

SPIRITUAL WISDOM:
MISSIVES OF HOPE



Francisco Cândido Xavier
and J. Herculano Pires

MISSIVES OF HOPE

Francisco Cândido Xavier José Herculano Pires Several Spiritual Authors



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgment	<i>i</i>
Preface to the English Translation.....	<i>ii</i>
Preface.....	<i>iii</i>
<u>Chapter I – Love and Compassion.....</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Disagreements and Conflicts 1</u>	
<u>Have Compassion and You Shall Find the Way 1</u>	
<u>The Right Measure 3</u>	
<u>Chapter II – Love and Reincarnation.....</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Heated Discussions 7</u>	
<u>Affective Life 7</u>	
<u>The Key to Reincarnation 9</u>	
<u>Chapter III – Inner Peace</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Invitation to Serenity 13</u>	
<u>A Retreat of Peace 14</u>	
<u>Our Individual Peace 17</u>	
<u>Chapter IV – Familial Issues</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Conflicts at Home 19</u>	
<u>The Difficult Relative 20</u>	
<u>The Alchemy of Love 22</u>	
<u>Parents and Children in Conflict 25</u>	
<u>Reincarnations and Psychological Complexes 27</u>	
<u>Chapter V – Parents and Children.....</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>Message Reception 31</u>	
<u>Married Children 31</u>	
<u>Parentage and Affinity 33</u>	
<u>Parents 35</u>	
<u>Who Did Not Ask to Be Born? 37</u>	
<u>Chapter VI – Marriage and Reincarnation</u>	<u>41</u>
<u>Regarding Marriage 41</u>	
<u>Union of Two 41</u>	
<u>The Laws of Marriage 44</u>	
<u>Less Fortunate Couples 46</u>	
<u>Justice and Mercy 47</u>	
<u>Chapter VII - Happiness</u>	<u>51</u>
<u>Happiness on Earth 51</u>	
<u>Inner Peace 52</u>	
<u>The Happiness Plan 53</u>	
<u>Chapter VIII – Unconditional Assistance</u>	
<u>..... 57</u>	
<u>Partisans of Mockery 57</u>	
<u>The Greatest</u>	
<u>Difference 58</u>	
<u>The Value of Assistance 60</u>	
<u>Message to Hamilton 62</u>	
<u>Chapter</u>	
<u>IX – Work at All Times</u>	<u>63</u>
<u>Inquiries</u>	
<u>63</u>	
<u>Do Not Fear 64</u>	
<u>Answers 66</u>	
<u>Chapter X –</u>	

Patience.....	69
Apprehensions and Conflicts	69
Fraternal Reminder	69
In the Course of Life	71
Chapter XI – Social Interactions, Personal Growth	75
Facing Obstacles	75
Success and We	76
The Stairs of Goodness	78
Chapter XII – Budding Love	81
Wars and Afflictions	81
Peace and Love	81
The Brick of Love	83
Chapter XIII – The Interexistent Being	85
Encounter in Prayer	85
Life and Courage	86
To Be and to Do	88
Chapter XIV – Perseverance	91
Apprehension and Despondency	91
You Will Win	91
The Victory Technique	94
Chapter XV – Struggles and Difficulties	97
A Point of Struggle	97
Confession and Prayer	98
The Trenches	100
Chapter XVI – Little is Preferable to Nothing	103
How to Act?	103
Better This Way	104
A Challenge to Humility	106
Chapter XVII – Words, Portrait of the Soul	109
Verbal Behavior	109
Self-portrait	110
The Final Blow	110
Chapter XVIII – The Right Measure of Consolation	113
From Emmanuel’s Files	113
Hidden Blessings	114
The Cup of Bitterness	116
Chapter XIX – The Objective of Prayer	119
For What Else Should Pray?	119
Prayer to Avoid Disturbing Others	119
The Dynamics of Prayer	121
Chapter XX – Trials and Hardships	125
Requests for Help	125
A Brother’s Message	126
Field of Trials	127
Chapter XXI – Spiritist Education	131
Educational Issues	131
As Earthly Beings	131
The Spiritist Culture	133
Truth and Love	136
The Human Solution	138
Chapter XXII – The Inner Sanctum.....	141
Facing the Present	141
Shelter	142
Mortal Remains	144
Chapter XXIII – The Knowledge-Faith Alliance	147
Time of Disbelief	147
Materialism and the Present	148

Time of Faith	150
On Difficult Days	154
Give God a Chance	155
Chapter XXIV – Absence of Spiritual Gender	159
Question 202	159
Psychological Conflicts	160
Psychological Acoustics	163
Chapter XXV – Reasons for Life, Reasoning for Death	167
Killing out of Compassion	167
Euthanasia and Life	168
Murderous Compassion	170
Chapter XXVI – Action and Reaction: Circle of Lives	173
The Mentally Impaired Child	173
Romance in Life	175
In the Mountains of Minas Gerais	177
Chapter XXVII – The True Meaning of Wealth	181
Gold: Pros and Cons	181
Money	181
The Wealthy and the Kingdom	183
Friendly Money	186
Coin, Body, and Soul	188
Chapter XXVIII – Free Will: Freedom to Will and Act	191
Serious Issues	191
The Most Important	192
Free Reaction	193
Maxims from the Worker of Truth	195
Everybody Is Important	197
Chapter XXIX – Psychic Tunneling	201
Inside the Program <i>Pinga Fogo</i>	201
When Judgment Calls	202
The Mediumistic Tunnel	204
Chapter XXX – Emotional Detachment	209
Emotional Attachment	209
Detachment	209
The Students’ Train	212
Chapter XXXI – The Divine Plan	215
Honorary Citizenship of São Paulo	215
Message of Peace	217
God’s Plan	219
Chapter XXXII – Atonement and Progress	221
The Paraplegic Woman	221
Renewal	222
Pain: The Law of Equilibrium	224
Chapter XXXIII – The Actual Importance of Time	227
The Transience of Life	227
The Ballad of Time	227
Time to Live	229
Chapter XXXIV – Self-punishment	233
Ballads in Answer	233
Suicide	234
The Self-punishment	236
Chapter XXXV – The Two Planes of Existence	239
Our Influence on the Deceased	239
Resolutely	240
Sociology of the Intermundium	241
On the Daily Path	244
A Bridge to the World	246
Chapter XXXVI – The Power of the Written Word	249
Mission of the Press	249
The Act of Writing	249
Lesson for the Masters	251
Mediumship and Experience	254

Form and Language	255
Chapter XXXVII – The Meaning of Aging	259
Youth and Old Age	259
Age	260
The Tenant of the Body	261
Chapter XXXVIII – Education and Love.....	265
Child Support	265
Lesson from Life	266
The Master’s Mistake	267
Chapter XXXIX – Restlessness: Disease and Cure	271
Times of Agitation	271
Curative Dialogue	272
Mildness and Affability	274
Chapter XL – From Trials to Experiences	277
Before Current Maladjustments	277
Prisoners of the Soul	278
The Upheaval of the Mendicants	280
Work and Evolution	282
Succession of Things and Beings	284
Chapter XLI – From the Desk of Prof. Herculano Pires	289
Energy and Materialization	289
Promised Land	290
I Want to Speak to Daddy	291
The Paranormal Brain	292

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i

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

This book is a compilation of messages originally published in the Brazilian newspaper *O Diário de São Paulo*, which were later gathered for publication in four books: *Chico Xavier Pedo Licença* (Chico Xavier Asks Permission), *Na Era do Espírito* (In the Age of the Spirit), *Astronautas do Além* (Astronauts from the Afterlife), and *Diálogo dos Vivos* (Dialogue of the Living).

Each message is the result of a partnership between two of the greatest names in spiritist literature, Francisco (Chico) Cândido Xavier and Prof. José Herculano Pires. The messages were received from the spirits by Francisco Xavier through the process known as psychography, and they were later sent to Prof. Herculano Pires, who analyzed them and provided additional remarks.

The present work has significant historical value in that it unites for the first time these two great contributors of the spiritist literature in a systematic collaborative effort.

We hope it will bring you moments of joy and reflection.

Jussara Korngold New York, March 23, 2015.

ii

PREFACE

Francisco Xavier's fame grew considerably after the success of the first *Pinga Fogo* TV show that aired on July 28, 1971. The popularity of the show was such that the newspaper *O Diário de São Paulo* published the transcript in its entirety, and TV Tupi re-broadcast the show with a record-breaking audience.

On August 22 of the same year, the newspaper *O Diário de São Paulo* began publishing a weekly column on Sundays entitled *Chico Xavier Pedo Licença* (Chico Xavier Asks Permission), which quickly became a widespread means for broadcasting the messages received by the medium of Uberaba, followed by a commentary from Prof. José Herculano Pires under the pseudonym *Irmão Saulo* (Brother Saul).

The partnership between Herculano Pires and Francisco Xavier in *O Diário de São Paulo* resulted in four works of great importance in the Brazilian Spiritist literature: *Chico Xavier Pedo Licença* (Chico Xavier Asks Permission), *Na Era do Espírito* (In the Age of the Spirit), *Astronautas do Além* (Astronauts from the Afterlife), and *Diálogo dos Vivos* (Dialogue of the Living), all published by GEEM – *Grupo Espírita Emmanuel* (the Spiritist Group Emmanuel) from São Bernardo do Campo–SP, Brazil.

This is not a book by an individual author or a statement of personal ideas.

iii

We request permission to say that this work is a dialogue in itself. It is a meeting point between Spiritism and us.

In many topics we interpose our inquiries and puzzlement in the face of the trials and tribulations of the human experience in order to articulate the

concerns and questions of many whose expressions of disquietude inspired the creation of these pages.

Someone will ask the reason for our involvement in affairs that concern the terrestrial plane. Is there no better place than Earth for disembodied spirits thirsting for beauty and revelation? Is the terrestrial plane so infinitely important that many friends keep gravitating around it after death?

We will answer these questions affirmatively.

Despite the existence of worlds whose sublimity and magnitude escape us at the moment, at the same time, the human experience, materially speaking, is highly significant for those who are unbound to it.

José Herculano Pires

iv

CHAPTER I – LOVE AND COMPASSION

DISAGREEMENTS AND CONFLICTS

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘Our doctrinal studies followed several discussions related to disagreements and conflicts in our daily lives. The Gospel According to Spiritism was opened on item 17 from chapter XIII, which refers to compassion. The comments that ensued were from many perspectives; Emmanuel's message was received at the end of our evening activities.’

HAVE COMPASSION AND YOU SHALL FIND THE WAY

Emmanuel

Have compassion when you analyze the less favorable behavior of a brother or sister and you will find the right path.

Compassion is the doorway to access the foundation of a solution to any moral problem in life.

In truth I tell you, we are all surrounded by companions who are riddled with anguish and restlessness.

Do not aggravate their suffering.

Some of these companions believed to be righteous, and fell prey to remorse; others confused tyranny for vigilance, and converted themselves into executioners of their beloved ones; others still assumed that affection was built solely from pleasure, and ended up unbalanced; others imagined that destitution should be the foundation of economy, and succumbed to avarice; and yet others understood that divine providence existed exclusively to sustain personal desires, and transfigured their own faith into a scourge to

their fellow human beings.

Reflect upon the mistakes to which they succumbed without awareness of their situation, and have compassion on them.

If you cannot relieve their distress, weave a veil of hope to protect them from the attacks by the forces of darkness.

God is the justice present in the exercise of the laws that reveal Him, but He is also compassion in the expression of the love that guarantees His omnipresence.

Those who have gone astray know that they have deviated from their right path without it being necessary for us to expose their shortcomings with accusations and censorship.

We all know in great detail the somber place where our minds dwell when we fall prey to delinquency.

May the sufferings from guilt be sufficient for our liberation.

Pain exists to show us that there is no imbalance without possibilities for rectification. And divine wisdom, which made us immortals, reigns sovereignly at the foundation of equilibrium. For this reason, the Lord has decreed the unforgettable statement to be attributed to Him in all revelations of truth: 'I want compassion, not sacrifice.'

THE RIGHT MEASURE

J. Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

We judge, and do so regularly. We carry in our minds the yardstick of arbitration. In any introduction, we immediately measure the other person from one end to the other. However, we never stop to consider whether our measuring gauge is accurate or not, or if it has not been corrupted by time and usage. God gave us discernment as a mirror of His divine justice for He made us in His image and similitude, not in the physical sense, but in spirit. For this reason, God gave us compassion also, a reflection of His divine mercy. Our imperfection leads us to overemphasize judgment and forget about compassion, two attributes that are at equilibrium in God.

In 1862, in the city of Bordeaux, France, the guardian angel Michael dictated a message about compassion that can be found in chapter XIII of The Gospel According to Spiritism. This message states that "Compassion is the virtue that brings us the closest to the angels. It is the sister of charity, which leads us to God." Compassion and mercy are synonymous. Spiritism teaches us that

we evolve towards God, but it also states that between the human condition and God there exists an angelic phase that we must experience. **No one will become spiritually evolved solely by using the yardstick of reasoning.**

The correct measure that we may apply to others is discernment within the scope of compassion, as Emmanuel teaches us yet again more than 100 years after the guardian angel Michael's communication. The violence of ancient times, which leveled barbarians and civilized people alike to the same standard of animality, and the violence of our times, when remnants of the past resurface under threatening circumstances, serve to illustrate how difficult it is to master the teachings of the earthly school.

As reluctant students, repeating the same classes over and over again by means of the reincarnation process, we have yet to learn the teachings from the Gospel. The spiritist revelation comes to our rescue at the present moment with its new teaching methods in an attempt to clear the pathway to our much needed advancement.

It is time we thought about the lessons in humanity that Jesus taught us through words and examples. **Earth is in a transitional phase towards a better world. Our trials of today are our final testimony. If we fail our test, oppressed under the weight of our animalistic ego, we will be transferred to other schools where we will have to start our studies all over.**

CHAPTER II – LOVE AND REINCARNATION HEATED DISCUSSIONS

Francisco Cândido Xavier

'I do not know why relationship problems are currently the most debated topics on Earth.

Before our public meeting began, the conversations revolved persistently around sexual relationships and their manifestations. Those friends of ours engaged in the exchange of such ideas were from different cities, and the theme caused animated and interesting discussions regarding freedom in life.

The Spirits' Book was opened on question 938 for our studies at the start of our meeting. After the usual explanations, our dear friend Emmanuel offered us a message entitled *Affective Life*, which I send to you with the desire to see it complemented by your studies and reflections.'

AFFECTIVE LIFE
Emmanuel

All problems concerning affective life will be properly clarified when knowledge of reincarnation becomes founded upon the golden rule.

This is to say that, in relationships of affection, we will do to others that which we wish others to do unto us; and so will we proceed because we will receive in return all that we donate to the other person's heart.

In its radiant freedom, love acts independently in its choices and manifestations; nonetheless, it equally conforms to the principle: "Free to sow, but bound to reap."

A handful of brief observations will suffice to contemplate this idea.

In many situations, the rivals we defeated in one way or another, leading them to their deaths, are the children that life and time subsequently place in our arms, who now attempt to collect from us the assistance and protection that we owe them by engaging our abnegation and resignation;

...the young boy or girl we pushed away from our arms by considering the child unworthy of our domestic nucleus at the time, causing the death of their physical body either directly or indirectly, are later returned to us in the condition of grandchild and, in many circumstances, will share our life and domicile;

...the unborn child we rejected to the abyss of the unnecessary abortion, who should have been born and grown up to develop a peaceful affection amidst our relatives, usually finds a new cradle within our social environment, reappearing amidst us in the condition of the man or woman who demands heavy tributes of affliction from us in approaching our familial organization;

...the individuals we deceived in the context of affective relationships in other times usually return to us as problematic children, requiring our constant attention and care for the emotional readjustments they demand. The frustrations, conflicts, extreme attachment, and innate aversions of today are the result of the imbalanced affections of yesterday, pleading for our dedication and reparation.

Taking into consideration the genestic factors involved, it is likely that human social groups will delay general acceptance of this truth.

However, the day will come when all human beings will understand that, when it comes to affection, the spirit will harvest that which it sows wherever it is.

THE KEY TO REINCARNATION

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

The principle of reincarnation is the key that opens the path to our understanding of all human problems. Without it, everything is mystery and confusion in our destiny, and the justice of God appears absurd. Such key has been lost to us since the fourth century of the Common Era. In adapting to the pagan and Judaic formalities, Christian religions have lost the key that Jesus left in his teachings, which remain irrefutably present and evidenced in the Gospels until today despite our inattention to them. Dazzled and confused, Christianity has not been able to find it amidst the capricious mazes of the theology formulated by the new doctors of the law.

Eighteen centuries after Christ, Christians would find themselves disarmed when challenged by the enlightened reason deriving from cultural advancement. The world previously converted to Christianity would then return to the forgotten sources of pagan culture. This apostasy, such as that of Emperor Julianus,¹ would lead the world again to unsolvable dilemmas that come from a reason that is devoid of spiritual light.

We have been struggling within this swirl of madness for two centuries, but for over a century the Spirit of Truth promised by Jesus has been renewing the teachings of the Master on Earth, thanks to the reestablishment of permanent and natural mediumistic communications, which have returned to us the lost key of reincarnation.

¹[TN] Flavius Claudius Julianus Augustus, or Emperor Julian or Julianus (331/332–363). He was emperor of the Roman Empire from 361 to 363.

As Jesus taught us, the freedom for a relationship of affection, which we seek through illusions pertaining to the material body, is actually to be found in the reality of the spirit where we are sowers who left to sow. The dissemination we undertake will determine our harvest, for the natural laws invariably bind us to their inexorable results. He who sows ryegrass cannot harvest wheat. If we sow imbalanced affections in our path, how can we expect to harvest fruits of stability?

From another perspective, if the sowing of the past was bad, how may we correct it if we continue to sow the same seeds? The key of reincarnation opens up the doors to our understanding. We have to renew our sowing. Still, if we give heed to the unbalanced theories of pagan reason, devoid of light, which tend to consider misguided sexual behaviors as normal and justify them with the false plenitude of material pleasures, we will not escape the vicious

circle of sensorial slavery.

CHAPTER III – INNER PEACE

INVITATION TO SERENITY

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘The Spirits’ Book presented us the theme from question 789, which was examined in our public meeting by many of our spiritist fellows with precious explanations. We counted among us friends from several municipalities. The topics related to peace were debated with respectful love using elucidations from Allan Kardec.

Naturally, many speakers dwelled on the emphasis to contemporary issues when peoples from all nations are looking for security and mutual agreement.

Emmanuel’s message, a welcoming page to serenity, was received through psychography prior to the conclusion of the meeting.’

Note : *In his annotations to question 789 of The Spirits’ Book, Allan Kardec states that “Humankind evolves through individuals who increasingly improve and enlighten themselves. When these grow in number, they will take the lead and draw the rest forward.” Therefore, if we wish to fight for peace, let us promote peace within ourselves and God will help extend it to the world.*

ARETREAT OF PEACE

Emmanuel

There are those who wonder how they may serve the cause for peace.

Would not such a task be reserved to those in charge of the world’s direction?

However, peace in the world is the result of all the individual struggles in the realm of pacification.

Let us reflect on it and fulfill our duties as well as we can.

Release the source of love from your heart.

Awaken upright thoughts in your brain.

Transform the work of each day into a hymn of blessings.

Attend to the commitments avowed by the laws of your own conscience.

March down the pathway of goodness towards others.

Have respect for the existence that others have chosen for themselves to the same extent that you wish your own life to be respected.

Erect within you a barrier against destructive criticism. Hospitalize aggressors and slanderers in your clinic of prayers.

Do not squander the wealth of time in acquiring remorse through useless complaints.

Don the armor of patience so you may be able to act and react constructively wherever you are.

Employ the good word in the verbal structures with which you express yourself.

Listen attentively, waiting without haste for your turn to speak.

Do not disregard anyone.

Protect yourself from the obstacles and problems that displease you through recollection of prayers in order to avoid standing out on the path of others as a result of your afflictions.

Accept others the way they are, without aiming at correcting or improving them forcibly.

Learn with humility and teach without demands.

Assist without collecting for it.

Do not solemnize the trials you require for improving your own path.

Immunize yourself with the therapy of forgiveness when facing an offence.

Wait for the propitious moment intended to clarify a difficult issue that may have emerged in your relationship with others.

Do not demand from others what they do not yet possess to contribute.

Do not mentalize evil with imaginary restlessness, but rather collaborate in the construction of the best that must happen.

Serve without fastening shackles to the wrists of your brothers and sisters.

And as you push on so, you will become a pillar of strength for general safety.

In truth, Heavenly Providence does not ask you to transform yourself into a bright light all at once, dispelling the shadows of perturbation wherever they prevail on Earth; rather, Heaven expects you to be, already today and wherever you are, a living retreat of peace.

OUR INDIVIDUAL PEACE

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

We all wish for peace in spite of living in conflict. This thousand-year-old contradiction characterizes the moral imperfection of human beings, and it was well defined by Paul of Tarsus when he wrote “What a wretched man I am for I do not do the good I desire, but the evil I do not want to do.” If he felt this contradiction in his flesh, the selfless servant of the Gospel who left everything to follow Christ and disseminate his message, so do all individuals

even more, in particular those who, like us, have not yet learned how to spell the basic word of the Gospel's teachings even after two thousand years, which, incidentally, is formed by only one syllable: love.

There are individuals who come into despair when facing such issues. But we must remember that Earth is a school in which generations succeed one another, with each one receiving the lessons in its own time. From the time of Paul of Tarsus to our own, many pupils completed the course and left the earthly school triumphantly, moving forward to superior educational institutions. We enjoy the advantage of relying on the examples and experiences of the apprentices who preceded us, not to mention on the advantage of trusting the lessons sent to us today through mediumship by former students such as Emmanuel, who ascended to the rank of master.

World peace depends on individual peace because the world of human beings is made by human beings. God created the natural world with all the possibilities for evolution and peace; and also created us to build our own world, the world of each person and that of humanity, seizing our own possibilities of evolution in the achievement of peace. If we convert ourselves into a "living retreat of peace," as Emmanuel described, we shall provide the world the peace it needs. If we remain the source of wars and disagreements, the world will always be incensed by our contradictions and injustices.

CHAPTER IV – FAMILIAL ISSUES

CONFLICTS AT HOME

Francisco Cândido Xavier

'Our duties were preceded by many observations made from parents talking at the meeting place. They were either friends or supporters of Spiritism, who had come to us looking for clarification and comfort for their souls regarding family issues they were facing, most of them related to their children.

At the completion of every set of allegations, only the concept and certainty of reincarnation brought reason and elucidation to the topics approached. Our meeting started after much discussion, all beneficial and opportune. The Spirits' Book offered us questions 209 and 210, motivating precious comments about family-related issues allied to the precepts of reincarnation.

Emmanuel was present once again at the end of the meeting to complement the studies of the evening.'

Note : *The aforementioned questions from The Spirits' Book are precisely related to the topic of caring parents and misbehaving offspring. The items*

warn readers that such children are a test to their parents, whose duty is to improve the spirits entrusted to them by providing the necessary guidance.

THE DIFFICULT RELATIVE

Emmanuel

To the extent that you can, bless and support the relatives who settle across your path as a difficult obstacle to transpose.

The law of cause and effect, as much as the principles of affinity, do not happen without reason.

Observe.

Time progresses quickly. Individuals whom you saw in the childhood of your physical existence have transformed themselves almost at once, and they now follow down paths that are next to yours during the course of your years of maturity.

Events you recall in great detail in your memory reveal the passage of many lustra.²

Therefore, our existences become entwined with one another in the course of time.

Companions from the past return to us claiming service or conciliation, the reformation or assistance that we owe them.

²[TN] *Lustrum* (*sing.*; *lustra, pl.*) is a period of five years.

The suffering and battered heart who shares with us the daily road on Earth is invariably that same spirit who made us debtor of great kindness and even greater dedication.

The rebellious child with whom you unexpectedly share your life is the brother you injured yesterday with the rashness that threw him in obduracy or to suggestions of revenge; the insubordinate daughter of the present is the young woman from the past in whose feelings you sowed despair and revolt; the presentday enigmatic father is the fellow whom you enslaved to your own whims, and whose past life you commanded with violence and tyranny; and the overbearing mother is the former sister you kept under the weight of oppression. The restless relative, bearer of great impatience, is always the same person who became unstable in remote times as a result of our mistakes, and who now demands recovery at the expense of our care and devotion in the arena of the physical existence.

It is true that such situation is not always the result of our own debts before the Divine Justice. Wherever it appears, love always knows how to shepherd

others towards individuals who are devoted to it, converting obstacles and trials into hope and happiness much like Jesus did, who has been loving us from immemorial times, long before we even met him, and who still supports us all on Earth without ever having had any debts to us. Yet, let us remember that every difficult relative is a work of love or reconciliation that Divine Providence entrusts us so we may have the privilege of transforming this opportunity into rungs of service and enlightenment in the ladder of our own advancement.

THE ALCHEMY OF LOVE

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

There is only one miraculous power capable of transforming souls: love. Without it we inevitably fall in the crucible of sufferings, heated by the fires of pain. Love is that mysterious energy that alchemists pursued, which was capable of producing the universal panacea, the remedy for all illnesses, and reveal the philosopher's stone, which transformed common metals into gold. Within a regimen of love, rude and violent souls improve themselves and become gentler.

Therefore, Emmanuel teaches us that difficult children and relatives are not sent to us only as adversaries from the past, but also as beloved creatures we lost when we strayed from the right course in our lives. Our love attracts them to carry out their transformation. In these cases of spiritual alchemy, parents must always be patient and devoted, as were the medieval alchemists, who were committed to long distillations and smelting processes in their pursuit of incredible results.

As a rule, we believe that alchemists never produced anything valuable in their irrational attempts. But historic truth is otherwise engaged. Chemistry was born from ancient alchemy, encompassing a set of techniques of filtration and blending, and smelting of metals, from which it achieved positive results that eventually contributed to the scientific evolution of the planet. Likewise, by means of the alchemy of love, and through the metamorphoses and reincarnation process, sacrifices are not useless and sufferings bear good fruits.

The mother who forgives all and forgets everything eventually sensitizes the child, kindling in that heart the renewing spark of love. The father who understands the rebelliousness of his child with paternal love teaches through a living example, which will free his child from the negative past. We would be all wretched were it not for love!, this spiritual touch, like that of Moses'

staff, which once made water pour forth from stones to quench the thirst of his people!

God created the world out of love; through an act of love, God made chaos come from nothing and the cosmos appear from chaos. These allegories bewilder positive spirits, but when we face life in its transformations, we see that metamorphosis is a universal law. Things and living beings are in constant transformation everywhere. Ancient educators used to submit their rebellious students to physical punishments, but modern pedagogues discovered that true discipline is the one that is born from the heart of the pupil when it is touched by the heart of the master.

René Descartes³ discovered that the idea of God is innate to human beings; Jean-Jacques Rousseau⁴ revealed the basic goodness of human individuals and, ever since Johann Pestalozzi,⁵ we have come to know that education is an act of love. But this act of love is not only accomplished at school: it begins at home and continues throughout life. Preachers of hatred and violence still pervade our culture, but the conflicts and bonfires they have lit are gradually being extinguished as a result of better understanding, with love as the only force capable of transforming the world. It is why Jesus taught us to love our enemies and forgive always.

Challenging children and relatives are mendicants of love whom our love attracted to our lives; they are not hardships, but rather merely trials.

³ [TN] René Descartes (1596–1650) was a French philosopher, mathematician, and writer.

⁴[TN] Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) was a Swiss philosopher, writer, and composer.

⁵[TN] Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827) was a Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer who founded many educational institutions in Switzerland and wrote several works on his revolutionary modern principles of education whose motto was “Learning by head, hand, and heart.” Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail, known as Allan Kardec, studied under him.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN IN CONFLICT

Emmanuel

Parents and children under conflict... It is possible that you have them in your familial setting. You suffer from seeing them in contradiction to your ideas or being entangled in restless and negative experiences. However, it is essential that you enlighten yourself with peace and consideration in order to understand them. Give them your words framed in patience and love so that your voice may be heard, and bless them even when they do not heed your manner of thinking or behaving.

On Earth, we are rather often hit harder by feelings from individuals who are associated to us in our physical existence. Their sentiments now comprise the harvest of what we morally sowed in our past, and those associates are now asking us for atonement and renewal. The so-called oedipal complications are nothing else but the representation of the otherwise obscure interwoven relationships that we created when we trapped dear souls in our sentimental cell by ties that they presently request to be undone so we may all experience joy from the ensuing mutual liberation.

The son who is excessively attached to the maternal heart, with manifesting difficulty in being himself, is on the vast majority of cases the same companion whom the genitor brought to her path in the past; he now supplicates her for the necessary support in order to exonerate himself from the psychological shackles binding him to insecurity.

Likewise, the daughter bound to the paternal spirit in serious difficulties to remove herself from the grips of authority, is habitually the same companion whom he manacled to himself in former experiences; and today she beseeches him the indispensable assistance to disentangle herself from the selfishness of the deceiving influence perpetrated in the name of love.

How many clashes, how many conflicts until both sides are willing to establish reciprocal concessions through many karmic corrections, when one and the other will find themselves emancipated from the obsessive conditions through which they became connected!

If you bring with you this or that child in conflict, or face difficult parents, never allow yourself to become irritated or condemn them.

Love them for whom they show themselves to be and pray for them, blessing their presence and respecting their decisions in the certainty that God, whose infinite kindness has always cared for us, will also care for them. In addition, remember that neither you nor they were created for the captivity of affection, but rather to be responsible and free so that they may consciously work towards the improvement of life through the sublimation of immortal love.

REINCARNATIONS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPLEXES

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

The discovery of the unconscious led Sigmund Freud⁶ and the advocates of his theories to look deeper into the issue of psychological complexes. Among these, the one that became the most popularized for its dramatic characteristics was the Oedipus complex, followed by the Electra complex.

They are two forms of ideo-affective sets that describe familial conflicts. Much earlier than Freud's discovery, Spiritism had already emphasized the importance of the unconscious in facing animic manifestations in the area of mediumship.

The Spirits' Book addressed the problem of the unconscious in April 1857; Freud was born the year before. This does not affect in anything the value and significance of the works of Freud and his successors. However, it is a historical event that places Spiritism in a very comfortable position regarding the approach to psychological problems.

In Emmanuel's message, we have the problem of familial conflicts described according to spiritist terms. Emmanuel emphasizes the importance of the theory of reincarnation for a better and more humane understanding, particularly more humane, of the so-called parental complexes. He asserts that "The so-called oedipal complications are nothing else but the representation of the otherwise obscure interwoven relationships that we created when we trapped dear souls in our sentimental cell..."

⁶[TN] Sigismund Schlomo Freud (1856–1939), known as Sigmund Freud, was an Austrian neurologist. He is considered the father of psychoanalysis.

In connecting complexes to archetypes, Carl Jung's⁷ interpretation corroborates this approach. The child in this case would already be carrying the archetype of the mother, the idea of "the eternal or divine mother," which is simply awoken by the physical mother during the current existence.

Spiritism restores the human nature to the Jungian archetype. It is not the concept of the "divine mother," a Platonic reminiscence, but the actual conceptualization of a real, flesh-andbone, concrete mother from a prior existence.

Scientific researches today on the topic of reincarnation open new possibilities for the understanding of the conflicts between parents and children. And for this very reason, Spiritism becomes more capable of assisting Depth Psychology⁸ in discovering the true roots of conflicting parental situations.

⁷ [TN] Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist. He is the founder of analytical psychology.

⁸ [TN] Depth Psychology was a term originally coined by Eugen Bleuler from the German word *Tiefenpsychologie*, to describe psychoanalytic approaches to therapy and research that take the unconscious into account. The term now refers to the ongoing development of theories and therapies that explore the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious, which were pioneered by

Pierre Janet, William James, and Carl Jung.

As the readers may see, the psychographed messages of Francisco Xavier do not have only a religious and moral sense. Rather often, they penetrate deeply into the problems that we are used to address only from a superficial point of view, even when we treat them from a perspective that may seem deep to us.

CHAPTER V – PARENTS AND CHILDREN

MESSAGE RECEPTION

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘I send you a message from our dear Emmanuel, which was received during our public meeting. Our house counted a large number of brothers and sisters who were addressing the struggles and issues related to their married children.

There were several conflicting opinions. When the meeting began, questions 203, 204, and 205 from *The Spirits’ Book* were presented to us for study.

After various comments from many of the participants attending the meeting, Emmanuel wrote a page through us in answer to their requests, enriching our studies and comments related to our previous considerations and discussions about Allan Kardec’s teachings.’

MARRIED CHILDREN

Emmanuel

Married children: a theme that seems ordinary at first, but which is always of the highest importance in questions concerning relationships.

Amidst the comfort of home, it is very common for us on Earth to forget that our children have grown in physical size and in spiritual responsibilities. And almost invariably, albeit involuntarily, we begin to influence them unconstructively beyond the scope of the esteem we owe them.

Let us ponder on this issue and learn to free them from our demands contrived as love.

Let us be resolute to help, offering them the opportunity to be themselves in the choices they make and in the experiences they pursue.

We must remember that they will not always attune to our inclinations and purposes.

They will aspire to other friendships and habits. They will wish to try another

style of existence that is different from the one with which we are familiar to work and live.

They undoubtedly love us as much as we love them; however, they are inclined to follow paths that are different from ours.

Let us be thankful for the ones who harmonize with us, being joyful for the tenderness of their constant presence, but let us also be grateful for the efforts of the others, who strive for goodness and perfection without following in our footsteps. When some of them move away from our circle of intimacy, it is often because they are addressing personal difficulties and trials in which our intervention would simply result in undue action, thereby complicating the issues instead of solving them.

Empathize with your married children and endeavor to respect them in their required detachment to be happy.

Let us all remember, incarnate and discarnate spirits alike, that our children in this world are, above all, God's children, and that they are in as much need as we are of support in their freedom in order to be able to live effectively.

PARENTAGE AND AFFINITY

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Question 203 from *The Spirits' Book* addresses the problem of familial lineages within a spiritual scope. In general, we think that biological heritage is the determinant of temper and character. Spiritism shows that human nature is spiritual rather than material. Therefore, what determines the condition of human beings is their essence, not their shape, namely, it is their spirit, not their instrument for corporeal manifestation. Families are aggregations of related spirits who establish a biological heredity line through successive reincarnations.

Every spirit that reincarnates brings its personality intact within itself, already formed in previous reincarnations. The similarities of psychological and moral characteristics among parents, children, and other descendants do not come from the physical body, but rather from their spirits. The uniqueness of each human being is represented by what each one actually is on its own. Therefore, there is a Cartesian parallelism between heredity and affinity. Once we admit to this conclusion, which today has been carefully considered by great scientific research centers, it is easy for us to understand the need for both social and emotional independence for these children who have emancipated themselves, and especially for the ones who have built their own

family.

Spiritual affinities do not imply dependence and submission because each spirit is directly responsible for its own evolution. Parents are responsible for their children regarding guidance offered through examples and education. However, parents should not subject children to their ideas and lifestyles.

Affinity does not mean identity. We enjoy being together with similar people because we get along with them, although it does not imply that we must necessarily live and think exactly alike. If that were so, evolution would stagnate. It is perfectly possible for our closest children, those most connected with us, to take different paths from ours; and if so, we should respect their desire for new experiences without their behavior constituting a complete detachment from us. Each spirit must be competent for its own life.

This is why Emmanuel reminds us about love without attachment, without intentions of servitude, so we may avoid placing obstacles to the freedom of action and the experiences of our married children. We must help and support them as opposed to torturing them with our selfish demands.

PARENTS

Emmanuel

On Earth, we usually expect to see in our children geniuses of moral elevation. Likewise, in the condition of children, we wish to find in our parents models of unassailable virtue.

However, as we progress in our extensive internship in the physical school, we gradually realize that we are whom we are despite our position in the world, that is, we are incomplete individuals on the path to perfection, transitorily linked to one another within the confines of the home or familial responsibilities whether for atonement or improvement.

Contemplate it. If life has given you difficult parents, who either were or are not presently capable of showing a certificate of irreprehensible conduct on a daily basis, do not exempt yourself from loving and respecting them all the same.

Some might say that they did not ask their parents to be born. However, such rebellious individuals might have been the very same ones who, before birth, used to address their future parents as obsessors of affection, repeatedly demanding of them a new existence on Earth until the incarnate beings finally conceded to their desires, whence both sides, parents and children, became

associated to one another; and all on behalf of those same recalcitrant children, so that they could reach the physical plane for new constructive accomplishments.

If you experience conflicts and listen to others attribute them to traumas born out of aversion, contempt, envy, hatred, emotional attachment, or overprotection from difficult parents you had, or who might perhaps still be sharing an existence with you, recall that similar studies may express the truth from the earthly point of view, but do not disregard that the laws of reincarnation are still at work. In the roles of parents or children, we are beings on a path of improvement, requiring immortality for its accomplishment, who will only successfully manage to sanitize our own imbalances and maladjustments if we dedicate ourselves to mutual understanding and respect.

In the presence of complicated parents, assist without ever reproaching them. They demand from you appreciation and assistance so they may find their own paths in life to the same extent that you received from them the support and compassion to reach the human school.

For the time being, in the condition of spirits in evolution on Earth, we are all far from the angelic virtues. And without exception, all of us require love and the assistance of love to live, interact, and survive.

WHO DID NOT ASK TO BE BORN?

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Question 203 from *The Spirits' Book* refers to the elements that parents transmit to their children. The answer of the spirits is that they provide "... only animal life, since the soul is indivisible. An obtuse father may have intelligent children, and vice versa." The spirits refuted the thesis that parents transmitted something from their own souls to their children.

The similarities of behavior and the inclinations within families are not explained in Spiritism by physical inheritance, but rather by a spiritual one. During reincarnation, spirits are attracted to their parents through their past associations. Positive connections are recognizable by prior affinity, negative ones by repulsion. Parents and children who attune to each other are kindred spirits, those who revolt are creditors and debtors who meet once again.

Spirits who are sufficiently evolved to be aware of their deficiencies ask for a reincarnation as soon as the extent of their stay in the spiritual life is over. They subsequently attach themselves either by affinity or remorse to those

individuals with whom they lived in a past life—with positive or negative ties, respectively—asking the latter to be accepted as their children. Each birth on Earth implies decisions taken in the spiritual world. There are those who ask to be born, and others who implore so. Those who beseech are generally the ones who most often do not adjust to their families, the most rebellious, for they are the ones in direst need.

The human concept that no one asks to be born is a mistake derived from the spiritual blindness of human beings. Since we forget the spiritual antecedents to our birth, for the very reason that we may have a new life without disturbing memories, we are under the impression that we were sent onto the world against our wishes. And many accuse their parents of being responsible for their birth, as if the parents had the power to create life whenever they so desired it, and of choosing the spirits that might be born as their children.

In addressing this issue in precise terms, Emmanuel's message cautions us regarding the necessity to attend to our duties in familial life, for accomplishment or neglect of those duties will determine our future condition in the spiritual life. The material life passes by quickly, but the spiritual ties continue beyond death, and they have repercussions on future lives.

CHAPTER VI – MARRIAGE AND REINCARNATION REGARDING MARRIAGE

Francisco Cândido Xavier

'We had been engaged in a friendly conversation with many companions and we had been talking enthusiastically about current themes. Our evening reunion began soon after those discussions with the selection of questions 2 and 3 from chapter XXII of *The Gospel According to Spiritism* for our studies, which enlightened us about the topic of marriage.

Participating friends debated the subject eagerly by describing many of the nuances of marriage and its subsequent duties. Brothers and sisters from different municipalities analyzed several aspects of the theme from both the male and female perspectives.

At the conclusion of our work, our dear friend Emmanuel wrote the message entitled *Union of Two*, further expounding on the deliberated opinions.

UNION OF TWO

Emmanuel

Marriage battles! Marriage trials! Whoever said that the foundation of matrimony is assured happiness within a structure of perfection had no grasp

of reality.

The union of two individuals in the cultivation of affinity or the execution of more extended familial duties is an honorable responsibility much like many inherent noble obligations. Nevertheless, for all its worth, it is still a task to be accomplished; and it is such an important charge that it is not entrusted to one heart only, but it is necessary to unite two of them in order to carry it out.

When a companion ponders about undertaking a certain approach, or another embraces a specific profession, we do not consider eluding either of them with visions of imaginary happiness. On the contrary, we recognize that they have chosen a laborious path in which to serve, and we bid them the desired success for the accomplishment of their objectives.

Likewise, marriage is not a construction without a foundation, a kind of palace made to specifications for its inhabitants.

It is imperative for spouses to learn to understand each other in order to develop in themselves the noble qualities that the other possesses, thereby transforming the companion's less fortunate tendencies into aspirations for a better life.

Clearly, we all have profound attachments, frustrations, idiosyncrasies, and difficulties. Reincarnation unquestionably apprises us of all of them when it indicates which direction those aspects take within the familial setting in accordance with the mechanisms of life that terrestrial experience motivates us to readjust.

For this reason, every couple and every domestic organization expose sensitive areas of interconnected problems that we must know how to avoid or address in order for the future to bring us solutions of irrevocable harmony.

If you are next to someone under the responsibility of affection, do not demand from your companion the immediate presentation of the resources that, according to your personal views, the other would need to become the perfect company in the domestic environment. Neither expect your companion to reason in accordance with your own thoughts for it is not licit to anyone to expect from others that which one cannot yet perform oneself.

If you do not want to have cast onto your shoulders the imposition of a companion who, like you, has embraced the responsibilities of a union of two, it is only fair that you should not impose yourself on the other by placing your own head on the shoulders of your spouse, to whom you promised care and

dedication.

We are all children of God.

Matrimony is an obligation in which interested parties engage freely, a duty that one spouse will have to answer fairly to the other. Notwithstanding the association, matrimony does not amalgamate its members. Therefore, besides achieving a state of complementarity, the union of two individuals brings to mind sowing and construction for spouses harvest what each has sown to the same extent that each possesses only what has been accomplished.

THE LAWS OF MARRIAGE

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

According to the evaluation of Allan Kardec in the text cited above, there are two basic laws of marriage: the material and divine law of sexual union targeting the reproduction of the species, and the moral and divine law of love for the spiritual evolution of human beings. Both laws are divine, for in essence all the laws of nature originate from God. However, human beings often distort the biological law of reproduction when they abuse of their free will and defraud or confound the law of love with inferior interests of animality.

It is these negative behaviors that create the difficulties, dramas, and the tragedies of matrimony. Of the two basic laws mentioned by Kardec in the order we obey them—first the material then the moral—the one that must prevail is the latter for our essence is spiritual, our nature moral, not material.

As a result of our giving preference to the first, the law of action and reaction, which determines our destinies, employs mechanisms of reparation that lead us to marriages of expiation. Knowing how to cope with such marriages is the means to atone for abuses of the past and predispose ourselves to future compensations. All attempts to evade proper restitution constitute postponement of the sacrifices due since the natural laws are enforced by the passage of time.

The responsibilities of marriage are not only applicable to spouses, but are also pertinent to the children and relatives from both sides. For this reason, and as Jesus taught, divorce is allowed in view of our hardened hearts, but those who are able to avoid it will be able to advance faster on the path of spiritual evolution.

As Emmanuel emphasizes, the union of two individuals is always an honorable responsibility, so happy is the one who is worthy of such charge.

LESS FORTUNATE COUPLES

Emmanuel

If you enjoy happiness in a peaceful home, remain silent at the moment of judging others whose marriage is in conflict, particularly if you are not able to praise them from any perspective of the experience they endure.

Since you were able to preserve the essence of love through friendship and immaculate kindness, be compassionate towards those who suddenly find themselves facing irreconcilability and perturbation.

In fact, you may have already noticed their mistakes and observed their attitudes, apparently thoughtless or immature. However, you have not seen the obstacles and tears, anxieties and anguish at the origin of the domestic drama that drains their forces, and of which you devise only a glimpse of the end result.

How many of us are heavily fettered with the guilt acquired in previous lives? How many commitments have we neglected so far, which now demand our attention and restitution?

Yet, when facing each other in the domestic arena on Earth according to the mandates of reincarnation, we commonly evade the opportunity of solving our problems and paying the debts we contracted.

A duty is a responsibility, no doubt, but on many occasions we do not have the necessary strength to carry it out.

And if we sometimes find understanding and generous human creditors in the world, who wait for us patiently, what may we expect from our Lord, whose justice is founded on grounds of infinite mercy?

If you find yourself happy within your matrimonial bonds, it is sensible not to encourage what you perceive to be a misbehavior, although our perception is not always correct; nevertheless, do not censor your fellow beings who find themselves under the flogging of trials and domineering imbalance.

On the contrary, pray for and bless them without denying them the support and understanding they need. Like us, they also rely on the goodness of God; and with respect to the adjustment of our obligations towards the directives of love, none of us right now here on Earth is capable of knowing for sure whether today is not the day we will receive assistance rather than provide it.

JUSTICE AND MERCY

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

If we do not accept the idea of reincarnation, can we logically admit to God's justice? Or would we rather reject God Himself, ignoring Him or even denying His existence? The thesis of reincarnation is a challenge to Western peoples where the idea of a single existence prevails as a result of long religious tradition. Nowadays, however, scientists devoted to solving psychological issues, which assault more and more individuals, are dedicating their investigations to this research field.

Would it be possible to obtain scientific proof of reincarnation within the strict methodological requirements of science? Ian Stevenson, [former]⁹ director of the Department of Neuropsychiatry at the University of Virginia in the United States—who is neither a spiritist nor a reincarnationist—examined more than 500 cases of possible reincarnations, and reached a few interesting conclusions. His book, *Twenty Suggestive Cases of Reincarnation*,¹⁰ contains two cases of reincarnation observed in Brazil.

There are also scientists in Russia who are interested in this topic. Professor Vladimir Raikov¹¹ from the University of Moscow is one of the leading researchers of “extra-cerebral memory.” Professor H. N. Banerjee,¹² who was among us [in Brazil], is the best known of the Indian researchers. Such worldwide scientific openness in the field of reincarnation reveals that the problem has already left the religious scope. The very existence of researches on this topic in academic environments addresses the questions about the methodological problem. In fact, the current scientific progress towards metaphysics, or at least parapsychics, has changed and will keep changing the rigorousness of the methodological dogmas, making it possible to clarify issues that, until recently, were considered outside the scientific scope.

⁹ [TN] Ian Pretyman Stevenson (1918–2007) was a Canadian-born American psychiatrist who investigated the paranormal and researched the concept of reincarnation, for which he became known internationally. He worked for fifty years at the University of Virginia School of Medicine.

¹⁰ [TN] STEVENSON, I. P. *Twenty Suggestive cases of reincarnation*. University of Virginia Press, 2nd ed., October 1, 1980; revised and enlarged. 396pp. ISBN-13: 978-0-81390-872-4.

¹¹ [TN] Vladimir Leonidovich Raikov (1934–2007) was a Russian psychiatrist and psychotherapist.

The family crisis, which is only one concern among many of the general predicaments affecting contemporary societies, finds a satisfactory explanation when it is analyzed in the light of the reincarnation principle.

Quarrels among couples, rebellious children, imbalance of other familial elements may all have their origins in preterite lives. In fact, this is what brought Ian Stevenson to initiate his investigations on reincarnation, according to his own statements. As he could find neither reasonable explanation nor acceptable theory to explain the strange misbehaviors in the homes of several of his clients, the renowned [Canadian-]American neuropsychiatrist courageously decided to accept the theory of reincarnation as a valid hypothesis to be evaluated. The insistence of psychographed messages related to reincarnation and their consequences are not, therefore, absurd. Emmanuel's message, considered herein, finds support among the current interest from scientists on the topic of reincarnation.

¹² [TN] (Sri) Hemendra Nath Banerjee (1929–1985) was an internationally acclaimed Indian parapsychologist, a friend and contemporary of Ian Stevenson.

CHAPTER VII HAPPINESS

HAPPINESS ON EARTH

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘Our conversations converged towards the main theme of happiness on Earth. As our study session began, the subject was approached with great enthusiasm by all our friends.

The Spirits' Book provided question 921 for the ideas in question about the topic. When we finished our activities, it was our dear spiritual friend André Luiz who concluded the comments with the page *Intimate Peace*.’

Note : *The spirits advise in question 921 that earthly happiness is relative and that it depends on us. Kardec stresses that “individuals deeply convinced of their future destiny do not see in their corporeal existence anything more than a fleeting journey. We are punished in this life for the infractions we committed against the laws of corporeal existence, for the misfortunes resulting from such infractions, and for our own excesses.”*

INNER PEACE

André Luiz

Keep always:

- ...trust in God and in yourself;
- ...a serene conscience;
- ...time spent on productive matters;
- ...a constructive speech;
- ...a prayer allied to work;
- ...hope in action;
- ...an industrious patience;

...a dispassionate opinion;
...the blessing of comprehension;
...a participation in everyone's progress;
...a compassionate attitude;
...truth enlightened by love;
...oblivion of evils;
...happiness in your commitments;
...unconditional forgiveness of offenses;
...a devotion to study; ...a gesture of kindness;
...an encouraging smile;
...spontaneity to assist others;
...simplicity of habits;
...a spirit of renovation;
...fostering of tolerance;
...courage to place yourself second to serving;
...and perseverance in goodness.

Let us maintain similar personal traits in our daily experience and we will acquire the science of inner peace; and with it the privilege of finding happiness in the execution of our duties in an atmosphere of love.

THE HAPPINESS PLAN

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

It is easy to live; but to exist is rather very difficult. Plants and animals live effortlessly. Human beings cannot merely live; above all things, they also need to exist.

The existential philosophies confirm the spiritual thesis in supporting that the individual is an existent entity in our present time, a being who consciously exists; and they do so now as a philosophical novelty. We learn in Spiritism that life is infinite, but the successive existences on Earth and in other material worlds are finite. Those philosophies state that human beings are born with a predestination, that they are complete at birth, but that they have to overcome themselves during their existence and transcend their human condition. Spiritism teaches us that this transcendence is the objective of our successive existences.

This ought to be enough to show us that the spiritist philosophy anticipated the philosophical thought of our time and transcended it in revealing another form of existence, the perispiritual one, that of life after death, in which the spirit is observed to exist in the spiritual body or perispirit.

Human transcendence stages, which Jean-Paul Sartre¹³ denied in his existential philosophy but most existentialist philosophers support as being real, are available to human knowledge as Kardec demonstrated through scientific research. Today, the physical sciences are confirming it on their own. The two most important pieces of evidence, both irrefutable, were established by parapsychological researches, in the case of the extraphysical nature of human beings, and by Soviet physicists and biologists, with the discovery of the energetic body or bioplastic body of human beings.

¹³ [TN] Jean-Paul Charles Aymard Sartre (1905–1980) was a French philosopher, playwright, novelist, literary critic, biographer, and political activist.

With the problem of life on Earth approached under these circumstances, we can easily comprehend that earthly happiness is a question of human adaptation to our existential conditions, which does not represent a mere adjustment because the need for transcendence is the actual main condition to be considered.

In the spiritist light, human beings are not simply existent entities, but inter-existent beings, that is, individuals who live alternately in two existential forms: the material and the spiritual. To attend only to the existential demands would mean to be complacent, as stoicism would have had it. It is also necessary to see to the requirements of the spirit that reside in our own consciousness. Thus, the inter-existence is a form of balance.

The plan for happiness that André Luiz presents to us is a veritable technical work. The sequence of propositions is perfect and each item deserves special study. “Confidence in God and in oneself” implies the theme of divine faith and human faith stated by Kardec, and the following proposition is derived from its accomplishment in us: “a serene consciousness.”

Those propositions, analyzed individually and as a sequence of events, would result in a book we could label “The Technique of Existing.” Spirits do not communicate with each other in vain. Their messages must be read and meditated upon with attention and profoundness.

CHAPTER VIII – UNCONDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

PARTISANS OF MOCKERY

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘Albino Teixeira’s page may have originated from a subject that often concerns us in the field of spiritual work.

Before our customary meeting, we talked among a group of close friends

about less responsible individuals who look for mediums devoted to the spiritist cause with the intention of spoiling or demoralizing the good work, rather than engaging in a fair collaboration towards the dissemination of the realities and blessings of the spiritual life.

Mediums are at work, sometimes listening to tens, even hundreds of people. These spiritual servants are imbued with the greatest will to serve without any intention of remuneration or selfpromotion. Among sincere individuals who come to them in search for guidance and support, there are fellows whose intent is disruption and irony. The mediums are there carrying out their responsibilities to educate, cooperate, clarify, and serve, while being clearly supported by the indirect protection of the good spirits, the messengers of the higher life.

The partisans of mockery turn up in the guise of individuals in need. They make up names for hypothetical relatives and friends, and charge their voices with affliction and sorrow that they do not actually feel. The mediums are moved, and personally respond with good intentions towards support, be it through a sentence or a written note addressed to the person in grief. In such cases, the mediums are human workers attempting to collaborate with the good spirits in the assistance of those who seek them without even asking for their identity. However, as soon as the mediums provide whatever service they can, these partisans of mockery come out of their guise and reveal everything to be a hoax of their own creation.

We applied ourselves to our duties of the evening with this concern in mind. As *The Gospel According to Spiritism* was opened, we landed on items 1 and 2 from chapter XXI. At the end of the meeting, Albino Teixeira, the devoted missionary of goodness, wrote through us the page that I now send to you.'

THE GREATEST DIFFERENCE

Albino Teixeira

What makes you stand out the most on Earth for the purposes of spiritual promotion towards a superior life is not so much:

- ...having been reborn in a mutilated or ill body;
- ...bearing serious psychological conflicts; ...residing in a difficult household;
- ...becoming agitated because of troublesome relatives;
- ...enduring frustrations and setbacks;
- ...experiencing public sarcasm;
- ...counteracting unfair criticisms;
- ...tolerating humiliations and injuries;

...standing insults or unbecoming accusations;
...experiencing abandonment from collaborators and friends;
...fighting incessantly against one's own inferior inclinations;
...finding yourself under constant obsession;
...or facing obstacles and disillusion.

What singles you out most efficiently in the physical plane and before the higher life, for your improvement and perfection towards the Greater Spirituality, is your ability to undergo similar trials as those listed above whilst carrying on your work and service on behalf of others for the prosperity of eternal goodness.

THE VALUE OF ASSISTANCE

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

The value of assistance is not in the intention of the person who asks for it, but in the intention of the individual who gives it. Those who work for the general good must give unconditionally. As Albino Teixeira teaches us, what matters in the higher life is what we do for the general good. If those who seek us bear venom in their hearts, have minds filled with unfair suspicions, and utter deceit in their speech, it is evident that they are the ones in direst need. After all, can there be any larger need than the one that ignores itself?

If the superior spirits do not warn the medium against the malice of the consulters, it is because these individuals should be helped and the medium must learn to assist even when being deceived.

The outcome of a good action is reckoned by evolution. The mockery partisans of today will evolve tomorrow, and they will become ashamed of themselves.

We must consider that Earth is still a stronghold of ignorance. Shifty consulters ignore the extent of their evil deeds; so much so that they search for truth in a pack of lies. They do not understand the importance of the mediumship process and therefore cannot properly appraise what they do. They act unconsciously when expressing their own consciousness. Could there be a greater alienation than this one? Mediums, on the contrary, are in full control of their consciousness towards goodness. Here, could there be any greater moral integrity in human behavior?

Does it matter if the consulter boasts of having deceived the medium, the consultee? Are mediums not human beings, and therefore, fallible? Do mediums want to enjoy infallibility or have any privileges in their human

condition? Mediumship for the general good is a learning process like any other. If mediums believe they are infallible, they teeter on the brink of failure. **It is better to fail among human beings or before human beings for the sake of love than to fail before the Greater Spirituality as a result of vanity and pride.**

Sincere and noble mediumistic work is not affected by a few trying episodes. The benefits sown through dignified work are not depreciated by slander and ignorance. Those who received the good they needed will know how to multiply it around themselves. After all, large are the cries of those who suffer and paltry is the smirk of the partisans of mockery.

It is the duty of every medium who is in the service of goodness to carry on the good battle, following the example of Paul of Tarsus.

MESSAGE TO HAMILTON

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

The reporter Hamilton Ribeiro asked the spirits for a prescription on behalf of a person who did not exist and whose address was equally fictitious. Francisco Xavier psychographed on the occasion “We will attempt to cooperate spiritually on your behalf in agreement with the spiritual friends who assist you. May Jesus bless us all.”

Hamilton closed his news column with the question “What should we think about this?” The answer is evident; the message was for him. This is the rule and Francisco Xavier has explained it several times that if the name of the person for whom something is petitioned is false, the spirits answer on behalf of the petitioner.

CHAPTER IX – WORK AT ALL TIMES

INQUIRIES

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘I could not tell how many questions gravitated round the souls of our fellow companions before our services that night.

What reason for the infirmities, sometimes without an explanation? How to deal with the disillusion brought up by friends whose friendship seemed otherwise everlasting? How to interpret the organic difficulties, and even certain mutilations at times, in intelligent creatures?

How to overcome the problems that line up in the existence of every creature on Earth as if each problem were waiting for the previous one to be solved

only to appear in its turn?

The execution of the evening proceedings started for our group amidst this atmosphere. When *The Gospel According to Spiritism* was opened, it provided items 3 and 4 of chapter XXV to our consideration, and it was our friend André Luiz who wrote the page for the evening, entitled *Do Not Fear*, which I believe was a note of consolation and warning to the general state of our minds regarding the constructive struggles of everyday life.'

Note : *The items of The Gospel According to Spiritism mentioned above teach us that work is a natural demand for the evolution of humankind, and that the spirits do not come to exempt us from the effort of solving our own problems, but simply to show us “the goal we have to reach and the path that leads us to it.”*

DO NOT FEAR

André Luiz

'Do not be afraid; just have faith,' says the Lord.

Believe in harmony, justice, truth and goodness.

We are free and under the protection of watchful laws.

God does not excuse Himself.

Therefore, whatever happens to us is always the best that we are capable of receiving.

In many instances, the unexpected infirmity of the body is an anticipated assistance to the needs of the soul; the deserting affection is an amputation in the emotional world so we may survive through the most useful works we may be performing; the thwarted wish is providence against invisible danger; the organic inhibition is an obstacle to the use of our energies in nonconstructive tasks; financial losses are short notices so we may not fall into irredeemable debts; and material penury is a challenge so we may be encouraged to work.

Do not be despondent in the trials that life has brought you.

Earth is a schooling opportunity in whose lessons all of us are both students and examiners of each other.

It is possible that you are feeling overwhelmed by the siege of many problems today; yet, if you tend to the instructions of love, which trace the right path between humility and service, you will find the exact course of action that leads to the solution of everything.

However, for such an accomplishment you must not stay in the corner of

inertia, collecting stones and thorns that may weigh your heart down or wound your soul.

Forget all that has been sadness or imbalance, and embrace the system of edifying action that renews our destinies.

All individuals who have fought and won, all who have fallen in the shadows and risen again towards the light, suffering, struggling, building, and renewing, have never stopped working.

ANSWERS

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

The answers to the questions asked by Francisco Xavier's visitors were given by André Luiz who, indubitably, made use of new words and novel forms of expression to address the spiritist teachings regarding the purpose of human life on Earth. The spirits of the Lord are good teachers and do not tire themselves of repeating the lessons to inattentive students, approaching them from different perspectives that they may eventually reach general understanding. The earthly school is guided by the pedagogy from heaven whose fundamental method is love.

In his studies about the human personality, the famous English psychologist Frederic Myers¹⁴ found that our consciousness is divided into two essential parts: the supraliminal and the subliminal.¹⁵ He came to this conclusion in his spiritist studies, confirmed by his hypnosis-based research. The supraliminal consciousness is the one we use in the world, which is adapted to the material demands of life. The subliminal consciousness is the one destined to the spiritual world, where we will have to live after death of our physical body.

¹⁴ [TN] Frederic William Henry Myers (1843–1901) was a poet, classicist, philologist, and one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research in 1883. In partnership with Charles Richet, his contemporary, he studied psychic events, particularly those produced by the medium of physical phenomena Eusapia Palladino. His work would have a great influence on Carl G. Jung.

¹⁵ [TN] MYERS, F. W. H. The subliminal consciousness. Proc. Soc. Psychical Res., v.7, nn.18-20, pp.436-535, 1891-1892.

We may understand consciousness as a sphere split in two, an orange sliced into two halves. The cut is the threshold. The half that lies above is what Myers called the supraliminal; the one residing below is the subliminal. The upper part is filled with questions about life and death, the lower part contains all the answers; life in the world is an educational process and in order to learn we must face many problems and attempt to solve them.

In the subliminal consciousness—the lower part—we store the learning we have accomplished through many reincarnations. But this learning is not complete, and that is why we return to the earthly school. When a difficult trial challenges the supraliminal consciousness, the other side, the subliminal part or the one below the threshold, comes to its assistance with resources from past experiences.

However, the subliminal consciousness—the lower part— is the one in contact with the spiritual realm, adapted to that world in contrast to the earthly plane. Therefore, parapsychology today shows that extrasensory perception comes from the unconscious. And it is by means of this inner and deep consciousness that spirits assist us with their intuitions. As we meditate on this, we better understand the lesson from André Luiz, which states that “Earth is a schooling opportunity in whose lessons all of us are both students and examiners of each other.”

CHAPTER X – PATIENCE
APPREHENSIONS AND CONFLICTS
Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘A large number of disillusioned brothers and sisters gathered almost serendipitously during our evening duties. Many came from towns far away, but they all presented the same concern: apprehensions and conflicts.

We had a friendly discussion about the multitude of choices presented to us in life. When the meeting started, The Gospel According to Spiritism offered us the comforting pages of item 7, chapter IX, for analysis and reflection on the theme of patience.

Fraternal Reminder was the message we received at the end of our activities.’

FRATERNAL REMINDER

Emmanuel

How many times you ask for guidance in the experiences of life!

You frequently appeal to the Spirituality, weighed down by afflictions and disappointments, as if crushed by stones of despair. However, on most occasions, the divine remedy to overcome such concerns is already enriching your experiences in life.

Who among us ignores the imperative need for patience during the unsettling circumstances that assault us in our evolutionary journeys?

Such a simple recommendation this is, one would object, that this reminder

expresses nothing else but the obvious, so preordained to everyone in their evolution as the humdrum of daily life itself.

However, that which is evident is not always the easiest to accomplish.

The practice of good is an indispensable light in the pursuit of happiness. We all know that. Nevertheless, who among us can kindle it without effort?

Spontaneous assistance to others is a safe foundation. That is irrefutable. Yet, how long will we spend on the complete learning of such message?

In every obstacle to conquer and in all shadows to extinguish, let us engage patience in the service of the heart. Patience applied to tolerance and understanding in all the trials and struggles that the world presents to us.

Progress may vertiginously follow the avenues of intelligence on Earth when it comes to the material nature of our realizations. However, without the lubricant of patience in the machinery of our relationships with each other, the speed in the physical world will frequently do nothing but dry out the gears of life, precipitating us, rather often, towards instability or disaster, fatigue or perturbation.

If you aspire to find safe directives that may guarantee stability to your home or social group; if you aim at being the most efficient at the work entrusted to you; if you really want to support your beloved ones, and if you effectively want to live with tranquility and produce abundantly, cultivate patience during moments of tribulations and problems that recur on your path, whatever they are, for it is only through the constant exercise of patience that we will find within us a peaceful territory in which we will edify the everlasting kingdom of love.

IN THE COURSE OF LIFE

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Emmanuel reminds us that the course of life demands care and attention. The signs from such transit resemble those from vehicular traffic. When we face a green light, we may advance safely albeit not without being vigilant. When the yellow light of anxiety appears, we should wait. However, when the red light of impatience violently blocks our way, we have but to stop, look attentively to both sides, examine the way ahead and behind us, inspect our position, and avoid engaging ourselves in protestations and complaints. This is true for traffic, after all, it must have its rules so everyone may transit safely; and confusion in traffic can only harm ourselves and others.

We live in the century of speed, and we do not appreciate losing time. However, Emmanuel warns us that speed dries up the gears of the vehicle. The unpleasant screeching noise from the engine translates into anguish and affliction when related to the vehicle of the body in its friction against the expectations of the soul. We might fall into instability, provoke a disaster, and surrender to fatigue or disturbance, all because of lack of the lubricant of patience, which we may obtain for the low price of a little bit of tolerance and understanding.

We become agitated because the hours drift by quickly and life is short. But the more restless we are the more we speed up the hours and shorten our life. The word patience has its origins in the Latin expression *patientia*, which comes from *pati*, to suffer, to endure suffering. Maybe this might help us understand its meaning. If we do not calmly tolerate that which makes us suffer, or those who make us suffer, we become remiss with respect to common sense and charity. Those who make us suffer are suffering themselves, whether as a result of their ignorance or malice, and in either case we owe them the moral duty of fraternity.

We do not live in isolation, but rather in society, so if we want peace and happiness we must assist others in finding these attributes. This task is not easy, and we do know it. Job himself, a symbol of patience, cursed and blasphemed during his trials. But patience is an achievement that we must reach through understanding and love. Those who do not love have no patience and tolerate nothing.

CHAPTER XI – SOCIAL INTERACTIONS, PERSONAL GROWTH FACING OBSTACLES

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘The page I now send to you was received during a meeting at a friends’ house. Many of the companions present there highlighted the obstacles they believed we face in life; difficulties in finding tranquility, the right job, prosperity, and joy in life.

How should one behave in order to find the true road to success? We talked about many solutions that common experience suggests in order to eliminate such problems in life when one of the attendants reminded us of the opportunity of praying as a group to seek inspiration from our superiors.

Thus it was that we prayed and subsequently sought the support of The Spirits’ Book, which offered us question 768 for our studies. After a brief conversation, our friend André Luiz wrote, with our participation, the

aforesaid page I hereby send to you, taking into consideration its possible publication with the help of your comments.’

Note : *Question 768 of The Spirits’ Book deals with the need of a social life for development of human faculties. Kardec remarks “No individual possesses faculties in their entirety and it is through social union that individuals complete one another.”*

SUCCESS AND WE

André Luiz

You are your own thought in motion.

We are all children of God and, wherever we are, we are all in His heavenly presence.

The supreme law of life is the well-being of everyone.

Focus exclusively on goodness and your imagination will work as a powerful lens in magnifying the idea of the assets that enrich your life.

Words are a creative force.

Attach kindness and understanding to the speech when expressing yourself and your word will do wonders.

Accept the law of progress.

Contemplate the tree you plant and you will witness the directive of evolution.

You are capable of being loyal to your love and ideals, and should keep yourself so; however, you will not achieve happiness without improving yourself.

Let us learn from the spring that, in spite of winding its way without deviating from the essential organization of its current, always moves forward in a constant flow towards its own goals.

The task in your hands is similar to a given enterprise whose clients partake of its dividends.

Your success will always be determined by the size of the service you provide.

Erase from your mind and conversations any ideas or words that might establish condemning or depressing images.

Our existence is comparable to a ladder and we are all capable of using the rungs that take us to higher grounds.

Never despise others, neither look down on yourself.

No one exists who is useless or unimportant in the divine work of creation.

Provide assistance in the name of goodness as much as you can and in any possible way in order to keep a serene conscience.
You will receive a hundredfold of everything you give.

Make God your mentor, your companion, your friend and your partner, acknowledging that it is your duty to mirror yourself in God as much as God is reflected in you through His Laws.

Give of yourself to the duties that Divine Providence has entrusted upon you in your daily routine by practicing goodness with the oblivion of all evils, in observance of the laws of the Creator; and your own work will do the rest, bringing you success and safety, peace and happiness with blessings from God.

THE STAIRS OF GOODNESS

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Sartre's sentence is well known, "Hell is other people." However, André Luiz proposes the opposite: "Heaven is other people." When we understand well the need for social life, we learn that the obstacles are rungs of a ladder we must climb. Such obstacles are precisely the other individuals for they are the ones who deny us the benefits we wish to attain, who try to divert us from our paths or use us as instruments for their personal gain at the expense of our own accomplishments.

But if we are in the physical life to develop our faculties and learn how to overcome difficulties, it is evident that obstacles are resources of which we avail ourselves for our improvement. An obstacle race is a valuable training ground to an athlete. We are nothing but athletes of the spirit developing our skills during life.

An athlete develops muscles, agility, and equilibrium. The spirit advances the intelligence, thought, understanding, and love. But without others along the way, we would not have the opportunity of practicing. As it is, we are forced to find other means of behavior to the extent of our failures in social relationships. Therefore, when we treat others as our brothers and sisters, as opposed to adversaries, we are able to overcome the obstacles.

God is supreme goodness and the others represent rungs of the ladder that leads us to Him. By thinking of God and promoting goodness to others we will be climbing the stairs to true success. We must nullify today the consequences of the evil we embraced in the past for those reactions are what entangle us. Let us learn presently to do good to others and the Creator will

reciprocate with the good of others on our behalf.

CHAPTER XII – BUDDING LOVE

WARS AND AFFLICTIONS

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘Attended by many companions, the central theme of our public meeting was question 745 of The Spirits’ Book. The expounders talked about the distressing pictures of past wars and on-going events in the world today. We were reminded of some leading figures in many human conflicts. All our present friends became eventually engrossed in the subject, thereby contributing different opinions to the discussion.

Our dear Emmanuel wrote the final minutes of the evening in *Peace and Love* at the end of our meeting.’

PEACE AND LOVE

Emmanuel

Remember those who walked the world before you, working and assisting, so that life would be better.

On the contrary, let us contemplate that there are but ashes left of those who instilled hate and vengeance in themselves, persecuting their own brothers and sisters... These individuals walked the terrestrial paths disseminating widowhood and orphanhood. They quite often donned gold and purple, but left in their wake the unfortunate marks of mourning and oppression. They were considered conquerors; yet, they disappeared, leaving misery and death in their footsteps.

However, those who bequeathed you with the hospitable place in which you now dwell in the world, have plodded along, suffering and blessing, pardoning and serving. Consider every good asset you possess in your soul, and you will recognize that the loftiest ideas spout from your mind like inspirational springs in the form of mosaics of light, pouring forth directives from the memories of the assets those individuals left you.

Here, it is the parents’ devotion guiding your first days; there, it takes the shape of tolerance from benefactors who supported you at school; over there, it assumes the guise of a friendly heart who gave you the blessing of affection in the form of trustworthy advice; it is also the love of those who departed to the higher life leaving you trust and tenderness; and occasionally, further still, it is the child who, returning the empty cradle to you after a short stay, now offers you the yearnings for immortal life through kisses of tenderness.

Do not be afflicted from having acquired large tasks.

Thank all who provided you with testimonies of peace and love with which you in dream of interweaving into a better future, and do not become despondent in your edifying and constructive work.

The Lord does not expect the impossible from us but hopes that, today already, we might be the word that consoles, the silence that understands, the fraternal embrace that incites the courage in sadness, or the assistance to those who wander in abandonment.

The flames of restlessness sweeping the Earth are actually still very intense. Note, however, that no one demands from you any wonders capable of redeeming the world from one moment to the next. Neither does God ask us for feats of greatness. Wherever you are, offer whatever brick of love you can provide for the building of peace, and give your glassful of cold water to put out the fire of the human afflictions.

THE BRICK OF LOVE

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

A man builds his house one brick at a time, which is destined to be his retreat in the world. Within it, he will attempt to develop the intuitions he brings from the spiritual life, during patient formation of the home in the loving companionship of a wife and children. The home is his nest of love. It is the adequate environment to germinate the heavenly seeds sown by God in his heart. The solitary and stone-hard ego, which symbolizes individualization, will be broken much like the slabs of a sidewalk are cracked by the serene and soft power of the grass.

Initially, the woman, who attracts that man by means of biological magnetism, and later the children, who seize him with the bonds of affinity, naturally force the expansion of his selfishness, which is love in the form of a seed, encased in itself. And like the seed, his ego bursts open the enclosure, and through the cracks of its shell love begins to germinate. It is the process of socialization at the incipience of its development. From the home, love will expand to the relatives, the social environment, towards humanity.

But before it reaches the superior degree of the boundless love that was taught by Jesus, the developing plant will attach itself to a wall or fence, like a thorny vine, in the defense of its stronghold. This is the phase of sociocentrism, of one's attachment to the familial and social nuclei, whereupon others are perceived not as our equals but as strangers.

Reincarnation will be responsible for breaking this barrier. And from one home to the next, human beings will finally open themselves up to the universal profusion of love.

CHAPTER XIII – THE INTEREXISTENT BEING ENCOUNTER IN PRAYER

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘The message *Life and Courage* was born from a gathering of friends at which I was present. We were talking about the difficulties and tribulations that challenge us in the execution of our duties concerning the necessary spiritual accomplishments for our progress.

How many companions deviate from the devoted activities to which they were initially dedicated in the realm of faith, in spite of continuing to believe in the spiritual truths! And how many others distance themselves from their own lives in despondency! As we alluded to this scenario, someone reminded us of the benefits of group prayer as a way to seek inspiration from the Superior Life.

The prayer was said by one of our companions, followed by our opening of *The Spirits’ Book*, which provided question number 643 for our studies. We exchanged ideas about the topics broached therein by the instructions of Allan Kardec.

At the end of our brief spiritual moment in prayer, our friend André Luiz wrote a message about courage and accomplishment through our intermediation, which all of us present at the study session agreed to have delivered to your hands in the hope of seeing it among our publications next to your doctrinal annotations in order to broaden the scope of enlightenment on behalf of us all.’

Note : *Question 643 refers to the practice of goodness in our daily life. The spirits state that we can achieve it at every moment, and they add that “doing good is not only being charitable but also being useful as often as possible, whenever assistance is required.”*

LIFE AND COURAGE

André Luiz

There is neither evolution nor elevation if individuals do not accept themselves for whom they are in order to do the best within their possibilities.

As a matter of fact, those who have neither ever erred nor suffered are still at the first stage of development in matters of experience.

No progress has ever been made or ever will be without risks.

Pessimism is an obstacle to spontaneous creation. One's concern about sacrifice with respect to accomplishing the best that is possible is to forestall the march forwards.

To work in the service of goodness is to participate, and to participate is to live courageously.

All those who safeguard themselves excessively against obstacles and provocations end up escaping from duties they are bound to develop.

Spirits who collaborate to the edification of general happiness do not feel irritated when insulted; they resemble sowers who, in preparation to fill up the cellar, are not aggravated by the debris in the soil that receives their dedication.

In the accountancy for the general good, the imperfection that works for the assistance of others in the process of enlightening the soul is more commendable than the indolent virtue that is afraid of vanishing.

Collectively speaking, as spirits still connected to Earth, all of us assemble into a vast flock of creatures in evolution. However, those bereft of courage to think, act, and renew themselves when the drove stampedes or halts will remain for a very long time in a repetitive cycle, for without courage to be ourselves, acting and cooperating towards accomplishing the duties that life ascribes to us, we will neither find progress nor be useful to anyone.

TO BE AND TODO

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Everything is yet to be accomplished in life. What we have already achieved is only the beginning of our duties. Being and doing are two sides of the same coin. Those who are, do; those who do not, are not.

We may recall Aristotle's doctrine of actuality and potentiality.¹⁶ We are within ourselves the energy of what we must perform. But it is only through action that we become transformed, renewing ourselves in the lively reality of our destiny, in the act of living. Existential philosophers consider today that, for human beings, life is the potential that becomes fulfilled in the act of

existing. Therefore, to exist is to live consciously, striving ceaselessly in the pursuit of transcendence.

The message from André Luiz touches on an essential aspect of Spiritism: its existentialist aspect.

Contrary to common thought, existentialism is not a superficial current of modern thinking. It is an effort to understand the being through its existence, a human quest undertaken through human actions.

¹⁶ [TN] Potentiality (or potency) and actuality are principles of dichotomy that Aristotle used when analyzing motion, causality, ethics, and physiology in two treatises *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *Nicomachean Ethics* and *De Anima*. Potentiality, in his context, refers to the potential or the “possibility” that a particular phenomenon is said to embody. Conversely, Actuality is the concretization of the potential or possibility, that is, the motion, activity or change that the phenomenon brings forth during its manifestation.

This examination is extended and intensified in Spiritism through the principle of successive existences.

Human beings beget themselves by performing their duties in each existence. If they deem themselves complete or incapable of action, they do not transform life into act, they do not exist.

Plants and animals live. Life accomplishes its task in the plant and animal kingdoms by means of the simple act of living. But there is consciousness in human beings, which surpasses the mere act of living and demands spiritual achievements.

Human beings can neither vegetate nor live based on animal instincts. The consciousness embodies its own instincts, designated spiritual instincts in *The Spirits’ Book*. These require from individuals a definition of living in the course of fulfilling their aspirations. Only in such manner does the individual become an existent, which is defined as interexistent in Spiritism, a being that exists between two worlds.

This is why human beings must accept themselves as they are by becoming aware of their deficiencies, their flaws, so they may give their best and possibly exceed themselves. The existential philosophies, which characterize the philosophical thinking of our time, confirm this point of view and offer us new elements to better understand them. [If the reader wishes to learn more about this topic, the book *The Being and Serenity*¹⁷ (*O Ser e a Serenidade*) is a must-read. We cannot indicate another at the time since none other [yet] exists.]

¹⁷ [TN] PIRES, J. H. *O ser e a serenidade. Ensaio de ontologia interexistencial* (1960). Paideia Editora, São Paulo, Brazil, 4th 2. [This book is not yet translated into English.] In this work, the eminent professor, journalist, and philosopher José Herculano Pires redirects Existentialism to its spiritual perspectives with mind-gripping wisdom and reasoning. From a romanticize reflection upon serenity, the author delves into the ontological-existential problematic in order to open up a new fighting front for the existentialist battle which he termed Interexistential Existentialism.

**CHAPTERXIV – PERSEVERANCE
APPREHENSION AND DESPONDENCY**
Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘The evening duties were preceded by several allegations of apprehension and despondency during our struggles in life today, as voiced by dozens of friends who visited us. There were many sad episodes, many trying circumstances.

The Gospel According to Spiritism presented us item 19 of chapter XXIV for our study. And Emmanuel, our spiritual friend, complemented the lessons of the evening with the page *You Will Win*, which he wrote with our assistance.’

Note : *The item cited in chapter XXIV is a brief comment from Kardec about the teachings of Jesus, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” The comment highlights the spiritual meaning of this passage from the Gospel, reminding us that on Earth we confront the necessary vicissitudes for our spiritual development.*

YOUWILLWIN
Emmanuel

Do not be discouraged. Persist a little longer.

Do not cultivate pessimism.

Focus on the good to be accomplished.

Forget the suggestions from destructive fear.

March forward, even across the shadow of your own mistakes.

Advance even if amidst tears.

Work continually.

Edify always.

Do not allow the frost of disenchantment to numb your heart.

Do not be susceptible to difficulties.

Convince yourself that victory is a daily achievement.

Do not give up patience.

Do not believe in accomplishments without efforts.

Apply silence to insults.

Oblivion to evils.

Forgiveness to offenses.

Recall that aggressors are infirm individuals. Do not allow unbalanced companions to destroy your work or snuff your hope.
Do not belittle the duties your conscience demands of you.
If you have made a mistake somewhere along the way, readjust your perspectives and seek the right way.
Count neither successes nor failures.
Study with the intention of learning.
Do not turn yourself against anyone.
Do not dramatize trials or difficulties.
Maintain the habit of praying so there might be light in your inner life.
Safeguard yourself in God and persevere in the work He has entrusted upon you.
Love always, doing for others the very best within your possibilities.
Act with assistance.
Attend without attachment.
And in this manner you shall win.

THE VICTORY TECHNIQUE

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

We all know that life is a struggle. We are on Earth neither to suffer nor to enjoy, but we are here to succeed. We fight against the environment, the maladjustments of society, diseases and incomprehension, human malice, the aggression from the elements, and the negative spiritual influences; but we fight especially against our own deficiencies, our ambitions, and our selfishness. Discouragement assails us when we feel wronged, forgotten by God, or when we are under trials that do not afflict others. It is the moment our selfishness manifests itself through the insurrection of our pride.

The example of Jesus should remind us of the technique for victory. He accepted his cross without owing any debt, and he prayed to his Father on behalf of his executioners at the supreme moment of the undeserved sacrifice. Would any among us, even those apparently more evolved, consider themselves more worthy of God's attention than Jesus? He did not ask us to take our cross and proceed alone, but rather to follow him. Such is the case because he marched ahead of all of us, bearing the burden of a cross he never deserved. His mission was to transform the world, to save humans from evil, and to free them from selfishness, which made them arrogant and merciless. His technique was not that of revolt, but one of resignation and faith.

There is no doubt that faith may waver in the human heart when it is faced with difficult challenges, especially when this faith is only emotional, not rational. However, human beings who have already learned that life has a

purpose, an objective, and that the trials in life correspond to the evolutionary needs of each one of us, must have a more vigorous faith.

Amidst the maelstroms of difficulty in life, let us remember that all released forces invariably tend to settle down towards the natural equilibrium. Everything in human life is temporary, nothing remains forever. Why should we despair when the gale blows if we know it will inevitably pass?

Emmanuel reminds us yet of the power of love, the greatest of all powers, which we can use to our defense. Our trust in God, for God is love, as John the Apostle taught us, and knowledge of the Law of Love, must assist us in such times of affliction. We have nothing to fear if we use these resources of the victory technique. Those who surrender and succumb are defectors.

CHAPTER XV – STRUGGLES AND DIFFICULTIES

A POINT OF STRUGGLE

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘We spent a few hours with companions from distant cities before our usual meeting. The subject of inner-transformation was the main theme among several topics debated in our discussions. We spoke of our difficulties in comparison to the standards of our redeeming doctrine.

We know what we must do, we are aware of the difficulties in performing our responsibilities—I speak here particularly for myself—however, there is always a struggling point within us, wherein we see how large the work is to accomplish our inner transformation.

We discussed the issue with sincere motivation in the hope of arriving at a solution to the problem when we were called back to our tasks for the evening. The meeting began with question 660 from *The Spirits’ Book*.

The poetess Maria Dolores concluded the evening meeting with the poem *Confession and Prayer*.

CONFESSION AND PRAYER

Maria Dolores

Lord Jesus!

While I prayed, even today,
asking for assistance and inspiration,
a voice descended from high above
and to my heart spoke in contemplation:
“God created us all to become
a living temple of endless love,

peaceful stance for the tired dove,
a portal to goodness, open to light,
that now and then is filled with essence
of treasures of peace and benevolence
in the service to all regardless of plight...
It is thus, oh! Jesus, that I beg of you:
Build anew my diminutive soul...
between battles that come and go,
as I further mirror the simple structure
that neglect ruins and leaves to rupture. But accepted I am in such poor state,
ruin'd building with bored foundation,
a scanty roof with missing slates,
and moldy walls in degradation...
Contemplate in me the burdens I till,
laden with errors and misunderstandings,
unhappy scrapheap of insane landings
under the immense weight of the regrets I feel.
Let pain remove the weight of sorrow
so teach me, Lord, thus to embrace it
as the cloudy night nurtures the star all lit
to escape the marring darkness it once borrow'd.
It matters not my forgotten soul in strife
through blows of affliction that I now abide.
Trim my heart, cleanse my pride,
I wish myself anew in the pure air of life. Let me wrestle and suffer before the
light above,
with you, oh! Lord, and in you may I be thereof
a patch of peace always in the field of hope,
a refuge of faith, a blessing of love 'n scope."

THE TRENCHES

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

We need to take to the trenches; however, we cannot seize them with bayonets or tossed grenades. Our battle is that of the sun that moves forward in beams of light, destroying darkness and awakening life. The point of struggle to which Chico Xavier alludes is the last stronghold, the trench deeply dug in the ground. The beams of light wash over it without penetrating its depths. Nevertheless, its flashes illuminate it every now and then, and if we persevere in our struggles, we will reach its inner core, shining light into its dark bottom as the sun reaches its zenith.

There is something in this appropriate expression of Francisco Xavier—point

of struggle—that recalls the known expression from Victor Hugo: *point d'optique*.¹⁸ For Victor Hugo, the stage was the point of sight at which the expression of life was concentrated in the theater. For Francisco Xavier, the point of struggle is the secret place in our inner core where the most resilient residues of our past are concentrated in an apparently irreducible manner.

¹⁸ [TN] Victor Marie Hugo (1802–1885) was a French poet, novelist, and dramatist of the Romantic Movement, and he is considered one of the greatest and best known

Every great battle from a specific sector of our spiritual renovation ends up in this seemingly inexpugnable trench. The Spirits' Book teaches us in question 660 to resort to prayer at these difficult moments, not with an excess of words but with an assuredness of feelings.

Maria Dolores comes to our assistance by providing an example through her prayer in the form of poetry. She does not tell us how to pray but prays herself, revealing her faith in verse-like supplications. As we analyze these verses, we note that in her poetic pantheism, Maria Dolores once again uses situations from nature so that the lessons of God may touch our hearts and awaken our reasoning through those conditions.

Such a prayer, overflowing with pure sentiment and confidence in God, is worth more than the recitation of memorized litanies uttered mechanically and repeatedly. We are not all poets to be able to express our anxieties in such a spontaneous poem as this one. Nevertheless, we all have feelings and we are all able to stimulate the source of faith to educe a sincere plea. And so shall we spur the sun of our faith to reach its zenith and pour out its light down into the trenches, eliminating the last point of struggle in our inner conflicts.

French writers . According to Victor Hugo, “The theater is a point of optics. Everything that exists in the world, within history, in life, in humans, everything must and can be reflected upon, but under the command of art.”

CHAPTER XVI – LITTLE IS PREFERABLE TO NOTHING HOW TO ACT?

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘Before the spiritual tasks of the evening, we discussed with several friends visiting our institution the circumstances in which we often find ourselves unable to act as we would have liked towards the practice of charity.

On many occasions, we are compelled by our duties to give beyond our means in terms of quantity when, in fact, we possess very little for ourselves. In other situations, our experience demands from us an attitude of tolerance to

avoid propagating the perturbation, an attitude that we are not capable of implementing at once.

Sometimes we want to spend time with others and bring joy to them, but we end up achieving only the least amount of it to prevent other individuals from becoming impatient. How should we act in these cases?

We were talking about this subject when the time for our doctrinal meeting came upon us. For the evening studies, *The Gospel According to Spiritism* offered us an examination of questions 5 and 6 from Chapter XIII, in reference to the widow's mite. At the end of the meeting, after the remarks made by several companions, our dear Emmanuel brought us the page *Better This Way* through psychography.'

BETTER THIS WAY

Emmanuel

It is time you offered your cooperation in the assistance of others and, as a rule, you wished you could donate the most of yourself according to the circumstances. However, if this cannot be so, give the little that you do possess, to the extent of your wishes, for it is better to offer one's very least than to deny oneself to provide assistance altogether, closing the doors to love towards others.

If a challenge to humility rises ahead, you will surely entertain reason for such an enterprise for its ability to show an angelical understanding to those who appraise your spiritual progress. However, if you are not capable of implementing it, do not exempt yourself from this or that minute gesture of tolerance. There is more fairness in articulating a meager impulse of sympathy than in abandoning fraternal assistance altogether, for the latter would consequently give passage to unfettered aggression when confronted by offenses and hardships, which are essentially nothing else than manifestations of the infirmities and imbalances in the behavior of others.

Should you not be given the opportunity to offer a day's work to companions who are needier than you are, offer them an hour to their benefit whenever possible, for it is more beneficial to spend only a few minutes in the execution of good works than to exempt yourself from it, which would arrest the ideal and trust in goodness in our companions of experience and journey.

Whenever you find yourself unable to experience happiness, in instances of crisis, and you see yourself without any other choice but to externalize a humble smile on behalf of those around you, do so for this modest smile will

be worthier than uttering a less agreeable word that might plunge others into desperation, thereby aggravating the problems of those around you who presently beg for your support and understanding.

Encourage the well-being of others as a guarantee for your own. When you cannot provide everything that you desire and as much as it is expected from you, offer at least what is within your means because absence of the best that one can do is an opening for the worst that may possibly happen. Therefore, the smallest sum of goodness will forever be a light dispelling the darkness that always collects where there is no goodness at all.

A CHALLENGE TO HUMILITY

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

We are being constantly challenged in the field of experiences in life. Emmanuel's expression, wherein he defines the present situation as a challenge to humility, requires more attention on our part. According to the passage in the Gospel, the poor widow was challenged in her humility at the temple in Jerusalem, as she observed the rich lay down great sums as offerings. However, she responded to the challenge in a positive manner, depositing there her humble contribution.

On another occasion, after the Sermon on the Mount, the famished crowd that pleaded for food challenged the humility of the apostles of Jesus. The apostles could have exempted themselves from assisting when the Master asked for what little they had in their haversacks by alleging paucity of their resources. Yet, they did not waver in providing the few loaves of bread and pieces of fish of their poor meal, which Jesus then multiplied to satiate the hunger of the people.

We are quite often challenged by individuals seeking our assistance when they present needs to which we cannot tend. Nonetheless, if we are humble, we will be able to give at least a little to alleviate the misery. And if we give our little morsel while mentalizing our Master, maybe the miracle of the multiplication will once again take place, for if we give in spirit, we will be giving more than the simple material mite.

The same is also true for the sorrows, afflictions, and sufferings of others. How often we are sought by those amidst such deeply rooted sorrows that it is beyond our means to extricate them from their abyss of agonies! However, if we elevate our thoughts to the Master and provide them with whatever is within our possibilities, perchance our words, albeit unpretentious and insecure, may bring them relief in the form of understanding and consolation.

In our vanity, we wish to utter miraculous words, but in truth, it is through our humility that we are really able to promote the miracle of divine assistance.

The challenge to our humility is also an invitation to faith. If we become cognizant of our weaknesses and inadequacies, we will also understand God's supremacy and magnificence. It is not rational to wish to solve someone else's problems when we are not capable of addressing our own. It is vanity and pretension to exhibit a superiority we do not possess. However, if we admit to humility to recognize who we are and to do solely what is within our means, our mite, whether material or moral, will be like that of the widow: it will weigh more than those from the rich.

CHAPTER XVII – WORDS, PORTRAIT OF THE SOUL VERBAL BEHAVIOR

Francisco Cândido Xavier

'The discussion preceding our public gathering was approached from many different perspectives, particularly how we might improve our verbal communications with the companions around us. Such was the atmosphere at the time and several answers were given here and there.

Many of our companions affirmed that it was necessary to highlight evil by illustrating its aggressive tendencies in order to eliminate it. Others declared that it was essential to grant complete freedom to swearing so individuals could lose their inhibitions. Still others claimed that individuals must verbally jettison any thought in their mind in order to be free from its impressions. And another group ascribed to the need for control of our verbal abilities to promote our education in life.

As the meeting started, *The Spirits' Book* presented question 919 for study. At the end, our spiritual friend Albino Teixeira joined us with his message.

Note : *Question 919 from The Spirits' Book refers to the most efficient means for us to improve ourselves. The answer is given by Saint Augustine, who emphasizes the importance of a daily examination of our conscience regarding what we did and said during the day.'*

SELF-PORTRAIT

Albino Teixeira

We are drawing our own portrait whenever our speech censures, explains, raises, belittles, debases, extols, devastates, restores, complicates, assists, supports, hurts, blesses, or condemns whomever it might be.

This consequence is true because someone's attitudes, thoughts, ideas, emotions, plans and intentions consist of someone's reality, whose true origins we cannot penetrate, so whenever we make a reference to others we are inescapably creating a partial or complete projection of ourselves.

THE FINAL BLOW

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Albino Teixeira wasted no time. In the confusion that ensued about human speech, he swiftly put across his remark and dealt the final blow. Nothing else did he say, nor was he asked to address. The decisive message hit the center of the target. Words are a projection of the soul. We speak of what is in our hearts, as the adage goes.

In his book *Thought and Life*,¹⁹ Emmanuel explains the mechanics of speech, which goes from perception to sensation to emotions, and from the latter to thoughts and verbal expression. As such, colloquial knowledge is accurate for words are born from the heart. We think what we feel and we say what we think.

Saint Augustine says in his answer to Kardec that God placed enemies at our side as mirrors for they say what they feel about us without the merciful veil of friendship. Albino Teixeira considered the words as either a partial or complete self-portrait. Both show us the importance of words as a means of revealing who we are. Our enemies give us their own portraiture in the offenses directed at us, but also as a distortion of the self-portrait that we showed them through our words.

Cursing as a means of catharsis or relief is not simply that; it is also a declaration of the ignominy we carry within us; and confession is not enough to expunge the shame. We must not forget that the modern theories of disinhibition originate from materialist psychologists, who understand nothing of the soul and cogitate about psychic problems based on organic reflexes. Current parapsychology itself condemns such psychological approaches that do not include a soul, which have lost their purpose as Prof. Joseph Rhine²⁰ points out; he classifies those psychological methods as mere ecological studies, those of a relationship between the individual and the environment only.

¹⁹ [TN] XAVIER, F. C.; EMMANUEL (spirit). *Thought and Life (Pensamento e Vida, orig.)* (1958). Roundtable Publishing Ltd., London, U.K., 1st English edition, 2013. 112pp. ISBN-13: 978-0-9564493-5-1.

In the other extreme, we have the pharisaism of deceitful speech, sweetened to such an extent as to become nauseating. Neither too much bitterness nor too much sweetness; the correct dose is halfway. It was for this reason that Jesus taught us ‘All you need to say is simply “Yes” or “No”; [anything beyond this comes from the evil one.]’ Our speech must be sincere, avoiding extremes; especially since words carry strength. If we become accustomed to using negative words, they will drag us in the torrent, leaving us each time worse off than ever. However, if we become used to good, sensible, and resolute words, they will consolidate what is best in us and help us improve further.

²⁰ [TN] Joseph Banks Rhine (1895–1980) was an American botanist. His studies however, led him to found a scientific approach to research in parapsychology, as a branch of psychology.

CHAPTER XVIII – THE RIGHT MEASURE OF CONSOLATION

FROM EMMANUEL’S FILES

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘We were travelling rather far from home when a group of people approached us. They were friends under trials of great difficulties who asked us for a few moments of prayer even though our transport was waiting to take us to our duties some distance away. All the same, we prayed for a few minutes and looked for instructions in *The Gospel According to Spiritism*.

Once we opened the book, item 12 from Chapter V brought us to meditation and an exchange of ideas, which we did in the short time we had available to us. There was no opportunity for a psychography, but serendipitously, our friend Emmanuel allowed us to take a message from his file of communications, which had been received sometime before. And that was the page named by our spiritual benefactor as *Hidden Blessings*, which proved to be so suitable for that moment that we decided to place it in your hands, as we all agreed to ask for your continual assistance in having your precious annotations added to it and published in *O Diário de S. Paulo*, if possible.

In the certainty that your esteemed friendship will address us with the usual attention, and thanking you in advance, I remain as usual sincerely in your debt.’

HIDDEN BLESSINGS

Emmanuel

We all need comforting in times of affliction.

That is fair. However, it is important to acknowledge that Divine Providence

does not give us difficulties without a reason. As we understand that the Lord never leaves us to our own weaknesses, neither does He allow the burdens we may carry to overpower our strength, let us refrain from using consolation like a sterile flower.

Let us make good use of the calm that follows the inner storm to retain the lesson that suffering offers us.

We obviously do not propose to praise the troublemakers or those who create setbacks. However, it is imperative that we take notice of the hidden advantages within all the hardships that reach us.

Who would be able to guess to which depths our less responsible friend would have taken us, in whom we had fully confided, had he not made us drink the bile of disillusionment that unveiled our eyes until then closed to the truth?

Who would be able to measure the quagmires of discord in which our spirits would have wallowed, had it not been for the disappointments and struggles faced by our workgroup, which taught us the need for an indispensable harmony on the path ahead?

In many cases, ingratitude is the name of the blessing with which God's infinite mercy distances a beloved one from us so that the person might not lead us to an imbalance by means of distorted affections.

In the dictionary of reality, and on several circumstances, hindrance will take the meaning of the invisible support that prevents us from falling prey to haste and unproductiveness.

To weep and suffer exclusively for the sake of lamentation and desperation would be merely avenues of descent towards despondency and rebelliousness.

To weep and suffer, yes, but only as instruments of readjustment, elevation, improvement, and development.

Our trials, our blessings.

Contemplate the greater evils that would have assuredly befallen you had you not received the providential help from the minor evils of today, and you will recognize that every setback that is accepted with serenity is a personal touch of God's hands warning your heart and showing you the way.

THE CUP OF BITTERNESS

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

The difficulties and disappointments that appear in our path are not created by chance. They resemble arrows drawn by a bow towards a target. They have a direction, which we must understand; and they bring us a message, which we need to decipher. The cup of bitterness cannot be turned away, as it was the case even for Jesus, because the disillusionment it brings is actually the remedy we need to free us from greater evils.

If friends and companions betray us today, turn against us rather often in inexplicable and unjustifiable ways, and are heedless of how much we have assisted them on so many occasions, what would they be capable of tomorrow? It is only better that they should offer us the cup of bitterness as soon as possible, the acrimony of disappointment. Earthly life is short, as it is taught in the item mentioned from The Gospel According to Spiritism, and we quickly pay off old debts, which would otherwise take us centuries to settle in the spiritual life. Many people complain that betrayal comes from relatives and friends, from one's own colleagues at work. But where else could it come from if not precisely from those who walk next to us?

God writes straight with crooked lines, says the wellknown proverb.

Emmanuel writes: our trials, our blessings. For spiritists, the experiences in life always have a concealed meaning no matter how tragic they may seem, which is the hidden blessing described in Emmanuel's message. It is in Spiritism that the thesis of Divine Providence is validated and proven, showing that the hand of God outlines the path of our evolution. Human beings may propose a path, but only God can effect it;²¹ human beings err, but God sets them right again. It would be absurd to protest against the providential measures dictated by God on our behalf. It is better for a tumor to burst than for its infection to spread out to the whole organism.

²¹ [TN] The related expression from the original text is the Latin phrase *Homo proponit, sed Deus disponit* from Tomás à Kempis (1380–1471), a German medieval Christian monk and author of *De Imitatione Christi* (Imitation of Christ) in 1418 wherein the phrase was used.

CHAPTER XIX – THE OBJECTIVE OF PRAYER FOR WHAT ELSE SHOULD PRAY?

Francisco Cândido Xavier

'We were discussing the characteristics of prayer before starting our duties. If Divine Providence gives us everything so we may learn to work and produce, what else should we ask for from God? Such was the question some

companions put forward...

Other individuals emphasized the opinion that our prayers should simply remain focused on an expression of gratitude. Once the studies of the evening began, The Spirits' Book provided question 660 for our analysis. After the remarks made by those present at our gathering, our spiritual friend André Luiz brought us a prayer through psychography, which I now send to you.

The companions interested in the analysis of the prayer written by André Luiz make this request so that it may be published together with your observations and notes.'

PRAYER TO AVOID DISTURBING OTHERS

André Luiz

Give me in your mercy the gift of being content with what I have so I may accomplish the best that I can.

Teach me how to do one task at a time within the scope of my obligations so I may not waste the value of time.

Free me from haste and insecurity so I shall not procure unnecessary afflictions regarding the future, neither shall I give myself to idleness in the present.

Give me the strength to wait patiently for a solution to the problems that concern me without troubling the path of those next to me.

Help me forget about myself and assist me in performing at least one good deed each day for the benefit of others without my letting anyone know about it.

If such and such a companion annoys me, guide me to overlook what has happened without letting those around me become aware of the issue in question.

Teach me not to condemn no matter who it is, and succor me when slanderous or malevolent thoughts come to my mind so I may have the means to dissipate them in silence through efforts without an accompanying outward expression.

Compel me to silence every complaint with respect to the trials and obstacles in life so I may not disturb those who share my path.

Help me to maintain a pleasant demeanor, such as that of a guiltless spirit, to

speak in a soothing voice, to uphold good manners, and to lose the habit of imposing my ideas or contradict others without need.

And assist me, Lord, to live within the directives of my duties and commitments, working and serving, so I may not trouble anyone.

THE DYNAMICS OF PRAYER

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

In the process of liberation from the animal instincts through development of reason, human beings gradually extricate themselves from the divine control, which that guides individuals according to their physical needs in the same manner that it directs all the other beings of the creation. In freeing themselves from the power that used to rule them, human beings become their own masters.

God grants all individuals free will so they may learn the difficult science of discernment and may develop the sense of personal responsibility. This is what the biblical allegory of Adam and Eve teaches us with their eating of the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge. It was then that Adam and Eve discovered how to tell good from evil and therefrom should learn how to guide themselves.

When our children reach the legal age for emancipation, they become free from our parental ruling and begin to guide themselves. Nevertheless, this situation does not imply that they will be capable of disregarding our advice, warnings or assistance. Should they behave so, they will be prone to mistakes, sometimes critical, from which we naturally wish to protect them albeit not always successfully.

God gives us everything, but we do not always understand the value of these dispensations. In an effort to continue helping us without harming our intellectual and spiritual development, God placed in our hearts the law of love, which is described in The Spirits' Book. This law is the moral foundation of religions, whose aim is to reconnect us with God. Prayer is the spontaneous means of communication of which we can avail ourselves to address our Father. It is also the means by which we can be reconnected to those individuals who moved away from us on other paths in this world, or those who crossed over the frontier of death.

The dynamics of prayer implies a question and an answer, a request and a concession. Even when the request is absurd, God answers us in accordance to our real needs, and within the realm of what is possible. What is important

for us is not to disengage ourselves from God of our own volition, similar to the proud and pretentious child who no longer wants to hear parental counsels and warnings. When we stray from the path as a result of our vanity and pride, we always end up disturbing others because the law of interdependence rules sovereignly in social life. This is why André Luiz answers our questions about prayers with a plea to God that we shall not disturb others.

CHAPTER XX – TRIALS AND HARDSHIPS

REQUESTS FOR HELP

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘Before our meeting began, there was one individual among the group of friends who visited us, who said he felt insecure and weak regarding the obligations to which he had committed himself. He claimed to be imperfect and that he felt overwhelmed by worries. He lamented having reincarnated in an environment of extensive trials and complained against himself, claiming that he had embraced faith in Jesus but could not find the means to feel happy about himself.

He asked for a discarnate benefactor to assist him.

Once our tasks began, The Gospel According to Spiritism provided item 3 of chapter XVII to our examination. At the end of the meeting, our friend André Luiz wrote the following page through our assistance, a page that was dedicated to the companion who had asked for guidance with loving candor.

We all agree to ask for your doctrinal remarks to be added to the message from our spiritual benefactor as his words have encouraged us to carry out our duties.’

A BROTHER’S MESSAGE

André Luiz

Let us ponder on the list below in the interim:

- ...you do not experience organic obstacles;
- ...you do not face inner conflicts;
- ...you live exempt from temptations;
- ...you experience an environment of immutable peace;
- ...you do not have troubling members in the family;
- ...you do not face obstacles at home;
- ...you do not encounter disagreements within your social group;
- ...you do not enter into conflict with demanding friends...
- ...you have never experienced loneliness;
- ...you travel the world without a worry;

...you have not handled crises of a personal nature;
...you have never felt the presence of despondency or affliction next to you...
...you do not have to make an effort to keep your friends;
...you do not meet with adversaries in the tasks that life has reserved for you;

...you work without the criticism of others who might issue remarks and expose your spirit to discussions and disharmony at your place of employment; and

...you do not experience setbacks and grievances that drive your heart towards needed renovation now and again.

If any item on this list of trials is unfamiliar to you, you are elsewhere from your path to evolution.

These events happen because it is precisely through problems and struggles that we accomplish the victories of the soul here on Earth.

Remember that human beings would not actually understand the voice of a luminous high-order spirit alone. Therefore, without listening to the words from individuals who share their experiences with us, and receiving their cooperation, it would not be possible for any of us to make an effort towards our evolution.

FIELD OF TRIALS

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Earth is a field of trials; and human life is a stage of apprenticeship on this field. We have trials and hardships, which are different from one another. Trials are means of learning whereas hardships are consequences of our past, atonement of the mistakes we made in previous lives. If we are here, it is because we need these experiences; and if we are aware that we requested our trials and tribulations while in the spiritual world, then we should understand that we asked for them because our need was dire.

Guided by the good spirits, the incarnate spirit sees its inferior situation in the spiritual world with exactitude; and it knows that its true and definitive world is the spiritual not the earthly one. The struggling spirit understands that earthly existence is temporary and that its sole objective is to prepare the interexistent for the true and permanent life. When on Earth, the spirit is not entitled to complaining, and it must face its problems and be grateful to God for the opportunities of acquittance, reparation, and progress that are granted.

If the incarnate spirit does not proceed in this way, it is because it is entranced

by the illusions of the physical plane, which causes it to lose the spiritual vision of its real objective during corporeal life. However, sincere prayer is a resource that the spirit has at its disposal to ask for assistance from the friends on the other side. And every sincere prayer, every legitimate request, soon receives its answer through intuition, a warning that seems to derive from the spirit's own consciousness, or even through a friendly message conveyed by the human telegraphy of mediumship.

No one comes to Earth to enjoy perfect happiness, which we can only experience in the spiritual world or in the superior worlds of the infinite cosmos. Happiness on Earth consists precisely in having the opportunity to face our trials and atonements with strength and determination, and without lamentation as The Gospel According to Spiritism instructs us in the item mentioned above. As Jesus taught us, truly happy individuals are only those who are successful in the world towards their elevation to the superior stances of the true life, which is the spiritual one.

CHAPTER XXI – SPIRITIST EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘Emmanuel’s favorable opinion regarding the development of spiritist education in its several aspects elicited great interest from the readers according to the excerpts from Francisco Xavier’s interview. Many of them actually asked us to clarify the last section of the conversation which was unfortunately truncated in its final, published form.

We decided to return to the issue in an effort to address all pertinent requests and we display here the previously abbreviated part, which is really of the utmost importance. Our readers will in this way become well acquainted with the position of the Superior Spirituality concerning educational issues within the spiritist environment.’

AS EARTHLY BEINGS

Francisco Cândido Xavier

The answers below, marked with [A] were given by the medium Francisco Cândido Xavier to the questions [Q] asked by the interviewer:

[Q]: ‘What do you think, Chico, or Emmanuel, of the organization of courses or even of university degree schools of Spiritism for a more comprehensive study of the many aspects of the Spiritist Doctrine?’

[A]: ‘It is another form of education. If we manage to organize such courses with the required respectability, with a true spirit of commitment from those in charge of starting them so that continuity is maintained; if we manage to find such apostles of persistence to maintain these blessings, then we must start such enterprises as soon as possible for the so-called empowerment of the spiritist idea and the strengthening of the cultural values of our doctrine.’

[Q]: *‘I believe that without due preparation of spiritists to carry out this task, whose accomplishment escapes us at the moment, we will not be able to fulfill our duty as spiritists in the future. Is this true?’*

[A]: ‘Emmanuel says that we are going to experience a phase similar to the one described by our friend [here], when we will have to face that issue with a spirit of great realism. And to do that we must forget the less constructive heritage from traditional religions, which have nurtured us for many centuries, which we deeply revere, but which do not address our tendencies and desires for spiritual progress. In this case, we must consider the human side of the Spiritist Doctrine. Spiritists are neither angels nor delinquents; they are human creatures. Spiritists are in neither heaven nor hell; they are on Earth. We are earthly beings. And as such, we will confront our issues in order to resolve them; and we will create courses to study those ideas as human beings.’

THE SPIRITIST CULTURE

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Two things became very clear in this excerpt from Francisco Xavier’s interview: (i) that courses on Spiritism are necessary and courses at a university level should be organized “as soon as possible;” and (ii) that the superior method of spiritist education has for its goals the “empowerment of the spiritist idea” and the “strengthening of the cultural values of the doctrine.” These are literal statements from Emmanuel through Francisco Xavier, as we see above.

Those excerpts belong to a recorded interview with the medium carried out in Uberaba²² on the occasion of the first anniversary of the TV show *No Limiar do Amanhã* (The Dawn of Tomorrow). In the second excerpt, which starts “Emmanuel says...”, the interviewee received confirmation from Emmanuel regarding his opinion that we are at a historic phase of development of the spiritist culture in the world, and that it becomes necessary for us to develop an interest in creating spiritist schools of higher education whose aim is to provide teenagers with a spiritual foundation upon solid cultural bases.

When referring to the human meaning of the Spiritist doctrine, Francisco Xavier digressed somewhat in order to state the importance of seeing spiritists, especially mediums, advocates and spiritist leaders, as human beings rather than angels. When he returned to the educational issue, he emphasized that point again, showing that we are “earthly beings” and in need of courses to study the doctrine as “earthly beings.”

Such emphasis on the cultural-spiritist problem somewhat addresses the erroneous or misleading thinking of those who intend to restrict spiritist education to its spiritual components, as if we were not incarnated on Earth and did not have to absorb the culture of the world together with the spiritist culture for the latter to illuminate and widen the scopes of the former.

²² [TN] Uberaba is a city in the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil where the medium Francisco Xavier lived for many years until his passing back to the spiritual world.

Spiritism cannot be seen as a divine doctrine, disconnected from the earthly cultural context. This is why we “must forget the less constructive heritages from traditional religions,” as they have already established a detrimental division between the religious and the worldly cultures. Spiritism is not only a spiritual revelation, as Kardec explained, but rather a double revelation, both divine and human, which intertwines within a unique historical process and represents a moment of synthesis in the cultural evolution of human beings.

A spiritist school of a university level would establish a fusion between human knowledge and that provided by the science of the spirit through Spiritism. Such institution of higher education, which would consist of regular courses to shape the “new human being,” could not function randomly, subjected to the eventual availability of dilettante professors. On the contrary, it would need a teaching staff that is organized upon established professional backgrounds, much in the same way that a spiritist hospital must rely on the services of professional doctors and nurses lest it fails to fulfill its objective. Thence Emmanuel’s statement that “we need to face this issue with a spirit of great realism.”

TRUTH AND LOVE

Emmanuel

Although we all effectively move towards the living light that is supreme truth, how many lessons until we reach it are actually necessary for us to be free from the shadows?

Only love can safely guide us so we may learn the right path towards the

eternal realities.

All of us here on Earth—incarnate and discarnate spirits alike, we who are still bound to this planet—constitute a single family on its way to immortality. However, how many of us may have already had or might still have the need of support during the long evolutionary expedition?

Some individuals believed that affection required violence to establish itself and fell into criminality, mutilating himself while attempting to do so to others.

Others believed themselves strong enough to oppress the destiny of their brothers and sisters, and strained themselves beyond their limits in excesses of power, scrambling the brain and wasting precious time during infirmity and in recuperation.

Still others contracted huge debts, enslaving themselves to complex situations from which they will have to spend immense efforts to break free.

And yet others deluded themselves with the idea of respite and happiness without a foundation of responsibility, and as a result, they have temporarily lost the ability to reason, going astray into labyrinths of spiritual blindness.

In reality, all of them, our brothers and sisters, must be readjusted and healed before they may be able to continue with the journey ahead. However, to accomplish this task, it is not enough to shake them with condemnatory statements regarding the devastations and struggles they experience.

It is imperative for us to dispense them care, assistance, treatment and understanding.

So far on planet Earth, and generally speaking, we are much more like elementary school students or patients in an asylum than anything else.

It might be impossible for us to accomplish a readjustment and acquire enlightenment without mutual understanding and support.

There surely are worlds in the cosmic vastness that coruscate, wherein creatures have already become enlightened, intermingling with the splendor of the suns in which the excels realities of life are modulated. However, so far on Earth, and very likely for many centuries still to come, despite our duty to an unremitting worship of the truth, the issue of our personal adjustment and readjustment will have no solution in the absence of love.

THE HUMAN SOLUTION

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

The message that Francisco Xavier offers us from Emmanuel's deliberations demands attention to be accurately understood. Let us not be deceived by its apparent simplicity and clarity. Its central theme is the pursuit of truth in the light of love. However, it is not enough to simply seek the truth; it is necessary to pursue it with love, establishing a balance between reasoning and affection.

Our inclinations to analytical thinking have led us until now to establish arbitrary divisions in the process of knowledge. We mandate the coldness of reasoning at the expense of the warmth of affectivity. Therefore, on the one hand, we have achieved great scientific and technical evolution, but on the other hand, we have observed the most legitimate aspirations of humanism disappear after being suffocated by the utilitarianism of the century, and we are now threatened by a moral catastrophe.

The eternal realities can be perceived by the mind, by reasoning, but they can only be reached and experienced with the support of love. Rational research, in itself, is sterile and fragmented. We wished to escape the excesses of mysticism so much that we fell prey to the radicalisms of reason. The light of love, which should transform Earth into a paradise, became an appendage to the senses and to animality, from which we cannot free ourselves.

Let us recall the allegory of Plato's cave.²³ We have become enslaved, shackled in a dark cave, facing a wall onto which the shadows of moving figures are projected by a lit fire behind us. Hence the mistakes mentioned in the second part of Emmanuel's message, errors that sow imbalances and apparently unsolvable conflicts, which demand from us corrective measures, treatment, and understanding.

The situation of human beings on Earth resembles that of an elementary school student subjected to didactic requirements, tests, and exhaustive exams. But it may perchance resemble more the situation of patients in an asylum undergoing painful treatment, electric shocks, and a regimen of prescription medication. How can we get out of such a situation? How can we find a human solution to resolve all these conflicts for more efficient management?

²³ [TN] The text refers to Plato's cave, also known as Allegory of the Cave, Analogy of the Cave, or Parable of the Cave, which appeared in Plato's work, *The Republic*. In it Plato discusses the effect of education and the lack of it in our nature by likening people untutored in the Theory of Forms to

prisoners chained in a cave, who are unable to move or turn their heads. The wall right in front of them is all they can see, onto which shadows are projected. Immediately behind the prisoners there is a raised walkway with a parapet along which puppeteers can walk, displaying animals and objects, whose shadows are cast on the wall by a fire that burns even further behind. The prisoners are ignorant of all that is behind them and are only able to see the shadows cast upon the cave wall in front of them. Scholars have analyzed the Allegory of the Cave from several aspects.

The only solution is that of mutual support and reciprocal understanding. It is useless to engage violence in our struggles, condemnation of those we consider to be in error, bitter criticism and harsh argumentation. Readjustment and enlightenment will only come when we learn to love our fellow humans and face them with brotherly affection as opposed to hatred and loathing.

The theory of the plurality of inhabited worlds offers us the promise of superior worlds, of cosmic civilizations where human beings are no longer shackled in the darkness of a cave contemplating projected shadows on a wall, but who are, instead, enlightened by solar splendor. But alas! How very far from such superior worlds we are still, and how much there is to advance in order to become worthy of them.

There is no doubt that we should seek the truth with diligence, avoiding illusions and deceptions. However, we will not be able to find a human solution without the light of love in human relationships and scientific pursuits because human beings are not objects—we are spirits, psychic vectors, harmonious structures of sentiments and thoughts. Only through understanding and actions based on this concept will we be able to find the human solution.

CHAPTER XXII – THE INNER SANCTUM

FACING THE PRESENT

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘Before our meeting, current events in the world prompted us to engage in long conversations about the survival of humanity in relation to world peace. We recalled the wars from the past and the current conflicts, and we attempted to figure out what our behavior should be like in such great contemporary trials.

How should we act against insecurity? How to ensure tranquility and the existential values? Such were the questions in our minds as we initiated the scheduled studies. The Spirits’ Book offered us question number 738 for analysis and many people commented on the topic.

At the end of our activities, our dear Emmanuel wrote the page that I now

send to you on behalf of our friends and my own, requesting your cooperation so it may be published as a combined manuscript with your comments.

Note : *Question number 738 referred to above deals with the problem of wars, the destructive catastrophes and the situation of humankind in such events. The spirits remind us of our spiritual nature, which is immortal, and therefore not affected by such material destructions.'*

SHELTER

Emmanuel

Individuals may each build their own shelter during the great calamities that break out on Earth.

As a rule, we treat as shelters a small apportioned amount of indoor space that is assigned for services of protection and security in the world.

Nevertheless, despite the respect we have for such places, to which crowds of people flock in times of crisis in pursuit of selfpreservation, we understand that no individual is safeguarded from a thrombotic episode, cardiac arrest, nervous collapse or emotional breakdown, not even if secluded in a safe stronghold, materially speaking. We are forced to recognize that in any difficult situation, far beyond privileged locations, we require inner support to experience serenity and discernment, a fortress wherein we may collaborate with dignity to suppress external turmoils whilst preserving our inner peace.

However, we will not achieve such peace by fleeing from reality, but rather by confronting it through constructive action in order to unveil and make use of all its lessons.

We will never have a safe haven by hiding in deserted beaches, within iron bulkheads, stony dugouts, or inside natural crevices.

The actual shelter of each one of us is deep inside ourselves.

The certainty that we are not alone in the regions of the universe, the trust in the survival of the spirit after death, the faith in the wisdom of life, the acceptance of one's duty to practice good, and one's dedication to order are all very important resources with which to build a serene conscience.

In view of such truth, do not be afraid of the gales of unrestrained passions when tempests of renewal upset the Earth.

Remain calm and trust the Higher Power that has breathed the essence of life

in you. Tranquility, however, does not imply inertia, but rather defines the inner state of individuals who prepare themselves to do their best regardless of what the circumstances might be.

Pray while working and wait in constructive activity.

And on all circumstances, let us all be convinced that the invulnerable shelter is always within ourselves when we accept the responsibility of living based on the justice and compassion of God.

MORTAL REMAINS

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

There are many inappropriate expressions in human language. When we speak of the deceased, or those who have passed away, we give death an absolute meaning that it has never possessed. It is not the human being that comes to an end upon death, but only one existence of the immortal being, during its fleeting sojourn in the physical world. Incidentally, the intuition of eternal life has also created some very appropriate expressions. When speaking of mortal remains, we put the issue of death in its rightful terms: remains, nothing else but the remains of a biological process through which the actual human being frees itself from its animal cover.

How much safety may we expect to have within such fragile bodily armor? Which stronghold can offer us assurance of preservation against danger? In which type of refuge may we escape death? These questions notwithstanding, such guarantee we look for outwardly is actually within ourselves, in our very nature as immortal beings. Life appears to be extinguished with death, but the real life is never destroyed.

Development and deterioration comprise the two poles of the physical existence. True life, however, remains unaltered before the former and beyond the latter. We bring within us this concept as a latent truth, but we need to transform this notion into an action in our consciousness in order to overcome the illusions of what is ephemeral. It is useless to cling on to a life that wanes with every passing minute. We call this behavior a positive attitude when, in fact, positivism is precisely the opposite, that is, the certainty that nothing can exempt us from physical death.

But we have a task to accomplish in this brief existence, nonetheless. We must learn to trust the spirit, and for such we need to develop our spiritual abilities. Egocentrism exaggerates the instinct of self-preservation, but wars and catastrophes crush our selfishness and force us to come out of ourselves

and become capable of heroic virtues that elevate us beyond ourselves. This is what Christ taught us when he said that whosoever wanted to save his life would lose it, and whoever lost it on behalf of one's love for the truth would save it.

Death is not the end. We will never be deceased. Death is only the passage from a perishable condition to the unfettered state of true life.

CHAPTER XXIII – THE KNOWLEDGE-FAITH ALLIANCE

TIME OF DISBELIEF

Francisco Cândido Xavier

'During our conversation, our visiting friends reported on the large number of individuals who show indifference to religious faith in our times.

They included among those individuals some companions of our faith who, although still supported by spiritist-Christian convictions, turn away from doctrinal activities.

We focused particularly on those companions who claim to be distanced from the idea of God, who declare themselves atheists, and the ones who state their preference for the condition of materialists to that of religious persons, spiritists, mediums, or doctrinal instructors, since they retain the inherent flaws of human nature.

We also discussed the case of so many who claim to be in disbelief as a direct result of the scientific discoveries of our time.

After these preliminary considerations, we began our studies of the evening with question 148 from *The Spirits' Book*, which inspired many constructive comments. Emmanuel wrote the page *Materialism and the Present* at the conclusion of our work.'

MATERIALISM AND THE PRESENT

Emmanuel

We find companions in several religious groups who profess to be overwhelmed with disillusionment, wherefore they withdraw from faith, claiming to be prepared to live without God.

To live without God implies for them the dismissal of the rules and obligations that curb our inferior impulses and impose on us the duties of self-education.

They proceed in this behavior believing to be happier by having arrived at such resolution. However, no one has ever been known to have reached inner peace, the fundamental foundation of happiness, in such manner.

The explanation resides in our consciousness, which takes up much more room within us than all the other structures that constitute our body and soul.

Concerning our physical vessel on present-day Earth, it is possible to transplant bodily parts; even certain organs may be removed without damage to the individual's existence. However, there is no surgery capable of reaching the forces of the consciousness. It is possible to alter or anesthetize functions of the brain, the seat of such forces, therefore temporarily preventing their manifestation, but any sedation of a mental field that is not allied to a scientific criterion for therapeutic or curative effects will always result in an imbalance, to which the victim will return by selfanalysis in order to conduct the appropriate readjustment.

None of us was created for irresponsibility.

It is also important to note that we are not as naïve as to acknowledge that it is enough to believe in God for us to feel like angels as opposed to human beings.

This is why we become aware of ourselves in those situations of debts, flaws, imperfections, deficiencies, and less fortunate inclinations, which still characterize our individuality.

Nevertheless, it is much better to accept ourselves for who we are as well as embrace others for whom they still are, whilst working for the general well-being under the inspired trust in God, than to declare ourselves against Him under the pretext of virtue or superiority, thereby descending into rebellion or hatred, violence or avarice, envy or criminality, alcoholism or drug addiction, frenzied sexuality or delusions of intelligence.

Some might say, and quite reasonably so, that millions of companions congregate in favor of materialism in this century. However, they all remain restless and insecure, seeking peace and happiness without any success. This situation inevitably happens because every time we rise against God, we choose in favor of confusion in our own lives.

Let us pray for the serenity of the companions who distance themselves from the temples and offices of religious faith for if they so choose to flee from God, alleging obstacles and tribulations in the real path towards the superior

life, they will experience the confrontation of much more serious difficulties throughout the unknown landscape to which they have ostracized themselves. Let us proceed vigilantly concerning the duties entrusted upon us, resolutely convinced that those fellow companions who pretend to escape from God still remain in Him due to the impossibility of their living without their own consciousness. They suffer with the absence of a deeper closeness, with the chores that allude to the inspiration from God; they yearn for their return to faith and trouble themselves with thirst for inner harmony, all reasons why every one of them will eventually return to the discipline of the laws of God.

TIME OF FAITH

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Human beings do not become materialists as a result of research and scientific progress, but rather as a consequence of pride and vanity. Allan Kardec states that in question 148 of *The Spirits' Book* when he writes the spiritual instructions verbatim. He subsequently adds "There are those who, through an aberration of the intellect, can see nothing in organized beings but the action of matter, and attribute to this action all the phenomena of existence."

Kardec's analysis was absolutely precise. Such aberration of intelligence becomes even more evident in our time, at the exact moment that earthly culture loses its material foundations and begins revolving round a spiritual center. The materialist option is an absurd, mere irrationality, a lamentable proof of warped logic due to pride. In the hands of the physicists, matter has been transmuted into energy, and therefore into vibration; the discovery of antimatter unveiled a new plane of life; astronautics showed the likelihood of contact with other inhabited worlds; materialists were taken by surprise by the possibility of photographing the spiritual body of a human being and they were capable of ascertaining that death does not destroy that body.

What information do such advances in knowledge offer in favor of materialist ideas? Only an intellectual aberration, a warped reasoning may lead someone to infer that materialism has emerged triumphant from this great scientific revolution. Materialist philosophers themselves, such as Bertrand Russell,²⁴ were compelled to use peculiar logical windings to defend their ideas.

²⁴ [TN] Bertrand Arthur William Russell (1872–1970), 3rd Earl Russell, was a British philosopher, logician, mathematician, historian, writer, social critic, and political activist.

Jean-Paul Sartre, the nihilist philosopher, lost his popularity to Martin Heidegger,²⁵ who until very recently had been accused of descending into mysticism.

It is imprudent to say that the current development of science favors materialism. Long before the most recent advances, Albert Einstein²⁶ himself stated that “Materialism has died from lack of matter.” Those who choose materialism at this point in the scientific evolution show either a lack of reason or disordered reasoning. It is equivalent to Thomas addressing the resurrected Christ by saying “If I can touch your wounds it is because you did not die.”

An inclination towards materialism is still rather common amidst the young. “Youth is at the leading edge in every improvement,” said José Ingenieros.²⁷ The young have the mission of renewing the world so they fight against the dominant ideologies, dissenting from the traditional systems. The battle between science and religion—the fideist dogmatism that obstructs progress—shows them on which side the progressive forces are and they audaciously enroll on that side. But Spiritism has changed this picture in that it has revealed that science may also be a deterrent to progress.

²⁵ [TN] Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) was a German philosopher and a very important contributor to the fields of existential phenomenology and philosophical hermeneutics.

²⁶ [TN] Albert Einstein (1879–1955) was a German-born theoretical physicist who has had an impressive influence on the philosophy of science. Modern physics is based on two of his seminal works: the special theory of relativity and the general theory of relativity. The quote above is part of the sentence “The further the spiritual evolution of mankind advances, the more certain it seems to me that the path to genuine religiosity does not lie through the fear of life, and the fear of death, and blind faith, but through striving after rational knowledge.”

²⁷ [TN] José Ingenieros (1877–1925) was born Giuseppe Ingegneri. A graduate from the University of Buenos Aires School of Medicine, he was an Argentine physician, pharmacist, positivist philosopher, and essayist.

The materialist dogmas are as damaging as those from religious fideism; and the young have already begun to understand this issue.

We must assist our young by showing them that Spiritism abets neither fideist dogmatism nor religious dogmatism. We must educate them that the spiritist science is the leading edge today. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the spiritist culture, creating the appropriate environment for an understanding of the doctrine in its entirety, not only of its religious aspect. Woe to those who attempt to draw the young away from Christ, subordinating them to the regimen of old. Spiritism is the youth of the world, the rebellion against the errors of the past. It proposes to us an event of faith, but of rather a rational faith, a faith on knowledge.

ON DIFFICULT DAYS

Emmanuel

On difficult days, reflect upon the other problematic days that have already passed.

After journeying through agonies and struggles that you thought were insurmountable, you did not know how to explain to yourself how you managed to succeed, and from which resources you collected the necessary strength to support and renew yourself during and after the painful combats.

You observed the infirmity in a beloved one become strangely grave, and without knowing the phenomenon in its details, you saw the ideal medication or providence appear, which pulled the individual away from death.

You experienced the visit of dejection when facing obstacles that aggravated your life, but you abandoned the discouragement of darkness and returned to the brightness of hope without ever realizing how much support you had.

Sentimental crises that looked invincible to you, as consequences of the anguish with which they assaulted the innermost core of your soul, disappeared as if by magic without your finding a definition for the liberating intervention that reconstituted your tranquility.

You suffered the absence of companions whom you loved dearly as they were called by discarnation to other levels of experiences by their own inalienable duties. However, without spending any effort, other blessed souls appeared, who began to nourish your heart with edifying affective support.

All this, however, ensued because you persisted with faith, waiting and trusting, working and serving, without abandoning yourself to desertion or failure, and therefore offering an opportunity for the goodness of God to operate on your behalf.

During current difficulties, consider those you have already overcome, and you will understand that God, whose infinite love assisted you yesterday, is here today supporting you still.

However, it is mandatory for all of this to occur that we remain loyal in carrying out our duties, for patience, a central virtue, is the gift of waiting for God while cooperating without disruption with the Divinity.

GIVE GOD A CHANCE

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

If the castaway does not give up hope and bears the violence of the waves, giving an opportunity to the rescuing boat to approach, he may be saved. However, if he soon surrenders to despair, and either falls overboard or loses his life preserver, it is clear that he will be pulled in by the waters. We almost surrender to despair during difficulties in life and we do not give an opportunity for Divine Providence to succor us. We lack the essential support, the inner strength from faith, which gives us the serenity to have the necessary confidence in the superior powers.

In other words: during difficult times, we must give God a chance. He is indubitably the supreme power, the intelligence that created us, and the force that sustains us. But He is also freedom, and not only has He given us the freedom to be and act, but He also respects that granted liberty so we may develop it, acquiring more strength and power based on responsibility. The love of God watches over us under all circumstances, but it is not the love of a tyrant, which creates psychological complexes and traumas, but that of a freeing love, an emotion that gives us the right to learn, which we only achieve through experience.

The world is a field of open experiences for the individual. Human beings, the single spark of liberty in an otherwise dark world, as phrased by Jean-Paul Sartre,²⁸ are able to place and displace in the arena of decisions, because they represent the moment when Creation takes on consciousness of itself, and begin to reflect onto itself the intelligence and creative power of God. This is why it is necessary for liberty to be preserved, and we may say that God respects Himself when He respects human freedom. The essential point in the human experience is the acquisition of faith, but faith may only be acquired through confidence in oneself. This is the reason why God's intervention depends on us.

²⁸ [TN] SARTRE, J.-P. *Existentialism is a humanism (L'existentialisme est un humanism, orig.)* (1946). Yale University Press, English edition, July 24, 2007. 128pp. ISBN13: 978-0-3001-1546-8.

Allan Kardec was the critic of faith to the same extent that Immanuel Kant²⁹ was the critic of reason. Kardec did not create a systematic philosophical treatise about faith, but examined it on the basis of understandable principles and showed that we can only have faith in what we know. He taught that there exist human faith and divine faith. To have faith in God, we need to know what God is, know Him and have confidence in Him. However, to reach this stage we must develop human faith in ourselves, and discover our divine nature, the hidden powers we bring in our otherwise apparent fragility. Therefore, in order to trust in God, it is sufficient to remember that the simple

fact that we exist is proof of His power.

²⁹ [TN] Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) was a German philosopher, considered to be a central figure in modern philosophy.

CHAPTER XXIV – ABSENCE OF SPIRITUAL GENDER

QUESTION 202

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘During our public meeting, friends arriving from several cities were predominantly interested in topics related to several psychological conflicts, which are being addressed by extensive research everywhere. Comments on this subject were quite lively. When our duties began, *The Spirits’ Book* provided question 202 and the explanations therein.

At the end of the scheduled activities, our dear spiritual benefactor wrote the page *Psychological Conflicts*, which I send for your opportune studies.’

Note: *Question 202 from The Spirits’ Book:*

[Q] *When we are spirits, do we prefer to incarnate into a male or a female body?*

[A] *“It matters little to a spirit, for it must ascend by following its trials.” Spirits incarnate as either men or women because they are genderless; since they must progress in every way, each gender, like each social position, offers them special trials and duties, and a new opportunity to acquire experience. Spirits who are always men will only know what men know.*

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONFLICTS

Emmanuel

How easy it is to judge the emotional conflicts of others!

In matters of gender, the public opinion on Earth until now has been restricted to understanding and approving of those who would engage in matrimony, and to disapproving of or reproaching those keeping themselves to celibacy.

Evolution, however, has unveiled the psychological sciences of the present time, and they have undertaken the study of the complexity of the soul almost to the point of thoroughly exposing it.

Nevertheless, gender-related issues continue to accumulate at an increasing rate.

As a result of emotional struggles, both married and single individuals, adolescent and adult alike, exhibit emotional disorders, ambivalent inclinations, dissatisfaction, emotional demands, and difficulties through inversive conditions and several phenomena of bisexuality.

Psychology always brings an invaluable contribution to the assistance of incarnate spirits caught up in paranormal situations within the realms of affection, most notably when this science educates patients in achieving self-acceptance. However, without the reincarnationist principles, which define the circumstances of each spirit according to the law of cause and effect, any form of assistance to victims of psychological maladjustments will be incomplete.

In this regard, it is indispensable to recall that every emotional scarring we may have caused to someone has repercussions in us, whereupon they create corresponding lesions in our spiritual field.

Individuals who may have traumatized the souls of beloved ones with outbursts of ingratitude now find themselves reincarnated on the earthly plane bearing so-called congenital disorders; those who may have likely cast out sensitive hearts over emotional cliffs are reborn now to endure irreversible sexual frustrations during the entire course of their physical existences; others who may have persecuted companions of the opposite sex, plunging them into despair and delinquency, now return to Earth in reverse positions; others still may have requested their own hospitalization in morphological cells corresponding to the opposite constitution of their innermost impulses, therefore temporarily isolating themselves in order to carry out crucial tasks, albeit not always tolerating the trials and obstacles of their own choice; and several others yet who, having possibly imposed suicide, crime, betrayal, and desertion on other individuals who accorded them complete trust, return to the physical experience under the weight of complex tribulations. Such atonement situations vary in accordance to the degree of culpability with which they once squandered their inner harmony.

Let us administer love and explanations to our brothers and sisters in humanity who experience sexual conflicts, instead of contempt or condemnation.

A normal physical behavior in the material world does not imply that our debts from past existences are gone. On the contrary, it is possible that we might find ourselves requesting support exactly from those whom we are assisting today.

As we close our notes, let us remember that Allan Kardec formulated question 202 in *The Spirits' Book* asking the Superior Spirituality for which sector of human activities, male or female, our discarnate friends had a preference or inclination on the occasion of their return to the physical world. And to that the mentors of the Kardecian codification answered convincingly:

In essence, it does not matter to the spirits. What truly counts for them, above all, is the trials they must experience.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ACOUSTICS

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

From the organic, biophysiological sense, spirits do not have genders, for they are divested of a material body and do not reproduce. Plant, animal, and human genders are a simple manifestation of polarity. Therefore, there is a spiritual issue of polarity similar to that of the energy currents we know, which determines the inner condition of the spirit and its male or female stance.

Consequently, in the inferior planes of the spirituality, in the regions of transition from the physical realm to the metaphysical one, the infernal regions of the traditional religions or the umbral regions of spiritist conception, the spiritual body of those entities mimics the sexual conditions that they experienced in their earthly life. The incubi and succubi³⁰ from the Middle Ages are examples of such coarse forms of inferior spirits.

The manifestations of these inferior beings confuse many scholars and seeing mediums, who do not accept the spiritist thesis that spirits do not have gender. It is a simple matter of lack of better doctrinal discernment.

³⁰ [TN] Incubus (incubi, *pl.*) and succubus (succubi, *pl.*) were feigned evil spirits or demons, usually personified in representations of nightmare, who were supposed to descend upon persons in their sleep, especially to seek carnal intercourse with women. Incubus was the demon in the male form while succubus was the female counterpart. Their existence was recognized by the ecclesiastical and civil law of the Middle Ages.

However, as Emmanuel teaches us in his message, the emotional scarrings that we produce on others have consequences in us, and they create corresponding and analogous lesions in our spiritual field. It is a phenomenon of psychological acoustics, similar to that of the physical and physiological acoustics from Helmholtz's theories.³¹

Therefore, gender-related problems are a part of the general law of action and reaction, which determines our trials and atonements, and the reason why victims of disorders in this area should not be subjected to and treated with

the brutal and hypocritical contempt of the past. Those who act in such manner, without charity, may be preparing similar situations for themselves in the future.

However, this does not justify acceptance of such disorders as part of normal behavior, as it is intended today, for otherwise we would be endorsing and stimulating imbalance as well as its propagation instead of assisting its victims towards re-equilibrium.

³¹ [TN] Helmholtz resonator was a device created by Hermann Ludwig Ferdinand von Helmholtz (1821–1894) to study acoustic science and identify the several frequencies or musical pitches found in the complex sounds, including music. The phenomenon of Helmholtz resonant observed therein consists of air resonance in the cavity, much in the same was as it is observed when an individual blows air across the top of an empty bottle.

Emmanuel recommends charitable acceptance of the infirm, but advocates that we apply to them the therapy of “love and explanations... instead of that of contempt or condemnation.” This was how Jesus proceeded towards the imbalanced individuals of his time, from the possessed Gerasene³² to the adulterous woman.

³² [TN] The inhabitant of the ancient Palestinian town of Gerasa (*Gersenus*, La.; *Gerasēnos*, Gr.) or Gergesa (*Gergesenus*, La.; *Gergesēnos*, Gr.).

CHAPTER XXV – REASONS FOR LIFE, REASONING FOR DEATH

KILLING OUT OF COMPASSION

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘Before our public meeting, friends of ours from the Guanabara³³ region showed us two recently released reports about euthanasia. We were a group of companions engaged in debating current issues and the proposed topic sparked our attention. After several opinions were contributed to the ongoing conversation, time called us back to our duties of the evening.

As we began our study meeting, The Gospel According to Spiritism surprised us all with item 28 from chapter V, which deals with the issue of death imposed in the name of human benevolence.

Several colleagues commented on the lesson and later, Emmanuel, our dear spiritual benefactor, made his presence with the page *Euthanasia and Life*.’

³³ [TN] *Baía da Guanabara* (Guanabara Bay) is an oceanic bay located in the state of Rio de Janeiro in southeast Brazil. Its shores provide a natural boundary for the cities of Rio de Janeiro, Duque de Caxias, Niterói and São Gonçalo. The *Pão de Açúcar* peak (Sugar Loaf Peak), with the iconic statue of Christ, the Redeemer, is situated in its western flank.

EUTHANASIA AND LIFE

Emmanuel

Earthly friends often request the opinion from discarnate companions on euthanasia. They add that several philosophers and scientists today contribute to great lengths their support to the idea of administered death, either by drugs or through withdrawal of treatment.

Many declare themselves to be distressed by the problems of children who are disfigured from birth, or in the presence of individuals bearing seemingly irreversible infirmities, who are often in comatose states at intensive care facilities. Some even question whether the mentally impaired little ones should be considered human beings at all, and if there is kindness in extending the inhibitions experienced by infirm individuals under near-death conditions who are insensitive to any reaction.

However, such is their belief because of a scarcity of spirituality resources in their possession that would otherwise expand the spiritual vision beyond the physical stage.

When it comes to physical deformities, it is imperative to remember that complexes of guilt determine unimaginable alterations in the spiritual body.

Human beings consider only the organic vehicle in which the spirit travels through space and time in its pursuit of selfimprovement, but they usually do not see the enhancement touches or dilapidation that the passengers imprint on themselves for the purpose of assessing merit or lack of it when they are given to disembark at their destination.

As a result, the common individual is not cognizant of the psychological side of our consciously suicidal and homicidal brothers and sisters, or of the others who deliberately turn themselves into nightmares or scourges to entire communities. They are now properly reincarnated under tasks of readjustment, whereupon they expose no other than the afflictive picture that they created for themselves, for every spirit descends from its own achievements and reveals in itself what it has accomplished of itself.

When in their presence, meditate and assist these children under heavy atonements or our sick companions whose infirmities are believed to be irreversible.

At the moment, on the stages of the physical world, no one can calculate the importance of a few moments or a few days for the spirit who is temporarily

imprisoned in a sick or deformed body.

Next to all our companions approaching discarnation, have mercy and help them as much as you can.

Recall that human science is always an admirable fact, which is under constant transformation, albeit respectful for the benefits it provides. Nevertheless, do not forget that life is always of divine creation and, for this very reason, will always be a permanent act of love wherever it is.

MURDEROUS COMPASSION

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Euthanasia is a question of logic. If we begin with the premise that death is the end, we naturally come to the conclusion that killing an incurably ill person, adult or child, is an act of mercy. But if we start with the premise that death is only the end of one existence, our compassion will be a murderous one. A false premise leads us to a criminal reasoning.

We must have the appropriate information about the problem we experience in order to reason correctly. Materialism knows only the physical body and does not take into account the existence of the soul. It completely ignores the meaning of life. Its reasoning about euthanasia is founded on ignorance.

Spiritualists know that the soul survives the body, but not all spiritualists understand the process of life. Their reasoning about euthanasia may lead to a sophism.³⁴ However, spiritists know that life is an evolutionary process and every corporeal existence is the result of the previous stages of this process. They have at their disposal reliable and accurate data on the biological phenomenon of death.

These data, information obtained from spiritist scientific experiments, are being presently confirmed by parapsychological and physical researches on the afflictions of death. Discovery of the bioplasma body by physicists and biologists should have been enough to warn the systematic spirits that they might be wrong.

The medieval inquisitors used to burn in the name of charity those whom they believed to be heretics in order to save them from the everlasting fires of hell. Present-day materialists intend to abbreviate death on behalf of rational mercy. Either way, we are still left with the dogmatism of ignorance besmirching the rights of life.

³⁴ [TN] The modern use and meaning of sophism is rather derogatory. A sophism is a specious albeit fallacious argument that is either used deliberately in order to deceive or mislead, or employed as a means of displaying ingenuity in reasoning. However, the original meaning of the word was related to a collection of techniques of philosophy and rhetoric for the purpose of teaching excellence or virtue, predominantly to young statesmen and the nobility. As a result of the practice of providing wisdom only to those who could afford to pay for education, sophists became portrayed as specious or deceptive individuals, which then led to the modern meaning of the term.

CHAPTER XXVI – ACTION AND REACTION: CIRCLE OF LIVES THE MENTALLY IMPAIRED CHILD

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘The poem *Romance in Life* was received during our public meeting. We received item 8 of chapter XIV from *The Gospel According to Spiritism* and question 372 from *The Spirits’ Book* for our studies.

After the comments from our participating companions, the spirit of the poet Alphonsus Guimaraens³⁵ gave a communication, offering to us the poetic piece that I hereby place in your hands. We have deemed it appropriate and moving.

Surprisingly, however, upon leaving the house on the morning following the meeting, we were approached by a lady carrying her mentally impaired son, whom she had brought to introduce to us in order to request the assistance of Dr. Bezerra de Menezes³⁶ on his behalf.

³⁵ [TN] Afonso Henrique da Costa Guimarães (1870–1921), known as Alphonsus de Guimaraens, was a Brazilian poet whose poetry is substantially interwoven with mystical and Catholic concepts.

³⁶ [TN] Adolfo Bezerra de Menezes Cavalcanti (1831–1900), was a Brazilian doctor, military man, writer, journalist, politician, philanthropist, and one of the greatest figures of the Spiritist Doctrine. He is better known in spiritist circles as Dr. Bezerra de Menezes, and he is often referred to as the Brazilian Kardec or the Physician of

This woman, in almost complete destitution, told us she had been present at the public meeting of the night before; she had not brought the infirm little one for she had arrived very late from Ouro Preto,³⁷ and had left the child resting at the inn.

Despite her miserable condition, she had paid attention to the message and had come to request a copy of it.

That moved me deeply and I remained meditating on the subject.’

Note : *Item 8 of chapter XIV of The Gospel According to Spiritism deals with corporeal and spiritual kinships, and shows that the spirits do not relate to*

each other by blood ties but rather spiritual affinities.

Item 372 from The Spirits' Book consists of the following question from Kardec: "What is the aim of Providence in creating unfortunate beings like the mentally impaired (cretins and idiots)?" The answer from the spirits is the following, "Spirits who dwell in such bodies are in atonement. They suffer from the constraint they experience and from the inability of expressing themselves through undeveloped or defective organs."

the Poor for his dedication to the spiritist cause and to the health of individuals from the low-income sectors of the Brazilian society.

³⁷ [TN] Ouro Preto is a city in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, and it is located 563km (340mi) from Uberaba where Francisco Xavier lived at the time.

ROMANCE IN LIFE³⁸

Alphonsus de Guimaraens

In the fields, where the moonlight wreathes its veil,
A couple rustles in love, in sleep and glow night sets sail.
He, the poet of nature, humble shepherd from birth;
She, a noblewoman, bloom of youth in its mirth.
How many carefree kisses far away from the mansion!
Under the light of azure so many affectionate intentions!
But soon one night, the beloved an old squire sends out
To the anxious youth unexpected message he spouts.
'Forgive me,' she writes, 'if to you I was not honest.
For I will now marry the man who awaits me in earnest.'
'The name of my parents I will not ever abhor.
Our love was a dream... a dream... Nothing more.'

³⁸ [TN] The reader should note that here, as well as in other poems in this book, despite attempts to keep the metric structure and poetic style of the original text, the translation focuses on content, rather than transposing all the characteristics of a literary piece from one language to another.

With solace nowhere, the unhappy boy thusly weeps,
Blind to reason, to vanish in death his desire then leaps.
To his hovel he runs, arming himself without flair,
And swiftly his head he gets shattered in despair.
Time passes swiftly... In the life beyond, the suicidal bard
Now a madman he is, begs life for a new body to start.
The noblewoman in the golden refuge 'ere she rests,
Bitter from the past lessons, one day dies in regrets.
Next to her raised tomb, draped in white jasmines in scent
In farewells her children wallow amidst spirals of incense.
From the silver trimmings she ultimately breaks ties
Now despicable and ungrateful thereupon where she lies.

She reminisces on the villager and the field of yore,
Pleading to see him to beg his forgiveness once more.
Soon in large ward she finally finds him barrowed,
Demented, blind, dumb, all in anguish shadow. Her condemning conscience,
in tears she endures
Wishes for Earth, for him a new life she'll ensure.
And the eternal law of love reveals itself to her in love,
Who returns to the physical and the simple village thereof.
Atoning today, little by little, she is a mother in sorrow,
Hauling a dumb and demented child in her hollow...
And while the infirm sad and dull eyes he does spun,
She lives imploring: 'Don't leave me, my son!'
The romance continues, and life moves on...
Blessed is pain that brings perfection upon.

IN THE MOUNTAINS OF MINAS GERAIS³⁹

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

It is worth to reproduce herein the words of Fernando Góes about the communicating poet: “Alphonsus de Guimaraens was always a timid man who never desired anything but to compose his verses of devotion and sad love in the solitude of the mountains of Minas.”

³⁹ [TN] Minas Gerais, officially abbreviated MG, is one of the twenty-six states of the Federal Republic of Brazil, a union of twenty-seven federal units including the federal district where the federal capital, Brasília, is located. The state of Minas Gerais is also known colloquially as Minas.

The solitude of the mountains of Minas is more filled with wonders than might have purported the essayist and historian of the Brazilian Symbolism in his volume IV of *Panorama da Poesia Brasileira*.⁴⁰ Alphonsus de Guimaraens continues to wander out there, where he now finds even sadder love stories for him to sing through the mediumistic harp of Francisco Xavier. The style and thematic of the poet identify him in this poem, which he unexpectedly sends to us from the beyond.

The medium says that he was “meditating on the subject” when he was addressed by the poor mother who asked for a copy of the poem. In his modesty and humility, Francisco Xavier did not want to draw himself the conclusions that we are going to extract from this mediumistic episode. The apparent coincidences that mark this incident reveal its hidden truth. In parapsychological terms, they are what is referred to nowadays as meaningful coincidences, albeit in a broader sense.

The two books by Allan Kardec mentioned by Francisco Xavier are always

opened at random and, on that occasion, they both offered coincidental excerpts for the studies of the evening. After the several comments that ensued, with each speaker illuminating the subject in his or her own manner, the poem from Alphonsus de Guimaraens restored the set of coincidences in telling an old story of frustrated sad love, very much in the style of the poet when he was incarnated.

⁴⁰ [TN] GÓES, F. F. *Panorama da poesia brasileira. IV. O simbolismo*. Civilização Brasileira S.A. Editora, 1st edition, 1959. 367pp. ISBN not available.

Francisco Xavier had no knowledge of the presence of the unhappy mother during the studies. The woman, nevertheless, despite her condition of penury and apparent ignorance, recognized in the poem her own story, lived in a previous incarnation during medieval times. This is how a hidden truth is revealed to those who have the eyes to see and the ears to hear, as it was taught by Jesus.

In the solitude of the mountains of Minas, a European tragedy came to its closure in our time. And the poet of woeful love, who was born, lived and died in Ouro Preto,⁴¹ took upon himself the responsibility to reveal it in his clear and perfect verses, filled with the same melancholy that suffuses all his art, but now through the psychography of Francisco Xavier.

⁴¹ [TN] Ouro Preto (Black Gold) is a historical city in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, famous for its outstanding Baroque architecture. It was the second capital of Minas Gerais during the gold rush, when this mining city was actually known as Vila Rica. In the late XVIII century, Vila Rica was the largest city in Brazil and one of the most populous in America. However, as the gold mines were exhausted during the XIX century, the city lost its importance and was later renamed Ouro Preto. It remained the state capital until the construction of the planned city of Belo Horizonte at the turn of the XX century, which is the current state capital.

CHAPTER XXVII – THE TRUE MEANING OF WEALTH

GOLD: PROS AND CONS

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘For our studies, The Gospel According to Spiritism provided item 7 from chapter XVI, On Earthly Fortunes, and our companions contributed several comments.

Some of them highlighted avarice and ambition, evil and the wars throughout history, all the while ascribing blame to gold. Others showed the value of material wealth as an instrument of evolution for human beings and for the world.

As a complement to the observations of the evening, our dear Emmanuel wrote the page that he called *Money*.’

MONEY

Emmanuel

Bless money so money may bless you.

In fact, our lives do not depend on it, but money in itself consists of a valuable support for progress upon which life is improved.

It is not love; however, it instills the sympathy and recognition in which, quite often, love appears in fountains of light. It is not health; yet, it ensures the medicine that fights the infirmity.

It is not peace; but it is a factor of equilibrium, either promoting work or extinguishing many of the debts that torment the spirit.

It is not happiness; nevertheless, it can create joy for us by means of the good that it can distribute.

Perhaps... perhaps... you might say, filled with bitterness of having watched so many go down the precipice of delinquency for not having been able to use it safely and productively. On our part, however, we take the liberty to ask if you know the entire inventory:

- ...of the pains that money suppresses;
- ...of the tears it dries;
- ...of the afflictions it undoes;
- ...of the cultural enterprises it supports;
- ...of the consolation it spreads;
- ...of the hopes it sows;
- ...of the good works it performs;
- ...of the lives it saves;
- ...of the suicides and other crimes that it manages to prevent;
- ...of the industries that it encourages and maintains;
- ...of the intelligences it improves;
- ...or of the blessings of joy that it distributes.

Neither censure the coined fortune nor condemn those who keep it as they take on responsibilities and direct those fortunes to purposes we ignore.

On Earth, money is a lever that Divine Providence places in our hands; in managing it, one can marginalize the heart to darkness as much as one can assemble the luminous path towards the greater life.

In summary, money comes from God, but it is imperative to recognize that its usage comes from us.

THE WEALTHY AND THE KINGDOM

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Jesus' condemnation of the rich, so clearly stated in the Gospel of Luke, does not refer to wealth itself, but to one's attachment to it. Had Jesus considered money to be a curse he would not have told the rich young man to distribute it to the poor. Both individual and familial wealth are forms of accumulation of assets that aim at the future of a community. Kardec examined this issue exhaustively and made the social role of wealth very clear. However, it is exactly for this reason that wealth constitutes one of the most dangerous trials for an incarnate spirit, as the spirits constantly remind us.

We may compare it to health. Strong, healthy individuals usually become infatuated with their own superior physical condition that they withdraw from the needs of the spirit. They forget whom they are and that they will have to return to the spiritual plane. Trials related to good health are as dangerous as those of fortune. But both are designed to educate the spirit in its struggle with the illusions and allures of life. It is in this struggle that the spirit develops its internal strengths, its ability to overcome matter, to master it as a swimmer masters the waters.

The parable of the rich young man exposes the state of the spirit before a trial. The young man wished for salvation and attempted to follow the directives of the law in order to achieve it. His conscience warned him that he was not doing what was required. But when Jesus told him to emancipate himself from his property and revert his wealth on to the poor, he had no courage to do so. Selling one's properties and distributing the money to the needy do not constitute mere alms giving. The greatest charity is the one in the form of aid and motivation for work. The useless properties of the rich young man could be transformed into productive resources, thus benefiting the poor.

The accumulation of wealth implies one's duty to ensure its proper use on behalf of the collective. Those who steer from such practice and employ it instead only in favor of their pride and vanity, place themselves in the condition of the camel that could not thread the eye of the needle.⁴² Earthly life passes quickly and the selfish rich person will eventually face the narrow door to the kingdom without being able to cross it. When human beings become capable of confronting the trial of wealth and overcoming selfishness, poverty will disappear from the world.

The door to the kingdom of God is narrow because only the pure souls, those relieved of the burden of ambition and pride, should cross it. Selfish rich individuals, attached to their possessions, are not able to enter because they are not willing to leave their burdens outside. These individuals will have to return to Earth many times, to the kingdoms of humankind, in order to learn that material wealth will only help them if they learn to trade their metal coins for acts of love.

⁴² [TN] “Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God,” Matthew 19: 24. Rather bizarre at first, this passage may actually be explained by the fact that, in Hebrew, the same word was used to describe a camel and a cable, which was made of the animal hair. In the translation, the meaning of one was mistaken for that of the other. Here, Prof. Herculano Pires maintains the mumpsimus by using the word camel in lieu of rope.

FRIENDLY MONEY

Emmanuel

Promissory notes! Variations in the stock exchange!

We see the issue of exchange in financial life everywhere as the foundation of several markets.

However, think on the exchange of charity as much as possible!

Let us ponder on the afflictions that money can suppress whenever we focus our attention on it.

Think of your financial balance, even if negligible, transformed into assistance to an infirm individual or into happiness to a child.

Often enough, the amount you judge to be modest, without any significance, can actually be transubstantiated into comfort and blessings to many individuals when applied towards the benefit of others.

It is undeniable that countless of our brothers and sisters do not yet understand the valuable mission of material wealth, disposing of it without dignity or graciousness, in the same way that there are many others who ignore the value of the physical body, and as such, dilapidate its energies without an understanding or profit. However, as a consequence of their own needs, human beings will gradually observe the importance of money as an instrument of work and education, progress and beneficence, which awaits our resolutions in order to build and serve.

Blessed be always the coin that remunerates the sweat of the bread winner of the family; that accomplishes the respectable dreams of youth; that succors our frail brothers and sisters along many a path; or that turns into support for the recovery of the little ones that wander aimlessly without guidance!

Put yourself in the place of those companions in the world who are in debt and under crushing commitments that require urgent solutions, who experience humiliation and penury, who suffer diseases in complete abandonment, or who lie along the way of so many paths of atonement without motivation and without a roof over their heads. You will then realize that the coin, when used in the service of goodness, can be compared to a ray of light from heaven, which originates from On High towards the tear on Earth in order to transform it into a blessing of hope and love in the edification of a happier world.

COIN, BODY, AND SOUL

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

The ups and downs of the stock exchange is not what tarnishes money, but rather the avarice of the spirit. When we utilize the expression “the evil metal,” we reveal our ignorance concerning the spiritual value of the coin. We find many passages in the Gospel where money is considered in its celestial value, so to speak, but no text is more beautiful than the Parable of the Lost Coin,⁴³ in which the Lord compares the coin to the soul. That is right! Because the souls are the coins of God’s treasure. This would have been enough to remind us that the coins of Earth, contrary to what we have always stated, can purchase celestial benefits.

To this date, it is still true that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. But such is the case because of the rich, not of their wealth. Money can be exchanged in the world, but it may also be exchanged for celestial coins. There is the exchange market of charity, fraternity, human understanding, where a single small coin, as it was the case in the widow’s offering,⁴⁴ may pay more in heaven than all the interest rates and monetary adjustments on Earth.

⁴³ [TN] Luke 15: 8–10.

⁴⁴ [TN] Parable of the Widow’s Mite in Mark 12: 41–44 and Luke 21: 1–4.

Emmanuel rehabilitates money within our poor human concept by calling our attention to the purpose of the coin, which we usually forget. He establishes simultaneously the liaison between money and physical body in showing that due to our lack of understanding, we end up squandering the energies of one and dilapidating the worth of the other. The coin thrown at the roulette wheel, consumed by addictions, or spent on whims of selfishness is similar to the body that is debased in the follies of drunkenness and sensuality. Conversely, the coin employed in the service of the creatures here on Earth is similar to

the soul that surrenders itself in the service of love, assisting those in need and stimulating those who work.

The exchange of charity does not consist in the primary service of alms only, but it is more generous concerning the great enterprises of motivation for work, study, and research, opening opportunities for general progress, which benefit millions of creatures directly and indirectly. When Jesus told the rich young man to forsake his assets, distributing them among the poor, he did not intend for the boy to become impoverished, but rather to guide him in circulating his wealth on behalf of the world.

Blessed be the coin, writes Emmanuel. Blessed be the coin when it does not lie in coffers or banks, where it becomes tarnished by avarice. Blessed be the coin when it is not buried by a useless servant, but rather multiplied by the diligent ones as illustrated in the Parable of the Talents.⁴⁵ Blessed be the coin that is not idle in the purse or the account balance, clenched in the hand of the miser, but rather in circulation in the social environment much like blood in the physical body, irrigating the tissues and producing the energies that the soul needs on Earth to ascend the narrow path to heaven. Coin and body are instruments that the soul uses while on Earth to conquer the freedom of the celestial life.

⁴⁵ [TN] Matthew 25: 14–30, Luke 19: 12–27.

CHAPTER XXVIII – FREEWILL: FREEDOM TO WILL AND ACT SERIOUS ISSUES

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘Before our meeting—which, in this case, was a more intimate gathering for disobsession purposes—a few brothers and sisters were asking each other which point would be the most significant to use as a reference when confronted by the most serious problems in the world.

The reincarnation challenges show themselves in many guises, and, based on that assessment, we proceeded with our conversation.

We have always set aside a few minutes at the beginning of our meetings to study the teachings of Allan Kardec. The Spirits' Book, opened randomly, produced question 843, concerning free will, for us to meditate.

Upon completion of our work, the spiritual friend who came to meet us was our dear André Luiz, who wrote through us the page he entitled *The Most Important.*’

THE MOST IMPORTANT

André Luiz

You are probably enduring a long series of trials during which your motivation almost vanishes.

Crises and problems have appeared.

However, peace and freedom, hope and joy, they all depend on your own attitude.

If you are reaping offence or contempt, you can be a source of forgiveness and tolerance yourself, providing the aggressors with a license for self-knowledge.

If difficulties contradict your expectations for self-realization in such and such sense, your patience will make you see the weak spots that you must annul in order to accomplish your plans at a more opportune moment.

If someone has brought disappointments to you, your fraternal understanding will help you realize that this is a blessing from life, for it immunizes your spirit against the acquisition of heavy and bitter future commitments.

If you experience obstacles towards your own means of support, your devotion to work will give you improved competence and that, in turn, will elevate your level of compensations and resources.

If you are sick, your serenity, in partnership with your cooperation, will be the essential foundation of assistance to the doctors and the other companions who provide you with a cure.

If you are misunderstood by loved ones, it is your kindness, together with your selflessness, that will make you a pillar of support so that your loved ones may return to your emotional environment.

Avoid the complications of rebellion and inconformity, hatred and envy, selfishness and despair, which will only add to the bulk of anguish.

Changes, afflictions, anxieties, struggles, disappointments, and conflicts have always existed in the evolutionary path. Therefore, the most important thing is not what happens but rather how you react.

FREE REACTION

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Many people question the nature of free will during a reincarnation event

seeing that the process is conditioned by karma, by the law of action and reaction. The schools of thought of existential philosophy have the principle of facticity, according to which we are born finished in the world, a completion that is determined by our body and the environment in which we are born. Despite this approach, existentialist philosophers consider human creatures as the only ones endowed with freedom, the only free beings on Earth, because from that initial point onwards, human beings are endowed with freedom to think and act, without which they would have no responsibility.

Long before this discovery by the existentialists, The Spirits' Book had already established free will as characteristic to the human species. Question 843 in that book shows that human freedom is progressive and develops in successive stages from birth to maturity.

The physical conditioning of human beings, which encompasses the organic circumstances, heredity, environment, and culture, does not suppress their ability to judge and choose. Instinctive tendencies predispose individuals to several paths, albeit without forcing them to engage a particular action. Similar to a driver who does not lose its freedom in spite of being limited by the capabilities of the vehicle, human beings as spirits continue to be free to think, desire, and act in the process of conditioning their reincarnation.

This is why André Luiz considers as the most important thing the way in which individuals react towards the vicissitudes of life. These difficulties act upon human beings as consequences of the past, but it is through their reactions that individuals will overcome the past and open new perspectives for their lives in the present and in the future. If humans react badly, they will continue entangled in their karma; if they react well, they will free themselves from it.

Therefore, our behavior towards the most important problems we experience in the world is what will decide our destiny. Can we wish for any greater freedom than this, that of being able to build our own future?

MAXIMS FROM THE WORKER OF TRUTH

Emmanuel

To understand that the needs and hopes of others are fundamentally equal to ours.

To assist without demanding the assisted to embrace your ideas.

To recognize that Divine Providence has countless ways to aid and enlighten human beings.

To learn to tolerate patiently the petty humiliations so as to provide great testimonies of personal sacrifice that the cause of truth will request of you some day.

To place yourself second to the work you perform. To guide yourself by mercy, not criticism.

To bless without reproach.

To build or rebuild without offense or condemnation.

To work without the intention of standing out or appearing to be the best or the greatest next to the others.

To cultivate cooperation and charity boundlessly.

To refrain from irritation and bitterness.

To act without creating problems.

To observe that without individual discipline towards goodness, its practice is impossible.

To respect the character of your companions.

To find time to tend to the blessing of prayer.

To focus on the noble qualities of others and forget their possible flaws.

To appreciate the efforts of others.

Never to waste time.

To erase enmity or discord through fraternal apologies and the constant service that we owe each other.

To create opportunities of work for yourself, helping others to discover opportunities of service according to their abilities and possibilities of achievement, keeping in everything the unshakable certainty that each individual is important in the creation of the Kingdom of God.

EVERYBODY IS IMPORTANT

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

We are all equals at the harvest because we are all equals before the Lord of the Harvest. God does not make distinctions of peoples, positions, even less so of institutions. Item 5 from chapter XX of The Gospel According to Spiritism establishes this essential condition, “Blessed will be those who have worked in the Lord’s field selflessly and with no other motive than charity!” Emmanuel concludes his message by reminding us that “...each individual is important in the creation of the Kingdom of God.”

Hoping for no disagreements among those who work in disseminating and supporting the doctrine would be to entertain chimeras. As Hubert Dreyfus⁴⁶ expounds, each human conscience is a point in the stream of time. Each one

of us is set at a determined angle to the eternal flow of reality; therefore, each one of us, has a peculiar way of observing things.

⁴⁶ [TN] Hubert Lederer Dreyfus (1929–) is an American philosopher.

Spiritism teaches us that we complete each other through our differences. And if we diverge on the small things, we always agree on the essentials. This is why charity, which is love in action, must eliminate the edges of our personalism, teaching us that we are all important in the pursuit and realization of truth.

On the one hand, it is obvious that we should not agree with and approve of everything in silence because tolerance out of complacency is equivalent to collusion in error. On the other hand, conceited and vicious critique, which condemns everything that is done by others, is the repudiation of charity. But woe to us should we suppress criticism from Spiritism! for criticism, when reasonable and sincere, is the embodiment of the practice of vigilance that was taught by Jesus and exemplified by Paul of Tarsus. How could we use the “discernment of reason” of which Kardec spoke if we were to abdicate from the right to rationalize, which, beyond an entitlement, is a supreme duty of the spirit?

When Emmanuel says “To guide [ourselves] by mercy not by criticism,” he is referring to the negative criticism that is born out of pride as opposed to positive criticism, which manifests spontaneously from impartial and fraternal reasoning with the intent of correcting and therefore assisting.

The motto “To appreciate the efforts of others” does not imply appreciation of the errors and lapses of others, but signifies the recognition of the collective efforts towards the common good. We all need mercy, but as God shows us through the law of action and reaction, mercy is not the sanction of errors and illusions but rather rectification and enlightenment.

CHAPTER XXIX – PSYCHIC TUNNELING

INSIDE THE PROGRAM *PINGA FOGO*

Francisco Cândido Xavier

Francisco Xavier tells us in writing that Emmanuel had always been by his side during his first appearance in the television program *Pinga Fogo* on channel 4:

‘Emmanuel managed to control me so that, while connected by means of a symbiotic process in which I was only partially conscious, he could answer or

lead me to answer the questions that were asked. I am still unsure how it all happened, and I could only see the whole process when I watched the rerun here in Uberaba.

I was myself only, or better yet, I was conscious only a single time during the program *Pinga Fogo*, at the time that our dear Emmanuel stood back for a few moments so I could tell the airplane story; and by the end of the program, as I finished the psychography of the message by the poet Cyro Costa, Emmanuel allowed me to connect with my discarnate mother. Then, as hard as I tried, I was not able to contain the tears.'

In 1971, Francisco Xavier participated in two memorable *Pinga Fogo* episodes on the Brazilian Broadcast Network TV Tupi, channel 4, in São Paulo: one in July and the second in December.

WHEN JUDGMENT CALLS

Emmanuel

At the moment of judging someone, how can you evaluate the individual as a whole if you do not know everything?

Take the example of a crime being committed, which has shocked many.

Let us suppose that a deranged person has placed a bomb in a house with the intent of killing its residents. However, behind this individual there are those who fabricated the deadly device, those who stored it for its use at the opportune moment, others still who assessed its destructive power and approved of its existence, and finally those who, with indifference, followed the spark run down the wick without the least motivation to put it out.

How would you measure the regret of the spirit of an assassinated individual, considering the hypothesis of such person having provoked the opponent to the brink of driving the antagonist to kill in a moment of insanity? And how would you ponder on the anguish of the fellow assassin, perhaps isolated in the confines of a prison as a living-dead, when the allegedly deceased remains alive? Which measure would you use to assess the grief of one and the other?

With what blows or harsh words would you punish for a few hours the less fortunate creature, who already carries the ordeal of guilt like a torment that wrings the heart day and night?

On the occasion of one's moral fall, it is more sensible to approach the topic in an assistive manner than placing ourselves in the undeserving position of critics.

We would not have such a dire need for justice if we did not commit so many injustices; neither would we require medicine if we did not have diseases.

Would we perhaps have the need of so many multiple lessons on Earth regarding goodness if evil did not create pitfalls for us in almost every direction on the planet?

And where are those enjoying the glory of having been safely ensconced in goodness without harm from any evil, or those who are crossing the briars of evil without the advantages of any goodness?

At the moment of judging, let us ask Divine Providence for inspiration for the magistrates, whom circumstances have clothed in robes, so they may reach good verdicts in their decisions in honor of the common good, for the charges of a judge called upon to arbitrate on the order of the social institution are as delicate as the difficulties faced by the duty of a surgeon conscripted to intervene on the physical body.

And as for the rest of us, who are not under any service of legal sentencing, since we have not committed ourselves to such duties, let us use moderation and compassion in all circumstances of our personal daily experiences, being aware as much as possible that the just are support for the unjust, and the righteous constitute hope for all whom evil leads to insanity.

Should you be placed under judgment amongst the lowest of the accused, and quite possibly denied the right to defend your own conscience, then enlightened and serene, do not condemn anyone at your moment of judgment, not even those who by any chance may come to condemn you.

Be merciful always and you will do right.

THE MEDIUMISTIC TUNNEL

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

From the moment that discovery of antimatter by physics raises the hypothesis of the double universes, scientifically constructed in this case, the imagery of the mediumistic tunnel acquires a more pronounced expression. Such image is also a scientific construction, in this case created by the eminent British physicist Sir Oliver Lodge,⁴⁷ who advocated the following: that we live on a single world in a real universe, but that the latter must be understood as a uni-verse, one that is divided in two parts or verses. On the one verse there is the plane of humankind, and on the other the plane of the spirits; between the two there is the unknown great divide.

Human curiosity is immense and it has been digging and tunneling through this divide with the expectation of finding what is on the other side. Thus, a tunnel has been gradually built. Then, suddenly, human beings started to hear muffled knocking sounds coming in their direction. Those were from the residents of the spiritual plane who, driven by the same curiosity, had also been digging their tunnel. Day after day, the knocks have become more audible on both sides. Workers from the two verses have come very much close to each other, and it is now time for the complete tunnel to be finally open.

This image finds corroboration in the current referendum of the astrophysical hypothesis of double universes. In his book *The Universe*,⁴⁸ upon considering that particles of anti-matter produced in a laboratory annihilate themselves when coming into contact with a corresponding amount of particles of matter, producing twice the amount of energy in this explosive process in which the two disintegrate, Isaac Asimov proposes the existence of an intermediate element that simultaneously connects and separates the two universes. This element corresponds to the universal fluid in Spiritism, having the same etiologic, dynamic, and functional characteristics of that fluid.

⁴⁷ [TN] Sir Oliver Joseph Lodge (1851–1940) was a British physicist and writer. Besides his involvement in the development of key patents of wireless telegraphy, Sir Lodge also had an active interest in Spiritualism. The idea of a psychic tunnel is found described in LODGE, O. J. *Psychic science*. In: *The outline of science. A plain story simply told* (THOMSON, J. A., ed.), v.2, April 1922.

In addition, those are the same features of the perispiritual element, which comes from the universal fluid and functions as a liaison between the body and the spirit in the psychosomatic constitution of the human being. It is due to this intermediate element that mediumistic phenomena become possible, allowing spirits to communicate through especially sensitive people, as in the case of Francisco Cândido Xavier. Therefore, the mediumistic tunnel is created as a joint effort between mediums and spirits in their mutual desire to overcome death and separation so they may reach the cosmic era of transdimensional and transtemporal communication.

⁴⁸ [TN] Isaak Yudovich Ozimov (1919/1920–1992), known as Isaac Asimov, was a Russian-born American writer and Biology professor. In ASIMOV, I. *The universe. From flat Earth to quasars* (1966). Walker and Co., 3rd edition, January 1, 1980. ISBN-13: 978-0-802-70655-3.

In this inexorable and silent process, which develops at the core of human beings despite their sensorial or external abilities, the spirits show a greater interest in the moral development of earthly humankind. This is so because the intellectual progress of human beings already enables them to be fully

integrated with the cosmic humanity that populates the double universes of the infinite; and it is also why Francisco Xavier has received a much larger volume of communications of philosophical and moral nature in his forty years of psychographic work, having published 116 books so far besides thousands of messages in which he journeys through scientific fields.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ [TN] Francisco Xavier's impressive legacy to the Spiritist Doctrine consists of over 450 books psychographed by him until his passing on June 30, 2002.

CHAPTERXXX – EMOTIONALDETACHMENT

EMOTIONALATTACHMENT

Francisco Cândido Xavier

Francisco Xavier explains to us in a letter about the antecedents of the message concerning emotional attachment in the familial environment:

‘In the previous evening to one of our public assemblies, about fifty of us were collected at a friendly meeting devoted to the Gospel at home. The topic at that gathering was the difficulty in breaking family ties when the paths chosen by our beloved ones differ from ours. As expected, the topic led to an intense discussion and the debate continued on the following evening, before the public session.

As we began our tasks, The Gospel According to Spiritism produced item 9 from chapter XIV for our studies, clearly focusing on the ongoing comments. At the end of our meeting, our selfless friend Emmanuel presented us with the page entitled Detachment, which I forward to you, my dear friend, hoping that it may help our regular studies and reflections.’

DETACHMENT

Emmanuel

For many people on Earth, detachment in the emotional area represents a difficult trial, for instance, one's separation from the familial unit, the distance from companionship, the moment of extrication of one individual from another...

If you see yourself in this situation, therefore, in the position of releasing companions of ideals and affinities, do not waver in promoting the well-being that waits for your action.

Those who yearn for independence and change, after having shared their experiences with you, are mendicants of tranquility and renewal. They do not have as much need for your gold or assistance, name or reputation, but rather

plead, above all, for foundations of tolerance and kindness so they may be able to leave you without inciting the briars of resentment in your heart.

Think of those whom you also abandoned one day in order to board other vessels, different from the ship that embodied your domestic environment, with the intent of set yourself out to the deep and vast sea of the earthly experience.

Relatives who cherished your presence and friends who partook of your company, all became separated from you as a result of your own deliberations.

We therefore express ourselves in this manner because the harmony in detachment quite often depends on those who have already matured in the physical life, to whom we ask for assistance and safety, support and validation.

If someone near you asks to be relieved of their commitments and obligations towards you, offer peace to those who need it so that they may tend to the directives of life in other areas of evolution.

You sincerely wish happiness warranted to your descendants, and you do not want your beloved children to cross the paths of tribulations and mistakes that embittered your childhood or adolescence; you become used to disapproving of resolutions from friends to distance themselves down avenues that you already know to be drenched in tears; neither do you agree with beloved relatives walking down roads already journeyed by you among obstacles and afflictions. Nevertheless, no matter how painful it might be to us, many of those whom we love the most came to Earth to experience exactly those conditions.

Neither deplore nor condemn the situation of companions who distance themselves from your company or bid you farewell only to meet you later at other and new levels of space and time.

Bless and support them always.

Those who depart or become separated from you on the road, in your daily life, expect from you, above all, the support of love and the protection of blessing.

THESTUDENTS' TRAIN⁵⁰

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Emmanuel places the problem of emotional detachment in two stances: the separation of our loved ones who move away from the home and the departure for “other and new levels of space and time.” In both cases, there is a disruption to the bond of companionship. In both cases, there is moral suffering on both sides. This subject is discussed in item 9 of chapter XIV of The Gospel According to Spiritism where we find the following advice to those who suffer: “The great trials, understand me well, are almost always indicative of an end to suffering and an improvement for the spirit as long as the spirit accepts them in God.”

The disaster of the students’ train between Suzano and Jundiapéba on June 8, 1972 belongs to the chapter of collective trials. In addition to the dead and injured, the relatives, friends and acquaintances of the victims also suffered with this trial. This tragedy reached a much larger community. We observe here a process of collective detachment. So many homes in mourning for the loss of loved ones, so many broken hearts, so many spirits stunned by the brutality of the event!

⁵⁰ [TN] The railroad disaster on June 8, 1972 became known to the press as the Students’ Train. This particular line was used by many students attending local universities. On that date, the train departed Roosevelt Station in the city of São Paulo at 7 AM towards the city of Mogi das Cruzes; however, due to a malfunction on the transmission lines, the train stopped for lack of electricity between the stations of Suzano and Jundiapéba. Minutes later, another train running on the same line and direction collided with the halted train, leaving 24 dead and 66 seriously wounded.

What is most impressive is the number of young people who had their lives suddenly cut short on their way to colleges in the region of Mogi das Cruzes. Everything seems terrifying, stupefying, as if one were in a chaotic world, without order, without law, without God. Nevertheless, the universe responds with the absolute order of its laws, which oversee everything, from the humble grass on Earth to the gigantic constellations of the infinite.

Nothing happens by chance. Everything results from the law of cause and effect, and every effect has a meaning: that of evolution. We are all imperfect spirits and we suffer in the trials that we petitioned for before reincarnating. We have collective debts to pay. However, freedom, peace and progress await us in addition to our redemption. The young who died were spared future sufferings in a life in which disease, senility, and death are the wages paid to all of us.

They are all spiritual beings, not material ones, and they were transferred to the Greater Life, which truly corresponds to their needs and nature. They now need understanding from their parents, siblings, friends and colleagues, whom they left behind on Earth. They need peace, prayers, positive thoughts, and

vibrations of sincere friendship for their spiritual convalescence.

CHAPTERXXXI – THE DIVINE PLAN
HONORARY CITIZENSHIP OF SÃO PAULO
Francisco Cândido Xavier

The City Council of São Paulo granted Francisco Cândido Xavier the title of Honorary Citizen of the City of São Paulo⁵¹. We wrote to the medium to congratulate him, considering the enormous significance of this fact to Spiritism, which has been gradually receiving the official recognition of its religious and cultural values for our country. Francisco Xavier answered us with a letter whose most important topics we transcribe below.

‘Dear friend:

Your letter was to me a blessing of comfort and joy. I am grateful for what you tell me with your friendly kindness. Truly, I have never attended any ceremony of a spiritist nature with the idea of being there on my own behalf or because of any expectation of personal merit. I have always joined these events to fulfill my duty to our principles; nothing else beyond that.

⁵¹ [TN] Francisco Xavier received the honorary citizenship of the city of São Paulo during a great ceremony in that city, capital of the state of the same name, on May 19, 1973.

In such events, I always feel as the lowest employee of an organization, who is present there only to receive a report from the company that has clearly engaged his services. Despite all that, the group of opponents relentlessly write to me with accusations of vanity, pride, pedantry, and other disorders.

Therefore, I thank your blessed words because the considerations that we have received are dedicated to Spiritism rather than to me personally. And as a matter of fact, I cannot respond with stoning such expressions of respect and affection to our doctrine.

I send you the message that was psychographed during our public meeting. Some of the visitors had discussed the subject of peace before the proceedings, which was likely a result of the current events happening in Vietnam, and the opinions, as always, differed significantly.

With our tasks initiated, The Spirits’ Book provided us question 921, and some enlightening explanations came from our attending companions. At the end of the meeting, our dear Emmanuel wrote the page Message of Peace.’

MESSAGE OF PEACE

Emmanuel

In the execution of any protocol designed to orchestrate happiness, do not forget the advice that happiness comes from within you.

Do not expect from the world the security that can only be formulated by you, within you.

Never despise the tasks that life has entrusted upon you.

The work you carry out today is the foundation of your future support.

Accept yourself for who you are and whatever qualities you possess in order to do the best that you can.

Note always that there is not a single individual bereft of value or whose assistance you might not need some day.

As much as possible, keep the light of virtue that guides your elevation, but do not let your virtue live without the means to reach down to those who are struggling through the gales of adversity, asking for your help and understanding.

Be faithful to the ideals you embrace without disregarding the side of truth in which others believe.

Use patience in the small difficulties so you may not lack serenity amidst the great crises that we must all endure in the course of time.

Neither become attached to the aspirations of youth nor be complacent with the weariness of many who have still not learned to live with the creativity brought forth by maturity.

Recall that no one has found out so far the point of interaction where fatigue ends and idleness begins.

Practice spiritual strength at every moment so your energies may not be snuffed out unexpectedly when the calamities of the human experience inevitably occur.

Resign yourself to fulfill your journey in this world among those who may reveal themselves in the condition of natural opponents to your points of view, and refrain from making enemies and nourishing resentment.

Neither abuse of nor be flippant about the feelings of others.
Keep your peace, even during great struggles.

Do not believe in pessimism, defeat, solitude or abandonment because if love is within you, as it is determined by the laws of the universe, you will find beauty and joy in any circumstance and anywhere on Earth.

Finally, never despair because no one can steal your privilege to immortality or oust you from God's plan whomever and wherever you are.

GOD'S PLAN

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

We are all included in God's plan. This strategy leads us in time to peace and eternity. But the static concept of eternity does not prevail in Spiritism, where it appears as linked to duration. Time is the fragmentary view of duration, a piece of the absolute that our relative perceptions can use. Those who cling to the relative, the illusions of the temporary, oblivious to their own transcendence, live in restlessness and, therefore, at war with themselves and the world.

God's plan is the universal orchestration of evolution, and we only have a glimpse of the few pieces that are accessible to our senses. But our mind, which is the brain of our soul, is capable of a perception that is beyond the senses. As parapsychological experiences have already proven scientifically, we are able to envision the past and the future clearly, thereby corroborating the spiritist researches of over a century ago. Those who learn to liberate themselves from the relative in order to catch a glimpse of the duration, which is eternity through a dynamic concept, learn to overcome restlessness and find peace.

Through evolution, our mind unfolds like a flower that blooms towards the progressive perception of the absolute which, in turn, affords us peace. Not the worldly peace that Jesus taught us, but the peace of the spirit. The individual perception of this peace gradually evolves into a collective accomplishment as humanity becomes enlightened and the world is transformed. Thus, through the human evolution and that of the world, the peace of the spirit, which may look individual at first, will unfold to be collective and universal.

It is important to remember that nothing and no one will ever be able to oust us from God's plan.

CHAPTERXXXII – ATONEMENT AND PROGRESS

THEPARAPLEGICWOMAN

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘Hours before our public meeting, we went to the neighboring town in the company of four brothers who had joined our group in order to pay a visit to a sick child. Not far from the house of the infirm little girl, we met a paraplegic woman in an almost completely isolated corner of an extensive rural area, who asked us to pray with her for a few moments.

Amiable and in great suffering, living off public charity, and destitute of relatives, her situation touched us profoundly.

After our regular visit to the homes of a few brothers and sisters of ours, we returned to our meeting and engaged ourselves in the preparations for the work of the evening.

The Gospel According to Spiritism offered to our examination the beautiful page entitled An Earthly Regality, from chapter II, which is signed by a spiritual entity who reported the struggles with which she met in the highly privileged position she had when on Earth.

The communication was kindly studied by one of the sisters present at our meeting. At the conclusion of our work, the poet Epifânio Leite⁵² brought us a sonnet with his expressive dedication. The poet, a discarnate being himself, informed us by psychophony of his intent to refer to the paraplegic woman in great material penury whom we had visited a few hours earlier.’

RENEWAL⁵³
Epifânio Leite

These verses are dedicated to the venerable sister whom we knew in earthly royalty four centuries ago. Highly educated, she did not spread the benefits of intelligence; she was an unconditional friend of her friends, and an implacable fiend to her adversaries; generous to the wealthy aristocrats, and indifferent to the victims of penury.

Although she emphasized the advantages of peace, she encouraged the wars of conquest and ambition as much as she could. She was grateful to the obedient vassals, and persecuted to the death those who did not observe her directives. She reached the hereafter loved and hated, and before the truth she became concerned with her own redemption.

⁵² [TN] Epifânio Leite de Albuquerque (1891–1942) authored the book of poetry *Escada de Jacó* (Jacob’s Ladder). He was a member of the Academy of Letters of the State of Ceará and a judge in Baturité, a city in the state of Ceará, the same state in which he was born. His poetry is characterized by formal rigor and tenderness of sentiments.

⁵³ [TN] Refer to footnote 38 on page 175.

She returned to Earth many times, gradually extinguishing the ostentatious light she once donned until she finally pleaded for her last trial, in which we presently identify her: rehabilitation in an infirm and disfigured body through accentuated penury for her imminent ascension to the greater spirituality.

We offer here a pale homage to this valorous and admirable sister, capable of committing herself to oblivion and enduring great suffering until the complete reparation of her self-importance, and we wish her a fulfilling victory in Jesus and with Jesus.

I recall thy sovereignty in the panels of memory!
The throne framing thy regal face of yester-years...
Thou oppressest with fear, strikest ere thy rule veers,
through idle opulence shinest thou of vanity illusory!
Passion emblazes thy hunger for all and vainglory,
Thou exilest and destroyest, degradest and imprisonest...
Yet, among austere forces, death upon thou comes trest,
And under ashes thou resignest thy pomp transitory! Times are gone... On
hard, narrow cradle thou today I spied,
paraplegic and lonely, to the bedstead all tied!
I cried on seeing thy ruined chamber, thy humble abode!
But I praise the gall of today before the sun of morrow...
for thou shalt rise to the kingdom of pure love through sorrow,
in thy starry carriage of divine white lilies emblazoned lode!

PAIN: THE LAW OF EQUILIBRIUM

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

It is easy to say that such episode might arise from suggestion. Francisco Xavier believes in reincarnation, has been impressed by the paraplegic woman and, therefore, unconsciously attempted to explain the situation. During the spiritist meeting, he entered a trance, and from his unconscious mind sprung the sonnet and the dedication through automatic writing. If you asked how one could explain the random opening of the Gospel on that particular page, it would be easy to claim influence of the circumstances; however, such an explanation would not go further than a hypothetical construction, one without any objective evidence; a simple pseudoscientific fantastic account.

There are no such fabrications in the spiritist doctrine. Instead, there are facts and corroboration. Since Kardec's time, scrutinized and experienced

mediumship has corroborated its reality through positive results as well as evidence gathered from the materialist scientific area itself. Systematic and objective evidence has been obtained by metapsychic and parapsychological researches, techniques to investigate the reincarnation process, and analysis of psychography in its two aspects, the animic (automatic writing), and the spiritic (psychic writings of spiritual authors who are rigorously identified). Moreover, one may add to this list the daily and universal convergence of pieces of evidence from all over the world.

Where does the poet Epifânio Leite fit in this unconscious fabrication? How and why did he surface in the subliminal memory of Francisco Xavier? And how did this fanciful imagery manage to imitate the style of the poet? We know that Epifânio Leite is almost completely unknown as a poet and that the medium is not a specialist in poetry or literary history. As we confront this episode with many others in the spiritist bibliography and psychic sciences, we have no reason to doubt its veracity. The spiritual hypothesis is confirmed in the universal testimony of the facts. It has been scientifically legitimized through studies and researches, both spiritist and non-spiritist, for more than a century.

Léon Denis defined pain as “a law of equilibrium and education.” We see in this episode the action of this law in the span of four centuries. We do not observe God punishing the late sovereign, but rather her subjecting herself to the law of equilibrium in order to reach through pain the understanding and the feeling of humanity she was found wanting in the past.

CHAPTER XXXIII – THE ACTUAL IMPORTANCE OF TIME

THE TRANSIENCE OF LIFE

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘The page of ballads from our spiritual friend Luciano dos Reis was received at the conclusion of our public meeting.

Before the beginning of the New Year,⁵⁴ the conversations preceding our duties revolved around the transience of human life.

Many companions deeply regretted losing certain opportunities, whereas others launched inquiries regarding the concept of time in our lives.

As our work started, question 992 from *The Spirits’ Book* provided a foundation for honest reflections.

THE BALLAD OF TIME⁵⁵

Luciano dos Reis

I teach that life insists

upon building and rebuilding;
the time that creates hatred

⁵⁴ [TN] *The New Year of 1973.*

⁵⁵ [TN] *Refer to footnote 38 on page 175.*

is the same that brings forth living.

The individual without time,

who waste it not in vain,

never finds time in time

to oneself temptation feign.

Some do not steal money,

nor similar advantage they strife;

but they rather rob the value of time

a necessity for the light of life.

It is the philosophy of time

in any time and place:

‘Woe to the human heart

that knows not how to pace.’

Time reminisces of the land

where the forest grows unhindered,

whose soil receives any seed,

and produces whatever’s planted.

Goodness, assistance, and service;

Rescue, attention, and dues... Realize time does not stop,

there is not a moment to lose.

Action is our mind in the open

on a screen our life it envelops,

from where others photograph us,

which time later develops.

To find true justice,

on Eternal Good must you ponder...

God gives equal time to all,

No creature is left asunder.

TIME TO LIVE

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

The issue of time has been preoccupying humankind since individuals began to think and have consciousness of themselves and of the world. Many have pondered on this problem without anyone solving it. The first aphorism of Hippocrates appears in Latin in the classic form *Ars longa, vita brevis*,⁵⁶ which Luiz Vaz de Camões⁵⁷ paraphrases in the verse “Too long is love for such short a life!”⁵⁸

The weekly Spiritist Symposium of Uberaba would have to confront this problem as well, but they would now have a spiritist solution available to them.

The Ecclesiastes states that God makes time for everything. In the book Genesis by Allan Kardec, we find a definition of time that shows its inherent relativity. This relativity in time becomes accentuated in the doctrine of successive lives, or palingenesic existences, that are solidary among themselves. For each existence, one particular time, that which is necessary to carry out the responsibilities that the spirit brings with itself as its inalienable duties for that reincarnation.

Therefore, the aphorism *Ars longa, vita brevis* corresponds only to a limited vision of things. God grants us time for everything, but not in exiguous limits of one reincarnation. The poet Camões could see the infinite extension of art, in which he would be capable of creating endlessly, but anguished with the minute amount of time he had available. Nevertheless, beyond the existential limits, he would have available to himself the limitless boundaries of life, which are amplified in duration by the concept of immortality. As a day is too short for the execution of a particular task, and we may extend it with the following day, so it is with the succession of reincarnations.

⁵⁶ [TN] This aphorism is present in the work *Aphorismi* by the Greek physician Hippocrates and it is rendered in English as “Art is long, life is short.” The Latin sentence *Ars longa, vita brevis* actually reverses the order of the original lines.

⁵⁷ [TN] Luís Vaz de Camões (1524(?)–1580) is considered the greatest poet of Portugal and the Portuguese language, whose mastery of verse has been compared to that of Shakespeare, Vondel, Homer, Virgil, and Dante. Among a considerable amount of lyrical poetry and drama, Camões is best remembered for his epic work *Os Lusíadas* (The Lusiads), whose influence in the Portuguese language is so profound that it is called the “language of Camões.”

⁵⁸ [TN] The original reads “*Para tão longo amor, tão curta a vida!*” and it is one of the verses of a sonnet.

The existentialist philosophies call our attention to the here and now but the spiritist existentialism, in valuing these categories during the transient moment, does not forget that we have already had yesterday and that we will certainly have tomorrow at our disposal. It was in the past, the moment of yesterday, that we conditioned our here and now to the execution of certain tasks, and God grants us the present day for it. If we come to administer time well, it will not appear to us to be insufficient; conversely, if we squander time, we will condition tomorrow to new angsts related to it.

This is how we should understand the final verses of Luciano dos Reis: “God

gives equal time to all, no creature is left asunder.” We demand from time what we should be claiming from ourselves because what we lack at the moment corresponds exactly to what we squandered just a moment ago. If we make use of each passing minute with intelligence and care, we will see that God has granted us time for everything we really have to accomplish in this life.

CHAPTERXXXIV – SELF-PUNISHMENT

BALLADS IN ANSWER

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘During our public meeting, we received a page signed by our friend Cornélio Pires,⁵⁹ who is today a worker of light and goodness in the spiritual world.

A few days ago, I received a letter from a personal friend of his, still [among the incarnates] here on Earth, asking my opinion about suicide. We recalled the topic as a discussion point during the evening activities of our meeting.

After the initial prayer, The Spirits’ Book brought question 943 for our studies. At the end of our studies, our spiritual friend mentioned above wrote to us the following ballad, which he entitled Suicide.’

Note : *Question 943 of The Spirit’s Book is the following: [Q] Where does the weariness of life come from, which takes possession of some individuals without any plausible reason?*

[A] It is the effect of idleness, lack of faith, and often, satiety. For those who employ their faculties in the pursuit of a useful aim according to their natural aptitudes, there is nothing harsh about work, and life flows more quickly; they bear the vicissitudes of life with even more patience and resignation for they look forward to the more solid and durable happiness that awaits them.

⁵⁹ [TN] *Cornélio Pires (1884–1958) was a Brazilian journalist, writer, and folklorist.*

SUICIDE⁶⁰

Cornélio Pires

Suicide, do not think of it,
not even as a joking rhyme...
for an act like this will bring
sufferings that’ll last a lifetime.

In love, Quim⁶¹ drowned himself in a well
in Guararema, bidding his life farewell.
In expiation he was later reborn,

with emphysema his body was shorn.

The young girl Dilermanda ⁶⁰ [TN] Refer to footnote 38 on page 175.

⁶¹ [NT] The names mentioned here are fictitious. They were kept as the original entries.

with certain shot killed herself.

She came back in sickly body,
cannot talk, see, not even walk.

Ms. Cesária da Estiva...

set herself on fire yore.

She is now again back on Earth
with a body covered in sores.

Maricota da Trindade

killed herself with insecticide.

Returned to life with cancer,
and died after four years of stride.

Columbano tried really hard,
and rebelliously he hoped to plea...

But he brought the same disease:
paraplegia for each one 'round to see.

Ms. Lilia Dagele

with gasoline she went all ablaze.

In new body she bears the scabies, reminding her of that fire of daze.

Tolerate in patience

any problem or atonement;

for there's no escape in dying,

all that counts is improvement.

THESELF-PUNISHMENT

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

God does not punish the suicidal individuals; they are the ones who punish themselves. The notion of divine punishment is profoundly transformed in the Spiritist Doctrine. As we understand the universe to be a consistent set of laws, a dynamic sequence of inter-related actions and reactions, we cannot think of punishments of a mythological nature after death. Human beings are immersed in this ocean of actions and reactions; however, empowered with the free will that reasoning promotes, they are like the swimmer who confronts the fatalism of the currents with the means to overcome them.

No one is dragged down in life by the exclusive force of the circumstances. Human consciousness is sovereign, and it has reasoning and will to control and guide itself. Moreover, human beings are always supported by the spiritual forces that govern the flow of everything; hence the recommendation from Jesus 'Pray and be vigilant.' Prayers are the elevated thoughts towards

highorder planes of existence, the connection between the divers of the flesh and their counterparts on the surface, and vigil is the control of the circumstances, which all human beings must have while immersed in the existence of the flesh.

Suicidal individuals are frightened swimmers who throw themselves at the rocks, and who allow the voraciousness of the waters to drag them, renouncing the opportunities to conquer the currents with the sheer force of their arms and power of their courage under the spiritual protection that we all enjoy. Life is an exercise for the powers of the spirit. Those who abandon the exercise by their free will are abdicating of their own development and, as a result, suffer the natural consequences of this negative choice. Nevertheless, a new opportunity will be given, albeit now with the added weight of the previous failure.

Cornélio Pires, the rustic poet of the city of Tietê,⁶² answers the question of his friend through many examples of concrete cases, which speak more than formal argumentation. Each one of our actions leads to a reaction in life. The art of living consists in controlling our actions—mental, emotional, and physical—to such an extent that we end up rewarding or punishing ourselves. However, even under punishment, we are not abandoned by God, who watches over us in our conscience.

⁶² [TN] A small city in the state of São Paulo, Brazil, with a population of over 39,000 in 2013 (statistical data from the municipal government.)

CHAPTERXXXV – THE TWOPLANES OFEXISTENCE

OUR INFLUENCE ON THE DECEASED

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘During our public meeting, we were invited to study the influence of our behavior and reactions on our discarnate companions during the earthly existence, who are incorrectly addressed as “the dead.” The invitation came from The Gospel According to Spiritism which, when opened at random, provided item 19 from chapter XXVIII for our analysis. The opinions voiced by many of the colleagues present were instructive, proving that the subject is being discussed with the necessary seriousness despite the peculiarity of the topic to many individuals.

At the end of our work, Emmanuel provided the psychographed page that I hereby send to you. Many of our companions, including myself, would really appreciate seeing it published along with your annotations in *O Diário de São Paulo* as an extension and complementation of our studies and analyses.

I received your book *Agonia das Religiões*⁶³ (Agony of the Religions), an admirable document about the importance of the Spiritist Codification for the world. I thank you for both your kindness and generous dedicatory, which brought me great comfort and much happiness.

⁶³ [TN] PIRES, J. H. *Agonia das religiões* (1976). Editora Paideia, São Paulo, Brazil, 3rd edition, 1989. 168pp. ISBN-13: 978-85-88849-50-1. [This title is not available in English.]

RESOLUTELY

Emmanuel

If you have already managed to acquire a spark of faith in immortality, remain resolutely on the path to goodness to which that light has brought you; and walk forward in the footsteps of the realizations at which you aim.

Indubitably, you will observe downpours of difficulties and high winds of incomprehension against this faith every once in a while; and above it all, you will have your heart confronted by those companions who became marginalized in the shadows, and who now supplicate you for the light without showing respect for it.

This one will accuse you of selfishness and pride for walking with a small lit lantern, while ignoring how much effort and discipline it costs you to do so; another will attempt to steal from you its minuscule flame in order to rule over it with violence; yet another will lay ambushes to you in order to convert it into despondency and frustration; and you will find others still, who come out of the fog to use that flicker of light in the discovery of earthly advantages or the prominence of human trivialities with which they have already succumbed to darkness in past circumstances.

Resist all these companions with energy, understanding, serenity, and faith in God. Such is the process, for the small lamp that has been accorded to you by divine mercy is a respectable loan so that you may conduct yourself with fewer insecurities down the redemptive paths you take, or where you are; and in doing so, you may somehow offer some assistance to your companions in experience, who walk forward with you, bearing sincerity and love for others. And in the companionship of these sowers of goodness, next to whom life has placed you to work and serve, learn and improve, hold the conviction that the light of God will also nourish you to the extent that you remain resolutely on the task to fulfill.

SOCIOLOGY OF THE INTERMUNDIUM

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

When we fixate our minds only on this world and give in to this idea, body and soul, the extraphysical reality remains beyond our field of mental perception.

The laws of optics apply to this field in a precise manner. If we always look to the left, we will not see what happens to our right. Those who look only to Earth do not envision heaven. Therefore, individuals dedicated to studying human psychology attribute the psychic and mediumistic phenomena exclusively to organic reactions. They see only cause and effect in the relationships between humans and the environment, falling prey to the inexorable confusion between psychology and ecology, as it was pointed out by Prof. Joseph Rhine.

Proof of such confusion lies on the historic fact of psychic, metapsychic, and parapsychological experiments, which led some of the most orthodox scientists in the past, such as William Crookes⁶⁴ and Charles Richet,⁶⁵ and recently, Samuel⁶⁶ Soal and Whately Carington,⁶⁷ to correct their single-eyed vision and admit to the reality of the other dimension of life, to the dismay of their peers. All legitimate scientists, who dared expand their visual fields, they had the honesty and courage to contest the optical distortion of others.

⁶⁴ [TN] Sir William Crookes (1832–1919) was a British chemist and physicist. He attended the Royal College of Chemistry in London and is famous for works on spectroscopy. The Crookes tube is named after him for his pioneering studies of vacuum tubes. He also became actively engaged in spiritualistic works in the mid 1860s, studying various phenomena with the mediums Kate Fox, Florence Cook, and Daniel Dunglas Home.

⁶⁵ [TN] Charles Robert Richet (1850–1935) was a French physiologist who studied many areas of knowledge including neurochemistry, digestion, thermoregulation in homeothermic animals, and breathing. He was the recipient of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1913 for his work on anaphylaxis. He was also an avid researcher of paranormal phenomena and believed that there was a physical explanation for them. He worked intensely with the mediums Eva Carrière and Eusapia Palladino and believed that some mediumship phenomena could be explained physically by the external projection of a material substance or ectoplasm, although he denied any association with spirits.

⁶⁶ [TN] Samuel George Soal (1889–1975) was a British mathematician and psychical researcher.

⁶⁷ [TN] Walter Whately Carington (1892–1947) was a British parapsychologist.

Consequently, and without much contestation, current researchers of parapsychological phenomena were able to arrive at the conclusion from Charles Richet that “death [is] but the entrance into a new life.” This discovery expands the field of human relationships according to a paranormal perspective, scientifically sanctioning a reality that has been known for millennia, that is, the one between the living in the physical plane and the living in the extraphysical one.

The statement of Auguste Comte⁶⁸ that the living are more and more dominated by the dead is pulled away from its meaning of pure recollection, and it becomes integrated into the reality of our daily lives. In much the same way the dead influence us, so do we exert influence on them. Our attitudes and reactions, behaviors, much more than our remembrances and prayers, affect the beloved creatures who continue to be linked to us for they are still whom they used to be, they continue to be alive without solution of continuity. This is the new and important piece of information that Spiritism offers to the sociological moral, transforming it into a spiritual one.

⁶⁸ [TN] Isidore Auguste Marie François Xavier Comte (1798–1857), better known as Auguste Comte, was a French philosopher and founder of the discipline of sociology and of the doctrine of positivism.

ON THE DAILY PATH

Emmanuel

Every so often, reflect upon the brothers and sisters who became embittered by pessimism and upon the interrupted great works in life as a result of extreme lack of assistance, resembling fertile fields forsaken to sterility and abandonment for want of love.

Hearts abound next to you which, desirous of understanding and collaboration, await almost exclusively for the magical touch of a good word in order to ignite in the ability to serve.

Do not consent to the presence of dejection at your table of fraternity and harmony.

No matter how many individuals may seek you for incentive and companionship, offer the rich bread of enthusiasm that feeds your own accomplishments.

Sow hope and courage on the fields of the spirit.

Recall the rain that creates and the dew that nourishes, with which nature revitalizes the energies of Earth, and offer others the best in yourself. The other is our bridge to the world.

Show yourself in the action and service towards the victory of goodness, and your message will be radiated by all those who heed your voice or believe in the great work.

At every opportunity, we feel ourselves before the community as if faced by

our own family in expectation.

Show sympathy and admiration, kindness and optimism.

Beneficence is not only the dispensation of solutions to problems of a material nature, but also, and considerably more, the first aid against the impoverishment of the spirit.

Stop to reflect upon the tired, sad, disillusioned, discouraged, and exhausted companions who cross your path in life, and share with them peace and renewal.

Much like it happens to others, so must you carry out your duties; the door of assistance opens from inside out.

If someone needs you, so it is with you.

The best means of receiving will always be to give of yourself.

ABRIDGE TO THE WORLD

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Individuals who keep exclusively to themselves are selfish animals.

According to the vernacular, they do not see past the end of their noses. They think only of themselves, take care only of their interests. They do not live like people, but stagnate like rats in their holes. Emmanuel warns us in his message against this danger of wont, this terrible situation of being saturated with selfishness; and providing the medicine, he says “The other is our bridge to the world.”

When Descartes doubted all the knowledge of his time, he discovered the idea of God in the deepest recesses of himself. That idea served him as a bridge to reconnect him with the world from which he had isolated himself. Emmanuel shows us that the bridge is our brothers and sisters. And this is in agreement with the evangelic teaching that loving others is the same as loving God. The bridge to the world, therefore, consists in the commandment of loving God above all things, and others as one loves oneself.

Selfish individuals consider all this as simple nonsense. But social life takes upon itself to be responsible for proving the reality of such teachings, for no one can live alone, isolated, sealed in their own husk. We all need others. There are two forms of transcendence according to psychologist Karl Jaspers: a horizontal transcendence and a vertical one. Humans can only elevate themselves, transcend the narrow limitations of their ego and animality, by linking themselves to others on the plane of social relationships (horizontal transcendence) or elevating themselves to God through religious sentiments (vertical transcendence). Those who elevate themselves by means of

horizontal transcendence end up ascending vertically as well, and vice-versa.

It is easy and rather comfortable to consider others exactly as such, as other people, strangers to us. The vulgar individual proceeds so. However, human beings who surpass the ordinary, who exhibit a more open-minded behavior than the common individual, know that the others are also our brothers and sisters, and that their pains are ours as well. Hence Emmanuel's teachings that "if someone needs you, so it is with you." Perfect sociability consists in understanding this principle.

CHAPTERXXXVI – THEPOWER OF THE WRITTENWORD

MISSION OF THEPRESS

Francisco Cândido Xavier

'We were discussing the mission of the press before our meeting started. Surprisingly, as we initiated our work, The Spirits' Book brought question 904 to our analysis. The topic was debated amicably, and at the end of our activities, Emmanuel wrote to us the page that follows.

As a result of the great reflections we were called upon to make by Allan Kardec's considerations, we place the page of our spiritual friend in your hands, hoping to see it under your analysis on your Sunday column of the newspaper *O Diário de São Paulo* to further our thoughts on the subject.'

THEACT OFWRITING

Emmanuel

To write with dignity... Would this process demand only high literary standards from those dedicated to the exteriorization of ideas through writing, freezing images with precious words?

Indubitably, all writers are creditors of respect, even those who distinguish themselves by possessing a completely hermetic sense.

However, it is of the utmost importance to consider, above all else, that writing must be performed with edification.

We understand that the materialized rewarding idea is preferably destined to noble venues, where it comes together with those present there and elicits educative creations that honor humanity. Nevertheless, such usage does not preclude its function in other areas, where it tends to different objectives in a much more forceful approach.

Let us momentarily observe the fields of experience in which millions of human beings are immersed, waiting for a thought that might adapt them to their necessities. Under these circumstances, we do not find themes belonging to symposia or highly specific topics, despite their being both dignifying and indispensable.

On the occasion of trials and edifying strives, we identify a hunger for renewing ideas that deliver consolation and hope, guidance and faith, pulling those hearts away from the darkness of irreflection and rebelliousness. There is a pressing need for writings that translate into assistance to the morally infirm in order to reinvigorate them; support to those being dragged by afflictions; medicine to the sick of spirit; a lifeline to those marooned on Earth; an aid to all who writhe in the immense waves of imbalance so they may reach a safe shore.

To write, yes, but knowing what one writes, how one writes, and for what and to whom one writes, for the thought creates the idea, the idea molds the verb, the verb establishes the action, and the action, in turn, creates one's destiny. As a result of such process, it is important to remember that life will bring back to us tomorrow, in absolute detail, everything that we write in the canvases of today.

LESSON FOR THE MASTERS

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

On the pages he sent to Earth after his death, through the admirable mediumship of Fernando de Lacerda,⁶⁹ Eça de Queiroz⁷⁰ tells us that his literary baggage was considered damaged by the customs office of the afterlife. Using Francisco Xavier's psychography, Humberto de Campos⁷¹ warned that the values debased by the writer in his earthly works were actually the most important ones in the spiritual realm.

⁶⁹ [TN] Fernando Augusto de Lacerda e Mello (1865–1918), known simply as Fernando de Lacerda, was a Portuguese medium. After the regicide of king Dom Carlos and the prince Luís Filipe in 1908, he suffered intense persecution for his ideological affiliation to the monarchy, which led him to self-exile in Brazil.

⁷⁰ [TN] José Maria de Eça de Queirós (1845–1900) was a Portuguese poet. He is considered one of the most important Portuguese writers of all times. Among his vast works, the following romances have received great acclaim: *Os Maias* (The Mayans), *O Primo Basílio* (Cousin Basilio), *Contos* (Short Stories), and *O Crime do Padre Amaro* (The Crime of Father Amaro).

Emmanuel confirms this assessment in his present message, which he ends with a précis regarding the mechanics of communication. In his analysis, we

realize that communication is not only the transmission of ideas, but also a process of creation.

In the development of destiny, which spans from sentiment to action, the heavy responsibilities of those who write become clearly evident. The most important aspect of writing is not the improvement of the form, neither is that of the discovery of new aesthetic formulations, which have become an obsessive behavior in present times. Artificial originality is like a greenhouse flower. Only that which spouts with spontaneity from the creative faculty is actually original. Literary or journalistic success has no meaning if it is not determined by the legitimate effort to serve, enriching the spiritual wealth of humanity.

The fascination with immediate accomplishments nourishes the vanity in authors, and disturbs their vision of a broader reality. Life is fleeting, and death will take them to the plane of retrospection in a world where appearances burst like soap bubbles. However, the worst consequence is that the literary works remain in the terrestrial realm of illusions, still eliciting feelings that will foment new creative destinies and deviate other vocations from their right paths.

⁷¹ [TN] Humberto de Campos Veras (1886–1934), known simply as Humberto de Campos, was a Brazilian writer, journalist, and politician.

The responsibility of authors, which on Earth is disguised by aesthetic mirages, are unveiled to their spiritual eyes in the other plane of existence in an undisguisable manner.

Therefore, we may say that this short message from Emmanuel is a lesson sent from the afterlife to writing masters. In a time when anxious crowds seek words of orientation and motivation, the responsibility of those who write is to tend to these demands instead of exploiting the general state of confusion.

The emperors of modern culture, refined creators of artifacts that scintillate in the writings like little jewels, and the exploiters of sensationalism, will all be able to see on this page from Emmanuel the opportune warning that they need so much, if they are capable of exercising enough humility in their efforts.

MEDIUMSHIP AND EXPERIENCE

Emmanuel

If car factories relied exclusively upon the authorities who designed their machines, assessing resistance or engineering the perfection of form, they

would be nothing but nurseries for the preservation of models.

If laboratories only made use of the intelligences who compose formulae that result in exact combinations of chemical agents, medication would never reach the infirm.

If music counted solely on the experienced composers to register its beauty on stave, it would never come out from silence into the field of sounds to the assistance to human beings.

So it is with mediumship.

If mediumistic events should count only with the presence of scholars and analysts who investigate its manifestations and scrutinize its statements, the spiritual communication would wane towards nonexistence.

We most certainly have a need for specialists and technicians in all theoretical fields, but we may neither disregard the practice of the teachings related to progress and improvement nor disparage those who are dedicated to its exercise, whereupon giving the best in themselves in support of their fellow companions.

Without drivers and mechanics, who quite often risk their lives on behalf of others, the world would not have vehicles for time-saving transportation.

Without workers and distributors, striving with great efforts, medication would not reach the infirm.

Without interpreters addressing it with complete devotion, music would not come out from the jotted notes.

And without instruments that are concordant with bearing obstacles and problems, difficulties and trials for the benefit of the cause of love and truth amongst fellow human beings, mediumship would effectively help no one.

FORM AND LANGUAGE

J. Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

The mediumistic message from Emmanuel in *Mediumship and Experience* is usually considered innocuous by some scholars of Spiritism for two main reasons: firstly, for its allegorical construction, using redundant language and an apparent waste of time and space; and secondly, for lack of elements that confirm its spiritual origin as oppose to having a solely animic origin. However, the message carries its justification in itself. Mediumistic

communications are, before all else, a process of communication, that is, it should not be exclusively dedicated to studies and researches of a theoretical nature; its practical purpose is its very reason for existing.

The form of the above-mentioned message does not please intellectuals, but it corresponds to the demands of popular exchange in a large demographic area. Its structure is didactical and its formal language addresses the average type of general understanding, therefore facilitating the communication. The issue of spiritist identification is irrelevant. What matters is to bring education to people in both a rational and emotional manner. Those who complain against the formalism in Emmanuel's mediumistic communications do not understand the practical importance of the dialogue that he has established and has maintained for four decades with a vast area of our population, patiently preparing them for a more elevated appreciation of life.

Some people allege that such method drives away more intellectually competent individuals. However, the vast mediumistic work of Francisco Xavier comprises of innumerable books that are, in turn, only accessible to intellectuals. Such volumes are addressed especially to theorists and scholars. And it would be absurd to expect the mediums and the communicating spirits to be restricted to such an elite. The spiritist message must reach all levels of the population in the language and form that is most appropriate for each one of them. Nevertheless, even the intellectual echelons have a lot to learn from these messages when they manage to bring themselves to the level of the people by forgoing their pretensions and prejudices.

CHAPTER XXXVII – THE MEANING OF AGING YOUTH AND OLD AGE

Francisco Cândido Xavier

'Our meeting was preceded by a long conversation with friends from several places. The central theme was physical age. We spoke of individuals who already feel useless in their youth whereas others in their eighties feel themselves with young vigor.

Why is that? Why are there human beings who feel despondent at twenty years of age while others still feel active in their eighties? Where should we place the limit between youth and old age?

The topic was under intense debate when we started our meeting. The Spirits' Book provided question 680 for our studies, which addresses this very same topic.

At the end of our activities, it was our dear friend Emmanuel who offered us a page entitled *Age*. It is a simple page, but our friends present at the occasion requested it to be part of the collection of thoughts under your edifying comments.'

AGE

Emmanuel

Physical maturity has never been an obstacle to the spirit who is eager to progress.

In all sectors of life, human beings are only as young as the ideals and hopes they embrace; and only as worn out as the skepticism or despondency to which they relinquish themselves.

Many companions intend to demarcate the age of an adult person by the external signs present; however, this is mere convention.

It is unquestionable, of course, that if human beings value the vehicle that enables them to carry out their own interests, they ought to take good care of its parts. Likewise, the spirit, as tenant of the physical body, transforms the latter into an instrument of manifestation: if the spirit desires balance and safety, it ought to make the effort to safeguard the most dependable conditions of work.

If a child is usually medicated in order to develop effectively, why would adult individuals put aside the necessary treatment that allows them to mature physically with adequate robustness, and thence maintain themselves useful until the last ounce of strength of the carnal vehicles they possess?

Do not believe in old age on the sole basis that time has endowed you with valuable experiences.

Convince yourself that you are an immortal spirit using a perishable body. If you live by the discipline of work, with the calisthenics of the thought with rectitude, you will always maintain a spiritual youth, the one that affirms itself as a fountain of constant renewal in improving the present and building the future.

THE TENANT OF THE BODY

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Youth is the phase of hopes and enthusiasms. In his work entitled *As Forças Morais*⁷² (The Moral Forces), José Ingenieros emphasized that "youth leads

the confrontation in every renovation effort.” But in actuality, youth lacks the experience required to control its forces and, consequently, to employ them efficiently. This lack of existential experience is a result of each new physical existence bringing forth its own set of issues.

The spirit, the tenant of the physical body as Emmanuel calls it, needs time to dominate its new set of circumstances. Let us remember that Jesus only devoted himself to his mission during adult life, and that Allan Kardec only started the codification of Spiritism when he was fifty years old.

⁷² [TN] INGENIEROS, J. *Las fuerzas morales*. Red Ediciones, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1st edition, October 31, 2010. 100pp. ISBN-13: 978-84-9897-492-8. [This title is not translated into English.]

From a different perspective, we should remember that the spirit brings its own difficulties, and rather often, it must overcome them during adolescence in order to feel unhindered in its mature years and old age and therefore carry out its new responsibilities. However, it is not easy to throw aside the heavy loads from the past, which almost always demand long sacrifices.

Ingenieros is correct in asserting the renewing function of youth, but the same author warns that there are “old juniors” and “young elders.” As the human population grows very fast today, the young represent majority in the world and they leave their presence in all sectors of activity. Nevertheless, it is still the mature adults and senior individuals who are responsible for the world. Even in the newly created field of astronautics, experience gathered from maturity still imposes itself upon the raptures of youth.

Emmanuel’s reasoning is evident. We cannot believe in old age when we see that time still brings us the wealth of experience. There is no precise limit between youth and old age when the tenant of the body has managed to prevail over its instrument and maintain it vigorous throughout the years. This tenant, the spirit, does not age; rather, time improves and refines it by providing repeating periods of youth that come to pass each time more beautifully and safely with every new reincarnation.

Terrestrial youth is a time of preparation of the human being in every existence. Spiritual youth is an update of the powers of the spirit towards a permanent form, above the transitoriness of matter.

CHAPTERXXXVIII – EDUCATION ANDLOVE CHILDSUPPORT

Francisco Cândido Xavier

‘The Spiritist Centre Eurípedes Barsanulfo, located in the village of Peirópolis and 24km from the city of Uberaba, used to allocate its meetings to services of assistance to children. We were there one day in a small caravan of friends. The theme for the evening was education, and the chosen text from The Gospel According to Spiritism was item 2 from chapter XXV. Close attention was paid to the many explanations that ensued.

At the end of the meeting, we received a message in the form of a sonnet, *Lição da Vida* (Lesson from Life), by the poetess Narcisa Amália. Those of us present at the meeting agreed to send the message to you, hoping to see it published with your enlightening doctrinal comments for our studies.’

LESSON FROM LIFE⁷³

Narcisa Amália

To a prison, the Master arrived in his career,
guiding young crowd for his lessons in Law;
when besides him narrow coach briskly stops,
ferrying dead criminal, a boy in his early years.
A warden addresses the curious crowd in his folly:
‘I did kill him! Perfect thief and killer he was!’
The shrouded body is viewed with respect...
‘Unhappy assassin!’ the Master exclaims ever so solemnly.
And continuing he spouted ‘I know...’
‘You, the dead, deceive me not,
To be a criminal at such young age, you lot!
From mud you surely sprung gun in tow...’
Once that said, he unveils the body... and in shock all are taken by dread.

⁷³ [TN] Refer to footnote 38 on page 175.

The professor now in tears kneels instead,
shouting ‘My God. Alas! My son... Oh, my son!’

THE MASTER’S MISTAKE

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Purely formal education loses its essence, which is love. The master becomes accustomed to the immediate objectives of the teachings, and forgets all about the moral and spiritual formation, the true objectives of the educational process. The situation that Narcisa Amália’s sonnet presents is not imaginary. It does not have the single objective of shocking us with its tragic aspect. Its real objective is to demonstrate to us the failures of the formal education that, converted into a teaching machinery, is not capable of reaching out to the soul of its pupils.

The master without love reveals his coldness when he says next to the corpse of the murdered child that the dead does not deceive him. Actually, the dead was not deceiving him, he was. Neither the filth of the economically deprived neighborhoods nor the precocious attachment to the trigger of a gun had been responsible for the transformation of the child into a criminal. The twisted cause had been in the father's heart, the master who had not learned to love, and who had not been able to understand the true nature of education. He was not a master but a professional of education.

Life, the great educator, which is neither formalized nor professionalized, surprises us sometimes with terrible lessons. Facts such as these, episodes where the master's failure leads him to devastating disillusion, happen more often than we would expect. Only the most tragic occurrences make it to the news by the media. The others, of a more personal nature, are smoldered by tears in their own homes.

Johann Pestalozzi, Kardec's master, was an apostle of education. Kardec learned from him that to educate is to love. Therefore, Kardec insists on the value and importance of education as the only efficient manner of changing the world and improving humankind. Atheistic modern-day education, a consequence of the abuses committed by religious sectarianism, will have to be replaced by the Spiritist education, where faith is not imposed in an arbitrary manner but develops in the pupil under the light of reasoning and according to the corroboration of facts. What we observe in the world today is the results of a wrong and distorted form of education.

Narcisa Amália's sonnet is an emotional shock to awaken us, spiritists, to our negligence in this particular field. We have founded schools, that is true, but we have forgotten the most important aspect, which is to give to these schools a safe system of spiritist education, elaborated with love by spiritist educators.

We already have among us the specialized magazine of the Spiritist Group of Pedagogical Studies for this purpose. However, how many spiritists have shown any interest for it? How many spiritist teachers have read its published issues? How long are we going to stay indifferent to the major problem that defies us all at this time in the world? Let each one answer these questions personally.

CHAPTER XXXIX – RESTLESSNESS: DISEASE AND CURE

TIMES OF AGITATION

Francisco Cândido Xavier

'As we started our public meeting, The Gospel According to Spiritism

showed us item 6 from chapter IX, which elicited great observations. Those who took to speak reminded us of the present state of agitation in the world today. They broached topics of current misunderstandings and irrational antagonisms, which create difficulties in general relationships, and they also brought into discussion the lamentable cases in which simple clashes of opinions foment savagery and delinquency.

At the end of our activities, our dear friend Emmanuel wrote the page that I am sending to you with wishes of seeing it published in *O Diário de São Paulo* next to your clarifying commentaries.

On behalf of the companions here and myself, I remain deeply in your debt for your constant attention to our petitions.'

CURATIVE DIALOGUE

Emmanuel

Observe the extension of human suffering and make your speech into an instrument of relief and peace.

You will find infirm individuals of the soul around you appearing from every place; some with psychological maladjustments from other existences, presenting obscure traumas in the mental field; others who could not fulfill their commitments, and who now wander in this world in self-loathing; desperate others, who walk the fine line between delinquency and a productive life; and the afflicted ones, almost all of them tied to processes of anguish.

They are all infirm individuals of the soul who must be medicated, first and foremost, with a curative dialogue.

At home, have compassion with your relatives and try to radiate the light of understanding that might establish tranquility and safety; in the work place, as much as possible, transform yourself in a cleanser of bitter confidences, substituting goodness for incomprehension, and blessings for acrimony; in public manifestations, select concepts that promote ideas and opinions so you may not stimulate violence or discord; and in public places, mobilize solidarity and kindness, decreasing the tiredness and loneliness felt by the companions who bear conflicts and trials that you might perhaps ignore.

Do not carry your speech with fulminating vibrations when surprised by the intemperance of others; otherwise, besides not curing the infirm, you will become even sicker yourself, especially under circumstances when facing particular adversaries or supposed aggressors.

Place yourself in the other person's situation and imagine how your reactions would be if someone spoke to you with bitterness and lack of consideration.

The denser the clouds in the environment, the deeper the mental imbalances around us.

The more dissonance embraces us, the more necessary it is for us to elicit a curative dialogue, capable of suppressing infirmities and obsessions at their incipience.

Regardless of the circumstances you find, blend your words with kindness and understanding.

We all know that sufferings, tears and fires of dissent and tribulations are all abundant on Earth.

The Lord, however, does not expect from us any miraculous formulae that will immediately extinguish the fires of agitation; however, wherever we are and with whomever we are, He asks us to provide a glass of cold water.

MILDNESS AND AFFABILITY

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

The agitations of our times characterize the transitional phase through which we are passing here on Earth. Spiritist knowledge ought to preserve us from dangerous pitfalls and incomprehension regarding the situation of the world today. A brief look at Allan Kardec's personal notes in *Posthumous Works* would suffice as an explanation and encouragement for us to keep the necessary vigil.

As always, Emmanuel recommends to us both mildness and affability as instruments of peace. His recipe is correct, but it is important not to forget the teachings of Lazarus from chapter IX, item 6 of *The Gospel According to Spiritism*, "It is not enough for milk and honey to flow from the lips. If the heart is never associated with these sentiments then there is only hypocrisy."

In its duty of leading us to the truth, Spiritism is not concerned with appearances, and it does not approve of techniques of impersonation of the human being. The thin coating of mildness in social relationships are worth nothing if we do not have a pure heart associated to it, in accordance with the teachings of Jesus to the Pharisees. We may speak in soft tones during times of fortune, but during tempestuous times, the word of caution, and the firm reprimand, even the raised voice, become indispensable.

Kardec's common sense reminds us of our duty to assist with energy in times of crisis.

Emmanuel writes that "...all infirm individuals of the soul must be medicated, first and foremost, with a curative dialogue." Spiritism, in its very essence, appeared in the world as a dialogue. We can see and feel in its doctrinal texts that the therapy is not always carried out with soothing words for there are situations that require the surgical touch of firm and precise expressions. Mildness and affability become negative properties when they are not produced by a heart that beats with true love.

The glass of cold water that might assist us during a moment of crisis does not spout from the fountain of pretense, but rather from the natural spring of fraternal understanding and legitimate feeling of love for the other person. We know that both personal and collective evolution are not carried out by artificial means. All contrivances are condemned by the renewing doctrine of the Spirit of Truth, which is founded upon the real, not the elusive. In our spiritist behavior, we cannot forget that our objective is the pursuit of truth, especially during the moments of crisis, such as the one through which we are coursing now.

CHAPTER XL – FROM TRIALS TO EXPERIENCES BEFORE CURRENT MALADJUSTMENTS

Francisco Cândido Xavier

'We were honored by the presence and participation of many groups of friends and supporters of the Spiritist Doctrine in our usual meeting. Before our programmed duties, the central topic of conversation was the current need to find resources so we may provide relief or assistance to the companions who come to us, given the large numbers of them abandoned to disharmony and spiritual sufferings.

When the meeting started, we were talking about the problems of obsession, disillusionment, lack of faith, and absence of equilibrium. The Gospel According to Spiritism offered to our examination item 14 from chapter V, which refers to madness and suicide. Many people commented on the subject. Our dear Emmanuel gave us the message Prisoners of the Soul, which we hereby present to you in the hope of seeing it published together with your doctrinal elucidations.'

PRISONERS OF THE SOUL

Emmanuel

When companions in affliction approach you, show compassion before

listening to them.

Embrace them in the condition of prisoners of the soul, enduring inner conflicts that you might ignore.

They are captives of suffering; this designation is likely to be the most appropriate in defining the circumstances of those who seek help, clinging on to the last threads of resistance against complete despair!...

This individual has become entangled with feelings of guilt when believing to be pursuing happiness, and now ignores how to regain the serenity lost; another has refused the trial through which to acquire redemption and is now shackled to commitments that are difficult to overcome; another yet has misspent energy and time, falling amidst the webs of organic exhaustion that now demands care and resignation; and another still has had the spirit chained to the coldness of a tomb wherein lies the veritable last memories of a beloved one!...

You will find the discouraged and wretched, those imprisoned in despondency and bitterness, and others whom rebelliousness has incarcerated in cells of anguish, all pleading for assistance and freedom!

Be considerate to all without exceptions, and do not hurt them with inopportune admonishings.

Let us remember that no one lives through turmoils of desperation for the simple fact that they so desire.

Those who come to you imploring assistance, have already struggled enough for themselves to be aware of their own situation.

Build the bridge of compassion between the faith that illuminates you and the pain from your brothers and sisters who display to you their aching hearts, and extend to them the rescuing hand so they may traverse the shadows towards the light.

How many have become lost on the paths of the world, so often deceived by themselves... They need very little interference from us in the form of resources of austerity and knowledge.

On the contrary, they expect from us, above all, a gesture of sympathy and a blessing of love.

THE UPHEAVAL OF THE MENDICANTS

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

We are witnessing today the upheaval of the mendicants. Millions of

creatures who requested reincarnations of trials, who are coming to Earth to discharge their tormented consciences, and who now rebel against the very same conditions for which they themselves petitioned. As they plunge into the plane of dense matter with their carnal diving suits, these suffering spirits reencounter the circumstances of their ancient passions, frustrated desires, unfulfilled illusions, and wish to repeat the attempts from the past. But the truth is that they are now bound to the carriage of trials with the sole intent of freeing themselves from the selfish longings, as they become prepared for the civilization of altruism that has already begun to dawn on the planet.

We are facing a time of transition. We must leave our faults in the past and advance courageously towards the future. It is not easy to jettison the burden of old pretenses during our journey. However, from another point of view, life today offers new prospects, perspectives that in the past were not feasible and which now lead to the rebirth of old temptations with greater violence. This is the interest rate on the old debts, which demand greater effort from the debtors who, in drunken stupor upon their return to the corporeal condition, forget the spiritual commitments acquired for this existence.

They lack the ability to understand the new situation promptly. Nevertheless, they all bring deep inside the warnings of the superior plane, ready to sprout from their unconscious when assisted by earthly companions who possess a mind enlightened by the renewing principles of Spiritism. This is why the former intuitively seek the spiritist assistance. However, if instead of understanding, they meet with rejection and reprimands in our midst, they will feel an intensification of the revolt and despair that afflicts them.

Hence Emmanuel's recommendation in the sense of our receiving them with attention and kindness, being compassionate to their plight even before listening to them. We must show understanding to be able to assist those who do not comprehend. If we are capable of loving them, as opposed to censoring them, we will be able to provide the assistance they request from us. The On High will second our efforts of fraternity. Let us endure the mockery, irony, and scoffing of those who defy us. Let us tolerate their impertinence as much as others have already put up with ours. And let us face all of those who beseech us for love, attention, and kindness for only this way will we be assisting them, all the while helping ourselves in the process as well.

It is obvious that we must not embrace them to motivate their attachment to old passions. All of us, without exceptions, need affective support and reprimands during the earthly life. The double action of the reins and spurs, as Lazarus teaches us, is what moves us to jump the obstacles of our trials.

The upheaval of the mendicants demands of parents, educators, religious leaders, and above all spiritists, an attitude of permanent affective disposition, of open heart, and at the same time a vigilant mind. We cannot assist them in their rebellion through our injudicious love.

This attitude is not an easy one to maintain, for the recalcitrant mendicants will accuse us of cruelty and delays every time we may oppose their abuses. And they will have their relatives by their side to support them. However, we will win the battle if we hold love in our hearts, for our love will awaken in the disobedient conscience the memory of the commitments engaged upon in the spiritual world.

WORK AND EVOLUTION

Emmanuel

On every occasion that we feel compelled to desert from serving, alleging failures and imperfections, it is convenient to observe the logical lessons from Nature, which finds in work its own path to evolution and improvement.

If the seed gave up its germination because of its confinement in the cloister of clay, it would not produce the fruit that feeds the human being. After all, the attention it receives from the fruit grower is in direct proportion to how much it produces.

If the rose bush decided to prevent its own flowers from blooming because of the thorns transfixed along its stems, it would not produce the roses that embellish the world so much. Again, it gathers only as much care from the gardener as it produces in flowers.

If the spring denied the soil its beneficence on the grounds that it would have to run through mud and stones on the riverbed...

If the metal decided to betray its own utility in supporting the boiling crucible...

If the animal persisted indefinitely in its refusal to be tamed, alleging the extreme aggressiveness still persistent in its behavior...

And on it goes... All of us, incarnate and discarnate spirits alike, in evolution here on Earth, are at the moment far from the angelical condition, much in the same way that the other elements in nature are still infinitely distant from the human condition.

Indubitably, due to our ability to reason, we have a duty to improve ourselves on a constant basis, but it will not be licit for us to allege defects and

insipience in order to flee from collaborating in the construction of goodness for the benefit of all, since we are observed and appraised towards the superior life by the extent we seize the opportunities to assist in our lives.

Therefore, in our own work, let us love the dispellent of all shadows that are still attached to us in the domains of the soul. Let us be convinced that in all districts of the universe, perfection is the final aim for all creatures and all things. Nevertheless, for the adequate execution of such perfection, work is an inexorable process.

SUCCESSION OF THINGS AND BEINGS

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Work is the driving force of evolution. Everything works, says Emmanuel. In *The Spirits' Book*, we find the Law of Work, which deserved a special chapter, and its thesis is the same as that in his message.

We find many philosophical theories that correlate with the Spiritist Doctrine. We remember Henri Bergson⁷⁴ and the theory of the vitalizing force: life, permeating matter, dominating it and creating things and beings. But we also remember John Dewey⁷⁵ and his theory of universal experience. Everything is experience because there is a vital principle in all things in nature. The very dialectics of Georg Hegel⁷⁶ and its materialist derivation have a correspondence to the spiritist theory of universal work.

When Emmanuel establishes a relationship between the seed, the rose bush, the spring, the metal, and the animal, he is not merely making comparisons or addressing figures of speech, but he is demonstrating with natural examples the spiritist principle of evolution. The Spirit's answer to question 540 of *The Spirits' Book* shows this point to us in the eloquent statement "...everything in nature is linked together, from the primitive atom to the archangel, who also began as only an atom." Léon Denis⁷⁷ taught us also that "the soul sleeps in the rock, dreams in the plant, stirs in the animal, and awakens in the human being."

⁷⁴ [TN] Henri-Louis Bergson (1859–1941) was a major French philosopher who wrote *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience* in 1889 (known as *Time and Free Will*), *Matière et Mémoire* in 1896 (*Matter and Memory*), *L'Evolution Créatrice* in 1907 (*Creative Evolution*), and *Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion* in 1932 (*The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*). The antidarwinian theory mentioned in the text is found in Bergson's work *Creative Evolution*, for which he won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1927.

⁷⁵ [TN] John Dewey (1859–1952) was an American philosopher, psychologist, leading activist in the Georgist movement, and educational reformer. The text alludes to one of his works: DEWEY, J. *Art as*

an experience (1934). Perigee Books, July 5, 2005. 371pp. ISBN-13: 978-0-39953-197-2.

⁷⁶ [TN] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) was a German philosopher and a major figure in German idealism.

Some spiritists do not accept the concept of evolution in all its amplitude, and attempt to modify it in many different ways. However, Emmanuel constantly brings to us in his messages the opportune enlightenment concerning this issue. We are still too ignorant to encompass in our mental vision the entire spiritist conception of the universe.

We shall make a note of the subject of the message in question in which Emmanuel places us in a process of ascension from the human condition to angelity, without forgetting to warn us that “...the other elements in nature are still infinitely distant from the human condition.” It is precisely because of this constant relationship of things and beings that we are capable of comparing the human struggles towards transcendence with the striving of the seed to germinate.

This comparison is so legitimate, and at the same time so very clarifying, that Christ himself used it in his preachings of the good news, as we see in the Parable of the Sower.⁷⁸ We are without a doubt spiritual seeds. As such, we have to work in the bosom of matter so the divine plan, built deeply within us, may be renewed by germination and development of our spirit.

⁷⁷ [TN] Léon Denis (1846–1927) was a notable French spiritist philosopher. After the death of Allan Kardec, Léon Denis, Gabriel Delanne, and Camille Flammarion became the principal exponents of Spiritism.

⁷⁸ [TN] From Matthew 13: 1–9.

CHAPTERXLI – FROM THEDESK OFPROF. HERCULANOPIRES

ENERGY AND MATERIALIZATION

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

According to calculations performed by Prof. Carlos Chohfi from the Department of Physics of Mackenzie University, to materialize a 70-kg individual (approximately 150lbs) would require an amount of energy equivalent to over 290 years of continuous operation of the hydroelectric power plant of Jupia.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, it does happen...

It is as in Galileo’s case, “*Eppur si muove.*”⁸⁰ The reason for Prof. Chohfi’s calculations report back to the materializations performed by Francisco Xavier. However, the issue of spiritual materialization is a figure of speech,

and it does not entail the actual formation of a human organism. It is simply the utilization of ectoplasm to give to the spiritual body the appearance of a human form. This is not a problem for regular physics, but one for what Prof. Friedrich Zöllner⁸¹ called transcendental physics, which today we might call parapsysics.

⁷⁹ [TN] The amount of energy released from the conversion of a 70-kg (approximately 150-lb) individual is equivalent to 1×10^{18} J or approximately two million million kilowatts-hour of energy. [The total output of the hydroelectric power plant of Jupiá in the state of São Paulo, Brazil is 1,561MW according to CESP – Companhia Energética de São Paulo.]

⁸⁰ [TN] *Eppur si muove*, Italian for “And yet it moves” or “Albeit it does move,” is a phrase attributed to the Italian mathematician, physicist, and philosopher Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) who is believed to have said it in 1633 after being coerced to recant his claims that the Earth moves around the Sun during his trial by the Church, known as the Galileo affair.

According to metapsychics, this problem is of a physiological nature. Materializations were called tangible apparitions by Allan Kardec. As we can see, the illustrious physicist gave his opinion as a physicist, heedless of the extraphysical nature of the issue at hand.

PROMISED LAND

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Relatives of the poet Cyro Costa⁸² were surprised by the appearance of a sonnet of his authorship at the conclusion of the TV program *Pinga Fogo* on Channel 4. Some of them were watching the program and were taken by surprise to see that at its conclusion, Francisco Xavier psychographed the sonnet *Second Millennium (Segundo Milênio)* in alexandrine verses of undeniable improvisation that summarized the central theme of the questions that had been addressed to the medium. The unmistakable style of Cyro Costa was the identity card that moved his relatives.

⁸¹ [TN] Johann Karl Friedrich Zöllner (1834–1882) was a German astrophysicist who studied optical illusions. The text refers to his work ZÖLLNER, J. K. F. *Transcendental physics. An account of experimental investigations from the scientific treatises of Johann Carl Friedrich Zöllner, 1880.* W.H. Harrison, London, 1880. 266pp.

⁸² [TN] Cyro Costa (1879–1937) was a Brazilian poet, chronicler, and lecturer who, despite his extraordinary literary background, did not publish a single book in life. His sonnet *Pai João (Massa John)* is part of many anthologies, which brought great fame to the poet.

A few days later, two of the poet’s daughters paid a visit to *Grupo Espírita Emmanuel* (Spiritist Group Emmanuel) in the city of São Bernardo do Campo, taking with them as a gift a few copies of the book *Terra Prometida* (Promised Land), the book of poems of the poet Cyro Costa, which the

publisher *Livraria José Olímpio* had published in 1938. There is a famous sonnet in that book entitled *Pai João* (Massa John), the best known of them, and another sonnet, *Mãe Preta* (Momma). Some of the verses from these two sonnets were extracted and engraved on the plate at the *Monumento à Mãe Preta* (Monument to Momma) in *Largo do Paissandu* (Paissandu Plaza) in the city of São Paulo. As we can see, the program *Pinga Fogo* with Francisco Xavier continues to produce unexpected results.

I WANT TO SPEAK TO DADDY

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

Some readers write to us to request that we ask Francisco Xavier for a communication with one of their dead relatives. One particular adolescent writes to us in great anguish and requests ‘Arrange this for me, I want to speak to daddy.’ It is important to understand that the communication with the spirits is not something similar to a telephone conversation. Those who have finished their sojourn here on Earth must continue other journeys of evolutionary experiences in the spiritual realm instead of remaining attached to the past.

Therefore, the communication is not always possible. We should also refrain at all cost from continuing to evoke our dead relatives so they may assist us with our problems here. These are our problems, not theirs. Each one of us have our own experiences and trials to undergo here on Earth. No one is alone for we all have our guardian angels and the superior spirits who watch over all of us.

THE PARANORMAL BRAIN

José Herculano Pires (Brother Saul)

The magazine *Realidade* (Reality), from the city of São Paulo, considered the brain of Francisco Xavier abnormal in an extensive news article. We find the answers from Brother Saul about this matter in the chronicle and annotations given below, which were published on that occasion in the newspaper *O Diário de São Paulo*.

To consider the brain of Francisco Xavier abnormal is to ignore effectively forty years of research and discoveries in the field of the psychological sciences. Since 1930, parapsychological investigations have been unveiling unknown circumstances of the brain, particularly in the functional areas that were considered until now as abnormal. Consequently, the former concept of normality has been extensively modified, so was that of the relationships between brain and mind. Intensive research has been carried out in great

universities in America, Europe, and Asia, that have contributed to the general scientific acceptance of the paranormal classification for cerebral conditions and both mental conditions and functions previously considered abnormal, pathological or supernatural.

The use of electroencephalography for corroboration of the changes in the brain during a hypnotic or mediumistic trance has provided surprising results. It has contributed to demonstrate that extrasensory perception, thought capture, and the manifestation of spirits through mediums, all require cerebral conditions, particularly cortical ones that may look abnormal for not comprising those of habitual processes during our awake state. And the very lack of similarity between these cerebral modifications and individual behavior, the absence of a pathological symptomatology that is, pointed to the difference between abnormal and paranormal. Charles Richet, much earlier, had already observed that it would be convenient to substitute the expressions common and uncommon for normal and abnormal.

Even in clearly pathological cases, it has been verified that separation from the paranormal cause, such as the departure of an obsessor, for instance, is enough to reestablish cerebral normalcy. Therefore, it is clear that the electroencephalogram of a medium during a trance must accuse this multitude of perturbations according to the type of mediumistic manifestation in course. This is itself objective proof of the legitimacy of the communication.

Francisco Cândido Xavier does not have an abnormal brain, he is not mentally infirm. On the contrary, he is a normal man, who does not suffer from epileptic episodes, as he has stated himself, and a man who lives a regular and productive life in assisting thousands of human beings towards their readjustment in this world. (For instance, see the message *Conflicts at Home*.) What he possesses, thanks to God, is a paranormal brain, the brain of the future, because it is the brain of the genius mind and that of the saints.