time, interested in learning more.

“This is true for all of us,” he said. “In order to recommence the physical struggle, we ask for a regimen of sanctions, or if we do not have the right to ask for ourselves, someone else obtains it by interceding with the higher authorities on our behalf.”

“Regimen of sanctions?” asked Hilario, surprised.

“Exactly. We’re not talking about measures of a moral nature by which, in our family or in our inner struggle, we meet up with spirits to whom we are debtors of patience and tenderness, tolerance and sacrifice in order to pay certain debts that taint our journey. What we are referring to are the rectifying measures that we ask for after repeated failures in the same errors and desertions, such as the congenital deficiencies with which we are reborn. Those who have wasted ample opportunities of work on earth by systematically ingesting corroding elements such as alcohol and other poisons of the organic forces, or those who overindulge in gluttony almost always cross the waters of death as indirect suicides. Awakening to the work of indispensable readjustment, they beg to return to the flesh in bodies that, from infancy, are inclined toward esophageal stenosis[2], stomach ulcers, pancreatic imbalance, colitis and multiple intestinal infirmities that impose systematic, although bearable, pain throughout their entire lives. Admirable minds, which have experienced successive moral downfalls because of the thoughtless way in which they used sports and dance to spread despair and unhappiness in loving and sensitive hearts, ask for organic forms susceptible to paralysis and rheumatism, and are afflicted with various ailments and neoplasms[3] that curb free movement. Individuals that in many circumstances had let themselves be poisoned through their eyes and ears, by entwining themselves in a vast web of criminality through slander and gossip, ask for physical vehicles impaired by auditory and visual deficiencies that keep them from tragic relapses. Intellectuals and artists that wasted sacred resources of the spirit by perverting people’s sentiments through the creation of unwholesome images, ask for serious cerebral impairments with grave and dolorous limitations so that, in their reflections of temporary ostracism, they may develop the forgotten qualities of the heart. Men and women who misused their physical attributes by using the beauty and perfection of their bodies to disseminate madness and suffering among those who believed in their false promises ask for bodies vulnerable to skin problems such as eczema and cutaneous tumors, or pathologies of the thyroid that make it very difficult for



them to learn. Great orators who scorned the divine mission of speech by inciting crowds or driving imprudent souls mad, ask for diseases of the vocal cords so that, suffering from periodic aphonias[4], they desist from inciting their audiences with their brilliant words. And thousands of persons that made the sanctuary of sex into a forge of trouble for others by wrecking homes and bringing unhappiness to other consciences, beg for bodies tormented by lesions in the generative organs, experiencing from puberty serious imbalances in the ovaries and testicles. Sight, speech, mental and auditory impairments, paralysis, cancer, leprosy, epilepsy, diabetes, pemphigus[5], insanity and a whole list of diseases that are hard to cure represent sanctions imposed by Divine Mercy under Universal Justice in response to our own pleadings so that we do not lose the eternal blessings of the spirit in exchange for lamentable human illusions.”

“But are there specialized institutions that provide, for instance, the organic irregularities requested for reincarnation?” asked my colleague, intrigued.

The kind instructor smiled significantly and stated:

“Yes, Hilario, the Lord’s Goodness is infinite and grants us the blessing of asking for the impediments I have just mentioned, because the acknowledgement of our weaknesses and transgressions does immense good for our indebted spirit. Humility, in any situation, turns on a light in our souls, generating blessed resources of fraternal sympathy all around us. However, even if we didn’t ask for the application of the penalties we need, our position wouldn’t change, because the practice of evil causes immediate lesions in our conscience. Once disharmonious, the conscience itself disrupts its centers of force. Thus, our reincarnation institutions collaborate so that we may all receive the physical garment we deserve on the earthly material stage.”

“Then what’s the use of pleading for this or that measure concerning our reeducation?”

“Ah! Please, do not give in to such an assumption!” said Druso in a grave tone. “Prayer, in the sense we alluded to, is always a proof of good will and understanding in our testimony as indebted spirits... Of course, it cannot change the course of the laws, whose transgressions have made us defendants subject to multiple corrections, but it does renew our way of being, representing not only a blessed sowing of solidarity on our behalf, but also a vaccine against a return to evil. In addition, prayer makes it possible for us to draw closer to the great benefactors who guide our steps, helping us to organize a new route for a secure journey.”

Hilario respectfully took note of the explanation and considered:

“Dear Instructor, it seems that we may conclude from your explanation that when we reincarnate we take with us the remnants of our wrongs, which share in our rebirth into the physiological machine as congenital roots of the ills we ourselves have planted.”

“Exactly,” affirmed our mentor friend. “Our predispositions to this or that infirmity in the physical body represent areas of magnetic attraction that speak of our debts before the Eternal Laws, exteriorizing in ourselves the defects of the spirit.”

Druso thought for a few moments, as if he were inwardly pondering the seriousness of



the matter, and then added:

“Our assertions obviously don’t exclude the need for asepsis and hygiene, medication and precise care in the treatment of patients of any kind. We merely want to emphasize the fact that the soul reappears in the physical apparatus bringing with it its wrongs, reflected in the body as areas prone to the manifestation of certain illnesses, thus offering a propitious arena for the development of innumerable viruses, bacilli and bacteria capable of inclining it to the most grave suffering, depending on the debts it has incurred. On the other hand, the soul also carries the faculties to create within its organic cosmos all kinds of antibodies, immunizing itself against the demands of the flesh. Moreover, these faculties can be increased considerably through prayer, enjoyable rectifying disciplines, mental endurance or service to others, all which attract invaluable resources on one’s behalf. We mustn’t forget that the good is the real antidote for evil.”

“Even so,” said Hilario, “we must remember that animals also suffer diagnosable diseases such as hoof-and-mouth, rabies and pneumonia.”

“Likewise, plants also experience peculiar diseases, requiring fertilizers and fungicides,” completed the mentor, smiling.

And he added:

“Pain is one of the most important ingredients in the economy of life in expansion. The iron under the hammer, the seed in the ground, the sacrificial hardship of animals, as well as a baby crying, unaware or semiconscious of the development of its organs, endure ‘evolution-pain’, which acts from the outside inward, improving the individual; otherwise, there would be no progress. However, for the purposes of our study, we are analyzing ‘expiation-pain’, which acts from the inside outward, marking individuals on the pathway of time, keeping them in complex mazes of affliction in order to regenerate them before Divine Justice... This is completely different...”

“How interesting!” marveled Hilario. “I’ve never even thought about such concepts... ‘evolution-pain’ and ‘expiation-pain’.”

“There is also ‘assistance-pain’,” Druso interrupted benevolently.

“How so?”

Noticing the surprised look on our faces, the instructor continued:

“On many occasions in the course of the human struggle, our soul takes on significant commitments of this or that kind. Usually, we reap advantages in certain areas of our experience while losing in others. We sometimes get really interested in the sublimation of our neighbors and forget our own growth. Therefore, through the intercession of friends devoted to our victory and happiness, we receive the blessing of prolonged and dolorous infirmities in our physical envelope, whether to keep us from falling into the abyss of criminality or, more frequently, to prepare us for discarnation so that we aren’t caught by unpleasant surprises in the transition of death. A heart attack, thrombosis[6], hemiplegia[7], painfully-endured cancer, premature senility and other calamities of the organic life

sometimes constitute the ‘assistance-pains’ that help the soul recover from certain errors incurred while in the dense body, habilitating itself through long periods of reflection and beneficial discipline to a respectable entry into the Spirit Life.”

At this point, Druso was called to other commitments, leaving us to ponder our own thoughts.

[1] Also commonly called chakras. – Tr.

[2] A narrowing or restriction of the lumen of the esophagus that slows or impedes the passage of fluid and foods from the oral cavity to the stomach . [www.medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com). – Tr.

[3] A tumor. An abnormal growth of tissue. The word neoplasm is not synonymous with cancer. A neoplasm may be benign or malignant. [www.medterms.com](http://www.medterms.com). – Tr.

[4] Complete loss of phonation due to organic disease of the larynx or to nonorganic (i.e., psychogenic) causes . [www.online-medical-dictionary.org](http://www.online-medical-dictionary.org). – Tr.

[5] Group of chronic blistering diseases characterized . . . by blister formation within the epidermis. *Ibid.* – Tr.

[6] The formation or presence of a clot in a blood vessel. [www.medterms.com](http://www.medterms.com). – Tr.

[7] Severe or complete loss of motor function on one side of the body. [www.online-medical-dictionary.org](http://www.online-medical-dictionary.org). – Tr.

## A Wonderful Surprise

We were at “Mansao Paz” almost daily for three years, learning invaluable lessons on how to serve.

Alongside Druso, and in fraternal communion with Silas and other esteemed friends, we took part in and wrote about sublime experiences.

In fact, the suffering in that shelter of extreme struggle was the common element everywhere we looked.

Many times, the place shook on its foundations due to awesome magnetic convulsions; at other times, under the attack of fierce legions, it was like a fortress enduring a fearful siege that only Divine Mercy could defeat.

Nevertheless, whatever the emergency might be, Druso summoned all of us to prayer and our requests never went unanswered. Supplies and resources, instructions and balsamic help invariably flowed down from the Higher Realms, helping us with our needs or eliminating our indecision.

Druso represented the highest standard of moral intangibility, despite his humble attitude.

We never saw him making the smallest gesture that conflicted with his noble and broad authority. He knew how to be firm without being harsh, just without showing favoritism, kind without being weak. He valued not only the counsel of the great spirits that visited us, but also the humble good wishes of the wretched sufferers who knocked at our door. While he maintained a loving reverence around Mansao’s supervisors and readily accepted their advice, he demonstrated immense caring in his incessant devotion towards the unfortunate souls who begged for our help and understanding. He worked on all fronts. He didn’t limit himself to the venerable duties of a central administrator, someone to whom we owed out constant praise. Instead, he was a dedicated advisor for all the assistants, a doctor for the patients, a guide for the rescue expeditions, and a tolerant and unassuming nurse whenever the circumstances demanded it.

However, he impressed us the most at the bedside of suffering brothers and sisters rescued from the terrifying surroundings where the institution was situated.

Night after night, whenever we wished, Silas, Hilario and I were able to observe his work of magnetic assistance on unfortunate individuals that had gone insane in the darkness and

had consequently completely lost touch with themselves, demented by evil urges or deranged by despair.

It was always heartbreaking to look at the disfigured and unrecognizable spirits whom mental flagellation had driven mad.

More than once, Hilario and I had burst into tears before the horrifying physiognomies that extreme disequilibrium had rendered motionless in terrible prostration or had smitten in bouts of madness.

Druso, however, would bend over all such wretches, always with the same tenderness. After the usual prayer, he would perform magnetic assistance procedures, and then, with security measures in place, he would interview the newcomers while we took various notes pertinent to our work.

For two, three or four hours every night he would personally carry out this assistance work. He considered it to be sacred and never gave anyone else the least excuse to replace him. Except for him, we all took turns in shifts of requested or voluntary assistance, support and consultation to the brothers and sisters whose indiscriminate plunge into darkness had driven them insane.

Under such circumstances on one unforgettable night, the corpse-like body of a woman was brought by her rescuers to the room where we normally did our assistance work.

The battered body was barely covered with filthy rags. Its fingers had become claws, and its face, completely distorted by a terrible hypertrophy, spoke without words of the long torments it had endured.

Although she had already been preliminarily assisted by Mansao's nurses, the wretched creature emitted a nauseating reek.

Nevertheless, just as in other such cases, Druso stroked her brow with paternal tenderness.

When he had finished the prayer that signaled the beginning of the assistance procedures, he began applying passes to awaken her energies. Immediately thereafter, he noticed that deep moans were coming from her chest, so he selflessly concentrated his magnetic forces on the brain of the wretched woman, who started to move, suddenly reanimated.

We clearly saw that Druso was concentrating on the cerebral cortex, stimulating her awakening.

Suddenly, her stiff mouth, hypnotically induced to move, opened slightly and screamed:  
"Druso!... Druso!... Have mercy on me!"

We were startled to see the director of Mansao stagger to the point of fainting, as if he had been hit by invisible rays of anguish and death. But he wasn't the only one stricken with bewilderment. Silas turned pale and lunged towards him, as if he was afraid the director was about to collapse.

Something strange was happening and we were unable to grasp what it meant.

The venerable director tried to compose himself and raised his lucid eyes to heaven in mute tears, asking for divine inspiration in the language of silent prayer, in which the soul communicates privately with God. After a few minutes, he asked the wretch:

“Sister, what would you like to tell us?”

The woman opened her eyes, which rolled around in their sockets without any expression of lucidity, and seeming to fear the presence of unseen enemies, she stated sadly:

“Bring my husband here!... Druso will forgive me... I’m tired, defeated... For God’s sake, deliver me!... Deliver me!... I need air!... Pure air!... Haven’t I paid enough for my crime?... I don’t believe that God created us to suffer in hell forever. If I sinned intentionally and acquired such enormous guilt, I also know... that my reparatory punishment... has also been enormous!... Take me to my husband... so that I can fall to my knees... Druso will take me from the place of the reprobate... He’ll know that I’m not as cruel as people think... My husband was extremely kind; he treated me like a father!... How long have I been suffering, O Lord? You, who healed lepers and the possessed, open your arms of love to me! Deliver me from this hell I was dragged into!... Help me, O Christ!... Let me receive the forgiveness I need from the husband I humiliated so that my conscience can pray with fervor!... The fire of remorse consumes me!... Have mercy!... Mercy!... Mercy!”

During a spontaneous pause, we saw Druso’s face bathed in abundant tears.

For the first time, Silas took over the magnetic assistance.

Notwithstanding the obvious astonishment on his face, with Druso’s unspoken permission, a concerned and hesitant Silas questioned the woman:

“What’s your name?”

“Aida,” she answered, heightening our attention.

The Assistant, however, obviously wanted more information that was as accurate as possible, so he continued, asking in a trembling voice:

“Aida, if you are Druso’s wife – as you would have us believe – can you remember anyone else? Anyone that might have shared your life at home?”

“Oh, yes!” replied Aida with unspeakable tenderness, “I remember... I remember... My husband had a son from his first marriage, a young doctor named Silas.”

And displaying her extreme mental fixation, she asked in a whisper:

“Where’s Silas? Why hasn’t he heard me either? He didn’t like me at first... But after some time... he became a son of my heart. He was good to me... Silas!... Yes!... Yes!... Who has enabled me to remember my past?!”

Our uneasy surprise kept mounting.

Both Druso and Silas fell to their knees in unstoppable tears.

In a split second we understood everything as we recalled the memorable night when Silas had told us his gripping tale.

This demented wretch was Aida, the suffering stepmother.

Only now did we realize that the Instructor and the Assistant had been father and son... Hence the discrete familiarity with which they naturally shared all their work.

Undoubtedly, I thought, they had accepted the afflictive mission of working in that persecuted institute of charity not only to help unfortunate discarnates but also to respond to lofty objectives of the heart.

I didn't have much time to ponder it, however, because in a moving gesture, Druso held the poor creature in his generous arms, and kneeling back down after holding her close, he exclaimed to heaven in a voice drowned in tears:

“Thank you, Lord!... Repentant sinners like me also receive their day of blessing!... Now that you have given back to my criminal heart the companion I poisoned in the world, give me strength so that I may lift her from the abyss of suffering she fell into because of my wrong!”

We could see that he was making an effort to continue beseeching Heavenly Compassion, but his sobs choked his voice completely, while a flood of sapphire light flowed down from the ceiling as if Infinite Goodness had immediately responded to the moving plea.

Extremely worn out, Silas helped him to his feet and both left, carrying that rag of a woman with the solemn emotion of someone who had won a precious trophy.

We were told that the magnetic work would not continue that evening, so we returned to our private rooms to study our notes.

The next day, Silas came to meet us.

He displayed the mysterious joy of someone who had just solved a long-suffering problem. Reminding us of our study of the Law of Cause and Effect, he quickly explained.

Druso and he had been father and son in their last reincarnation. After receiving the permission to work in search of Aida, whose downfall they had caused, they had dedicated themselves to working at Mansao under the auspices of friends from the Higher Planes. At the cost of tremendous struggles for their own regeneration, they had won solid friendships and remarkable experience. However, the memory of the injured young woman was a poisonous thorn in their souls. Thus, for the sake of their own progress toward the Infinite Light, they had to pay their ignominious debt.

With an unknown joy gleaming in his eyes, he expressed his hopes:

“In three days time, my father will leave his post as director of the institution and finally meet my mother so that together they can soon return to a new reincarnation under the guardianship of some of our friends. My father will return first, followed by my selfless mother for their assignment in the flesh. They will get married and receive me into their

arms as their first born so that the three of us may receive the suffering Aida in our hearts. Jesus will grant us the joy of paying off our huge debt with the loving assistance of my mother, who renounced the happiness of immediate ascension on our behalf... As you can see, we ourselves, according to the Law, seek Justice with our own hands.”

The Assistant’s face shone like that of a happy child.

“What about you?” asked Hilario. “Are you going to stay here in the meantime?”

“No,” replied our friend, “with my father’s departure, I got permission to enter a large school, where I will prepare myself for new duties in the field of human medicine during my upcoming life on the earth.”

This information implied a change in our program.

It would be appropriate to finish up our studies at the institution since Druso and Silas had been our unequivocal and faithful support from the start.

I embraced the Assistant in anticipation of how much I would miss him.

Silas was one more friend to whom I would have to say goodbye.

I congratulated him on his victory, and together we agreed that it was also time for Hilario and me to leave.

The administrative change would not encourage any extensions of our time there.

For us, too, the departure was unavoidable.

Our brave friend embraced us with profound affection while tears of sublime gratitude streamed from our eyes.

Who said that separation is only a sad flower in the land of humankind?

\* \* \*

Three days after our final conversation, we found ourselves in a large auditorium of the spiritual assistance institute.

The Instructor and Assistant were saying farewell to their friends.

The enormous hall was packed.

Druso stood on the large dais reserved for the leadership of Mansao. He was flanked by Instructor Aranda, who was going to take over his post, and his dear wife, the one who, in the world, had offered him the sweet dreams of his first marriage. Her serene eyes expressed radiant goodness.

Other benefactors, including our dear Silas, were also there, attentive and moved.

The audience included Hilario, myself, various assistants and workers of the school-hospital, and more than three hundred patients.

All had come to bring Druso their precious testimonies of recognition.

The touching acknowledgments were numerous and forthcoming.

As soft music from unseen instruments played throughout, all the patients waited in line to say a word to the selfless Instructor who had welcomed them so kindly.

Trembling old men blessed his name, and women, whose appearance spoke of hard-won renewal, offered him the sad, tormented flowers that Mansao's troubled surroundings could produce. Various other spirits that had recovered through his tireless dedication expressed their respect and gratitude, while many young patients kissed his hands.

Druso had a kind word of tenderness and love for each one of them.

Muffled weeping could be heard here and there.

We all owed the wonderful mentor knowledge and hope, energy and consolation.

After a simple ceremony of the transfer of responsibilities, the new director stood up and promised to direct the house with loyalty to our Lord Jesus Christ. Truthfully, however, I didn't think that Instructor Aranda would be able to capture our full attention at that moment, and as soon as she sat down, Druso stood up and asked permission to say a farewell prayer.

Everyone bowed their heads in silence as his voice rose to the Infinite like a melody framed with tears.

*“Lord Jesus!” he began humbly, “at this moment, in which we offer you our hearts, permit our souls to bow down in reverence to thank you for the blessings of light that your immeasurable goodness has granted us here for fifty years of love...*

*You, O Master, who brought Lazarus forth from the tomb, you also brought me forth from the darkness to the redemptive dawn, casting into the hell of my guilt the dew of your mercy...*

*You extended your magnanimous arms to my spirit immersed in the muddy currents of crime.*

*You brought me from the whipping post of remorse to the service of hope.*

*You gave me strength when my energies were failing...*

*On days of suffering, you were the nourishment for my longings; on thorn-covered pathways, you were always my faithful companion.*

*You silently taught me that only in recovering my self-respect by paying off my debts could I begin to recapture my inner peace...*

*O Lord, you entrusted me with the work in this restorative shelter as the constant assistance of your infinite benevolence so that I could leave the darkness of the night on the way to the radiance of a new day!*

*I thank you for the instructors you granted me and their understanding of my shortcomings; the generous colleagues who so often tolerated my demands and the sick brothers and sisters who brought so much invaluable knowledge to my heart!*

*And now, O Lord, as the human realm opens its doors once again, accompany me with*



*your mercy and the grace of your blessing.*

*Do not let the comfort of the world make me forget you, and constrain me to live with humility so that pride may not overpower me!*

*Give me edifying struggle as the teacher of my redemption and do not take your eyes off my steps, even if it means that constant pain will mark the days of my life.*

*And if possible, let the brothers and sisters of this place support me with their prayers of assistance so that, on the perilous pathway of regeneration, I may never tire of praising your eternal love forever!”*

Druso finished in tears.

Small luminous flakes rained down like tiny stars that disappeared softly upon touching our heads.

Outside, the storm raged in terrible convulsions.

Inside, however, we were completely sure that beyond the band of darkness the limitless sky sparkled eternally in light...

Joining Silas, we approached the selfless Instructor for our last farewell, for Hilario and I too now had to leave since our task was finished.

Druso embraced us paternally, and maybe because we lingered, trying to express our immense affection, he gazed at us and said:

“God bless us all, my sons! One day we shall all meet again.”

Our voices stifled with emotion, we kissed his hands in profound silence because only tears could say something of our gratitude and sentiment in that unforgettable farewell...



[www.edicei.com](http://www.edicei.com)