

LIVING SPRING COLLECTION

Chico Xavier
By the Spirit Emmanuel

**The Way,
the truth
and the life**



**The way, the truth
and the life**

Chico Xavier
By the Spirit Emmanuel

The way, the truth and the life

LIVING SPRING COLLECTION

Translated by Darrel W. Kimble and Marcia M. Saiz



Copyright © 2012 by
FEDERAÇÃO ESPÍRITA BRASILEIRA – FEB

First Edition – 9/2021

Original title in Portuguese:
CAMINHO, VERDADE E VIDA
(Brasil, 1948)

ISBN 978-85-9466-213-2

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

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

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

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

E54w Emmanuel (Spirit)

The way, the truth and the life [livro eletrônico]/ dictated by the Spirit Emmanuel; [received by] Francisco Cândido Xavier; [translated by Darrel W. Kimble, Marcia Saiz and Ily Reis]. – Brasília, DF (Brazil): FEB, 2021.

1 Megabytes; e-Pub 3. (Living Spring Collection; 1)

Original title: Caminho, verdade e vida

ISBN 978-85-9466-213-2

1. Spiritism. 2. Psychographic works. I. Xavier, Francisco Cândido, 1910-2002.
II. Federação Espírita Brasileira. III. Title. IV. Collection.

CDD 133.93
CDU 133.7
CDE 85.04.00

Contents

Interpreting the Sacred Texts

- 1 - Time
- 2 - Follow me
- 3 - Examine yourself
- 4 - Work
- 5 - Foundations
- 6 - Effort and prayer
- 7 - Everything new
- 8 - Jesus came
- 9 - Christian gatherings
- 10 - Mediumship
- 11 - Consolation
- 12 - Education in the home
- 13 - What is the flesh?
- 14 - In yourself
- 15 - Conversion
- 16 - Make straight the way
- 17 - Through Christ
- 18 - Inner cleansing
- 19 - Spreading the Gospel
- 20 - The fellow servant
- 21 - The moral way
- 22 - What are you looking for?
- 23 - Living by faith
- 24 - The corroded treasure
- 25 - Be calm
- 26 - Suffering

27 - Business
28 - Scribes
29 - To be content
30 - The world and evil
31 - The littlest things
32 - Clouds
33 - Recapitulations
34 - Eating and drinking
35 - Sowing
36 - Heresies
37 - Honors
38 - Preaching
39 - Enter and cooperate
40 - A time for trust
41 - The Golden Rule
42 - Praise to the good
43 - Advice
44 - The blind man of Jericho
45 - Conversation
46 - Who are you?
47 - The big question
48 - Watch out!
49 - Knowing and doing
50 - An accounting of himself
51 - Spiritual infants
52 - Gifts
53 - Peace
54 - The vine
55 - Branches of the vine
56 - Profits

57 - Money
58 - To gain
59 - Beloved friends
60 - Doing the good
61 - Ministry
62 - Kindred
63 - Who are you?
64 - The greatest treasure
65 - To ask
66 - How do you ask?
67 - Those living in the beyond
68 - The afterlife
69 - Communications
70 - Secret powers
71 - Being a witness
72 - Transitory things
73 - Opportunity
74 - Clean hands
75 - In Caesar's household
76 - Constructions
77 - One should reflect
78 - Truths and illusions
79 - To each one
80 - Opinions
81 - Human authority
82 - Dry trees
83 - Afflictions
84 - Rise
85 - Testimony
86 - Jesus and his friends

- 87 - Why are you sleeping?
- 88 - Keeping watch with Jesus
- 89 - Peter's failure
- 90 - The opportunity to do the good
- 91 - The field of blood
- 92 - Mary Magdalene
- 93 - Christian joy
- 94 - When saving ourselves
- 95 - The unknown friend
- 96 - The crown
- 97 - Do you love enough?
- 98 - Cloaks
- 99 - To promise
- 100 - Help from the invisible realm
- 101 - Everything in God
- 102 - The Christian and the world
- 103 - The esteem of the world
- 104 - The symbolic sword
- 105 - Not everybody
- 106 - Giving
- 107 - The coming of the Kingdom
- 108 - Reincarnation
- 109 - We will always find
- 110 - Successive lives
- 111 - World leaders
- 112 - Like Lazarus
- 113 - Do not forget
- 114 - Letters from Christ
- 115 - Christ's ambassadors
- 116 - Acting accordingly

117 - Productive land
118 - The paralytic
119 - Christian glory
120 - Watching out for oneself
121 - Thistles
122 - Fruits
123 - To hope in Christ
124 - Firmness of faith
125 - Children and servants
126 - Idols
127 - While it is still day
128 - Spiritual blessings
129 - The origin of temptations
130 - Sorrow
131 - Human beings and angels
132 - Going always forward
133 - The supremacy of Jesus
134 - A little is enough
135 - Non-transferable gold
136 - Earthly and heavenly things
137 - Eating with publicans
138 - Intentions
139 - For love
140 - To the mountains
141 - Too bad for them
142 - One Lord only
143 - Legion of evil
144 - What do we have to do with Christ?
145 - Spiritual counseling
146 - Dealing with the invisible world

147 - A challenge
148 - Watch yourself
149 - Ownership
150 - Goads
151 - Youthfulness
152 - Knowledge and love
153 - Passes
154 - Renouncing
155 - Among Christians
156 - Intuition
157 - Do this and you will live
158 - Baptism
159 - Whom do you follow?
160 - The man from Macedonia
161 - Let us make the most of it
162 - Let us hope
163 - Not believing
164 - Let us not disturb
165 - External possessions
166 - Permanent possessions
167 - Praying
168 - Meditating
169 - The real picture
170 - Spiritual control
171 - A mother's words
172 - Tears
173 - Devotion to the good
174 - Our daily bread
175 - Cooperation
176 - A living lesson

- 177 - Conventional opinions
- 178 - The divine door
- 179 - The new commandment
- 180 - Let us shine our light

Interpreting the Sacred Texts

First of all, know this: no prophecy in the Scriptures is the prophet's own. (2 Pet. 1:20)

Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. His imperishable light has shone down on earth's millennia as the Word of the beginning, and has pervaded the world for nearly twenty centuries.

Bloody battles, wars of extermination and social calamities have not changed his words one little bit; rather, they have become more and more up-to-date with earth's multiform evolution. Tribulations of blood and tears have done nothing but vivify their grandeur. However, always too late to take advantage of invaluable opportunities, we have scorned the Way too often in the course of our repeated existences, indifferent to the heritage of the Truth and the Life.

Even so, the Lord has never left us helpless.

Each and every day, he prolongs his tolerance regarding our debts. It is in our own best interest, however, to raise the standard of our will, to establish disciplines for our personal use and to educate ourselves by getting in touch with the Divine Master. He is our Benevolent Friend, but we have neglected his counsel so often that we are prone to reaching the dark regions of indefinitely postponing the inner illumination we need to acquire life eternal.

With the purpose of taking advantage of an opportunity to serve, we have put together this humble interpretive work with no intentions of making an exegetical analysis.

We have compiled only a modest number of pages meant for regular meditation.

Taking Bible verses out of context and conferring on them a color independent of the New Testament chapter to which they belong will probably seem strange to many of our friends. In certain passages we have extracted only short phrases, giving them a special appearance, and

sometimes our modest comments may appear to disagree with the precepts of the chapter to which they belong.

We have proceeded in this way nevertheless, considering that each pearl in a necklace has its own specific worth, and that, in the immense whole of the teachings of the Good News, each concept of Christ or of his direct collaborators may be adapted to a specific situation of the spirit on the roads of life. Furthermore, the lesson of the Master is not only an imperative for the purposes of worship. The Gospel cannot be reduced to a breviary for the kneeling-board. It is an indispensable script for legislation and administration, for service and obedience. Christ does not draw a line between church and workplace. The whole earth is simultaneously his prayer altar and his work arena. By praising him in the churches while denying him in the streets, we have become shipwrecked a thousand times due to our own fault. However, any place can be consecrated to divine service.

Many disciples in the various Christian denominations have gotten involved in theological investigations, transforming the Lord's teachings into a dead relic on altars of stone. Nevertheless, Christ hopes that all of us may make his Gospel of Love and Wisdom a prayer companion, a textbook for our daily learning experience, an inspiring source for our humblest actions in our daily work, and a code of good manners for fraternal interaction.

Although we have clarified our humble aims, we can foresee plenty of bewilderment in this or that group of believers.

What can we do? We have an immense distance to overcome on the Way in order to acquire the Truth and the Life in their totality.

We can grasp the respect owed to Christ, but by the Lord's own example we know that the labor of the faithful learner is composed of worship and work, prayer and self-effort.

As for the rest, we are happy to realize that the Sacred Texts are gifts from the Father to all his children, and that is why we have written those wise words by Simon Peter: "First of all, know this: no prophecy in the Scriptures is the prophet's own."

EMMANUEL

*Pedro Leopoldo, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil,
September 2, 1948.*

1

Time

The one who regards a particular day as special does so unto the Lord – Paul. (Rom. 14:6)

Most people still do not realize the infinite worth of time.

In fact, there are those who misuse this divine gift. They believe that the wealth of blessings they receive are owed to them by God.

It would be fair to ask them their reason for such a presumption.

Since Universal Creation is everyone's legacy, it is right for everyone to enjoy life's possibilities; even so, people do not usually think about the harmonious circumstances that work together for the benefit of their spiritual growth.

Of course, every person can depend on time, but what if this time is without light, without balance, without health, without work?

Despite how important this question is, it is important to remember that there are very few people who actually make good use of their day, whereas the ranks of those who go about wasting theirs in every possible way are on the increase.

The old saying "just killing time" reflects people's unconscious awareness of this fact.

In the most obscure corners of the earth there are people wasting sacred opportunities. Nevertheless, in the execution of the divine laws, one single day of peace, harmony and enlightenment is highly important for human concourse.

Those who want things done immediately clamor, "Time is money!" but later they have to restart all their uncompleted undertakings on the ladder of reincarnation ... That is why people do and undo, why they build and tear

down, and why they take the learning process lightly and recapitulate with difficulty as they acquire experience.

In nearly every area of evolution we see the wasting of opportunities complicating the pathways of life. However, many centuries ago the apostle told us that time belongs to the Lord.

2

Follow me

*Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain until I return, what is that to you? Follow me."
(Jn. 21:22)*

In communities of Christian toil, we often see coworkers who are highly concerned with the tasks given to other brothers and sisters of the struggle.

However, we must ask ourselves how much better the world would be if everyone were completely and honestly concerned only with what was theirs to do in the common endeavor.

Has one of our friends been called to fill a role that is different than ours?

Let us comfort him or her with genuine understanding.

Sometimes it may seem like one of them has changed somehow. Coworkers may fault him or her because of it. Some of them regard him or her as being a bearer of dangerous temptations. They jump to conclusions and rush to pass judgment. But who can really know the true cause behind it? Are we in such a lofty position that we can analyze the situation from every angle? What seems to be a failure or desertion may actually entail a new resolution from Jesus concerning the redemption of this friend who now seems so distant.

The Good Shepherd is always watching over us. He has promised that not one of the sheep entrusted to him by the Father will be lost.

In light of this, let us do our utmost to attend to the duties that have been given to us. Each one of us needs to mind the obligations that are ours alone.

According to this standard of understanding and attitude, there will always be a lot of worthwhile work to be done.

Thus, if to your mortal eyes a brother or sister seems to have gone astray, remember Jesus' words to the fisherman from Capernaum: "*What is that to you? Follow me.*"

3

Examine yourself

Let nothing be done in strife or vainglory, but in humility. – Paul. (Phil. 2:3)

Jesus' work is endless. Within the orbit of this work, there is a place for every person and every salutary idea.

If in the divine order each tree produces according to its own kind, in the Christian endeavor each disciple contributes according to his or her level of evolution.

A human lifetime is not a season of pleasure. A person is here for the purpose of learning, and in this endeavor he or she should take advantage of the opportunity to learn and enable others to do the same.

The apostle Paul understood this truth, stating that we should not do anything in the spirit of strife or vainglory, but in humility.

When you do something that goes beyond the scope of your daily duties, examine your reasons for doing so. If it is the result of an unjust desire for control, or if it is only due to an unnecessary argument, then watch your heart so that your path may be less troublesome. But if you were just doing what you were supposed to, then even if you were seen as being strict and demanding, inflexible or unfaithful, then accept the unjustified observation and carry on.

Just keep doing your job, remembering that as he served others with humility, without strife or vainglory, Jesus himself was seen as imprudent and rebellious, a traitor to the law and an enemy of the people, but that he received his glorious crown on the cross.

4

Work

But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working even now, and I work also." (Jn. 5:17)

Everywhere we look, we see unhappy, complaining people.

Almost all of them are actually asking for help. Very few love the task they have been given. Most people complain about their job.

Those who clean the streets want to be business persons; those who work in the country would prefer life in the city.

The problem, however, is not the job, but the understanding of the opportunity.

Usually, complaints in this regard are the product of an unconscious laziness. It is the innate desire to hold on to what is useless and ruinous from failures in the obscure past.

But Jesus came to save us from "dying in sin." He brought us the blessing of work, which is the unceasing activity of life.

So that we may know how to honor our own endeavor, Jesus referred to the Father, who never stops working on his eternal endeavor of love and wisdom, and to his own task, which was replete with imperishable dedication to humankind.

So, when you feel tired, remember that Jesus is working. We started our humble undertaking only yesterday, but the Master has been toiling for us for how long?

5

Foundations

Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part of me." (Jn. 13:8)

It is quite natural for us to see the Master's decision to wash his disciples' feet as being, more than anything else, a sublime demonstration of sanctifying humility.

It is right for us to begin with examining the intellectual interpretation of his divine acts, but then we need to proceed with a more in-depth analysis. Through the lasting message of the Gospel, Christ continues to wash the feet of all sincere followers of his doctrine of love and forgiveness.

People are usually uninterested in all of their loftier obligations, and they often applaud crime and lack of conscience. But when they meet Jesus and his sublime teachings, they feel that they are treading on a new foundation, and that their fundamental concepts of life are now quite different.

He provides lightness to their spiritual feet so they can progress in a different manner on the evolutionary path.

Everything seems completely new and they understand that if it were not for that marvelous intervention, they would not be able to partake of the banquet of the true life.

Then, just like the apostle from Capernaum, they acquire new responsibilities on the path, and in their desire to live up to the divine expectation, they ask Jesus to wash not only their feet but their hands and head also.

6

Effort and prayer

And sending the crowd away, he went up onto a mountain away from the others in order to pray. And when the evening came, he was there alone. (Mt. 14:23)

From time to time, religious groups appear that preach complete withdrawal from human struggles in order to pursue the work of prayer.

In this particular, however, the Master continues to be the fount of living instruction. Work and prayer were two characteristics of his divine activity.

Jesus did not keep himself isolated from people in order to remain in full contemplation of the divine realities that illuminated his soul, but he was able to cultivate prayer in all its heavenly loftiness, nonetheless.

When he sent the crowd away after having finished his work for the day, he set aside some time to meditate by himself, communing with the Father in solitary, sublime prayer.

All who are on earth are there for the purpose of reaching a higher level of evolution by means of the work they have been called to do. And through prayer, they receive indispensable help from God for the sanctification of their task.

Work and prayer complement each other in every spiritual activity.

Those who do nothing but work, without method or rest, will end up in despair, in a dreadful dryness of heart; those who do nothing but spend all their time on their knees will be in danger of succumbing to inertia and idleness.

Prayer illuminates work, and work is like a book of light for the spiritualized life.

Mind your duties because that is why you are in the world; but never forget that “mountain,” located in your highest sentiments, so that you may

pray “away from the others,” as the Lord used to do.

7

Everything new

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things have passed away; everything has been made new – Paul. (2 Cor. 5:17)

We often see troubled believers utilizing the sacred resources of prayer in order to perpetuate unjustifiable situations only because they entail certain immediate advantages for their selfish concerns.

Such a mental attitude is very grave.

Christ taught patience and tolerance, but he never asked his disciples to enter into any kind of agreement with the wrongful ways that make the world unhappy. As a result, he went to the cross and bequeathed to us not only the ultimate example of non-violence, but of non-conformity to the darkness in which most people take delight.

Believers should make no mistake about the path they are to take.

In Christ, everything has to be renewed. The wrongful past is to be dead and gone, situations of doubt are to come to an end, and the age-old concerns of the “carnal man” are to give way to a new spirit-filled life, in which everything entails a healthy re-building for the eternal future.

It is nonsense to use Jesus’ name to carry on with old errors.

Whenever we see believers using fine-sounding words to address the Master, but whose innermost being has not yet been renewed, they are like prisoners bound in chains. These brothers and sisters may be at Christ’s door because of the sincerity of their intentions; however, they have not yet succeeded in entering the sanctuary of his love.

8

Jesus came

*But he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, making himself similar to men. – Paul.
(Phil. 2:7)*

Many disciples talk about how terribly hard it is to do good works in the service of evangelical fellowship. They complain about the unfortunate state of ignorance that most people seem to enjoy.

However, complaints like this are unjustified.

In carrying out his divine mission of love, Jesus did not depend on the immediate collaboration of perfected and wise spirits; instead, "... he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, making himself similar to men."

We were not able to go up to the Savior to be with him in his sublime position; instead, he came down to us, temporarily extinguishing his aureole of light in order to benefit us without displays of sensationalism.

Jesus' example in this particular is a highly profound lesson.

Let no one allege intellectual or sentimental accomplishments as a reason for their brothers and sisters misunderstanding them.

None of those who have walked the earth ever reached the heights of Christ. On the other hand, we see him eating with sinners, talking fraternally to prostitutes and giving his final example between two thieves.

If your neighbor cannot reach your spiritual level, then you can go to his or hers for the good work of fraternity and enlightenment, without any ostentation that might be offensive.

Remember the example of the Divine Master.

In order to come to us, he emptied himself, entering the world as a child with no cradle, and exiting his glorious endeavor as a crucified servant.

9

Christian gatherings

*On the evening of the first day of the week, when the disciples were assembled with the doors of the place locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them:
“Peace be with you.” (Jn. 20:19)*

Ever since the day of Christ’s glorious resurrection, earthly humankind has been considered worthy of relations with the spirit world.

Due to the need to keep the human mind from considering such a possibility too soon, the book of Deuteronomy forbid any sort of communication with those who had gone through the portals of the grave. However, just as Jesus used forgiveness and unlimited love to mitigate the old law of inflexible justice, he further softened the demands of the Mosaic code by coming to meet his heartsick disciples.

When the doors were locked so that tumultuous vibrations from outside adversaries would not trouble the hearts of those who eagerly desired divine communion, the beloved Master appeared, increasing everyone’s hope in the life eternal. At that unforgettable hour, the activity of exchange between the visible and invisible world was established. The Christian family in its many expressions would never be without the sweet nourishment of its loving and close-knit gatherings. From then on, disciples would meet in the cenacles of Jerusalem as well as in the catacombs of Rome. And in modern times, the deepest meaning of such gatherings remains the same, whether in Catholic or Protestant churches, or in Spiritist centers.

There should is one objective: to seek inspiration from the higher realms. The only difference is that, within the Spiritist environment, the soul is able gratify itself more fully in higher flights because it does not concern itself with certain dogmatic prejudices or with an organized clergy.

10

Mediumship

“And it shall happen in the last days,” says the Lord, “that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall have visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17)

On the day of Pentecost, Jerusalem was full of foreigners. People from Mesopotamia, Phrygia, Libya, Egypt, Crete, Arabia, Parthia and Rome were crowded together in the large square when the humble disciples of the Nazarene began proclaiming the Good News, addressing each group of the multitude in its own language.

A wave of wonder and joy invaded the overall spirit.

Regarding that divine concert, there were skeptics who attributed the revelation to a state of madness or drunkenness. But Simon Peter stood up and explained that this was the light promised by heaven to illuminate the darkness of the flesh.

Ever since then, the light of Pentecost has incessantly been poured out upon the world. Until that moment, the disciples had been weak and indecisive, but from then on they broke from the influence of the environment, healing the sick, uplifting the spirits of the downcast, and speaking to the kings of the earth in the name of the Lord.

Their exhausted strength had been infused with the power of Jesus.

The era of mediumship, the foundation of all of Christianity’s achievements down through the centuries, had been established.

The moral prejudices that dominate the paths of humankind have been at work against the influence of mediumship even till now. But it is upon mediumship – that glorious light from heaven given to humankind at Pentecost – that the spiritual endeavors of all true communities of Christ’s Doctrine are being built, and it is mediumship – having spread from the

apostles to all human circles – which has reappeared in Christian Spiritism as the immortal soul of revived Christianity.

11

Consolation

“If anyone would serve me, he must follow me.” – Jesus (Jn. 12:26)

Frequently, today’s religious organizations – especially Spiritist ones – are filled with people longing for a word of consolation.

In fact, the lofty Doctrine of the Spirits is the divine expression of the Promised Consoler. In the Doctrine’s work, new pathways, filled with profound consolation for the most difficult days, shine for human thought.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to understand that it would not be right for a person to want to be consoled without first having put forth the effort to do what he or she could ...

Many people ask for help from the messengers of the invisible realm; but how can they receive it if they have come to the point of abandoning themselves to the whims of the impetuous winds that blow so strongly to imperil their path?

Spiritual consolation is not like the world’s bread, which passes mechanically from one hand to another to satiate the body’s hunger. Spiritual consolation is like the sun, which is the same for everybody, but which shines only in places where there is no closed stronghold for the darkness to hide in.

Jesus’ disciples may say they need consolation. That is natural. However, before asking for it, they must know whether or not they are truly serving and following the Master. Christ has never failed to keep his promises. His divine kingdom is built upon everlasting consolations; but in order to reach that kingdom, it is necessary to follow in his steps, and everybody knows what Jesus’ path was like as he walked amongst the stones of this world.

12

Education in the home

“You, too, do what you have seen your father do.” – Jesus. (Jn. 8:38)

In today’s world, an education giving free rein to the human instincts is encouraged. The old teachings involving developing one’s character in the home are being forgotten little by little; nevertheless, society will be compelled to readjust its purposes sooner or later.

Human parents must be the individual’s first mentors. Setting up the right environment depends on their loving mission. In today’s unwatchful society, corrupted environments point to the fact that there are bad parents mixed in with those who, at the cost of huge sacrifices, are able to maintain as much security as possible against the threat of disorder.

The domestic endeavor can never be a release-valve for unproductive pleasures, because it constitutes working and cooperating with God. The man and woman who try to be parents while, at the same time, enjoying the pleasures of earthly life are blind, and they will finish their insane effort – spiritually speaking – in the common grave of uselessness.

In vain do sociologists strive to replace education in the home with unintelligible substitutes, which only poison the soul. Only a spirit that has understood the parenthood of God above all is able to escape the law that says that children will always imitate their parents, even if the parents are wicked.

Let us heed Christ’s word, and if you have children, take the Master’s statement as a warning.

13

What is the flesh?

If we live in spirit, let us also walk in spirit. – Paul (Gal. 5:25)

When talking about spirituality, people often complain about the demands of the flesh.

It is true that the apostles often spoke about the lusts of the flesh, its criminal impulses and its noxious desires. We, too, often feel the need to use symbols in order to make the lessons of the Gospel more accessible. The Master himself said that the spirit, as the divine element, is strong, but the flesh, as its human expression, is weak.

But what is the flesh, after all?

Each spiritual personality has a fluidic body. Have you never noticed that flesh is composed of condensed fluids? Of course, when these fluids combine, they obey the imperatives of life on earth; you have designated this process as the law of heredity. However, this combining process is passive and is not self-determining. We may portray it as an earthly home where the spirit is in command, a dwelling which will take on the good or bad characteristics of its owner.

Whenever we speak about the “sins of the flesh,” we might translate this expression as entailing the wrongs caused by the unevolved condition of the spiritual human being on the planet.

Undignified desires, depressing impulses, ingratitude, bad faith and the marks of betrayal are never the result of the flesh per se.

It is essential that people understand the need for self-control and that they awaken their faculties of self-discipline and renewal in Jesus Christ.

One of the biggest absurdities that some disciples commit is to attribute responsibility for humankind’s crimes and errors to the mass of passive cells

that serve the human being, when we know that everything proceeds from the spirit.

14

In yourself

Do you have faith? Have it in yourself before God. – Paul. (Rom. 14:22)

As they go about their daily chores, people must not forget Paul's expression, "Have faith in yourself." They should bear it in mind in the sphere of their obligations before God.

Those who live in the certainty of the divine promises are those who have faith in the relative power that has been entrusted to them; and by increasing this power with their own efforts, they evolve with their eyes set on eternity.

However, those who are discouraged as to their own abilities and place their hopes in human promises instead are like pieces of cork with no definite purpose: they are at the mercy of the sea without course or harbor.

Of course, no one can live without having faith in someone within their closest circle; but affection, a friendly tie or the warmth of a praiseworthy devotion does not mean not having faith in oneself before the Creator.

Within each person's sphere, God can do anything, but that does not exclude the cooperation, the will and the faith of his children in accomplishing it. A father who mechanically did everything for his children would soon extinguish the finest abilities in each one of them.

Why are you still indecisive if the Lord has given you this or that honest work? Do it correctly, for if God has faith in you to do something, then you should have faith in yourself before him.

15

Conversion

“And when you are converted, confirm your brothers.” – Jesus. (Lk. 22:32)

A person’s conversion is not as easy as the bearers of hurried convictions might think.

Many say, “I believe,” but few can say, “I have been transformed.”

The Master’s words to Simon Peter are very symbolic. Jesus spoke them on the day before Calvary during the grave hour of his last meeting with his disciples. He told the fisherman from Capernaum to confirm his brothers and sisters in the faith after he himself had been converted.

It should be noted that Peter had always been Jesus’ most active apostolic companion. The Master always preferred Peter’s simple house to carry out his divine ministry of love. For three years, Simon Peter had witnessed some of the most astonishing incidents. He had seen lepers cleansed, the blind recover their sight, the insane regain their reason. He had been dazzled by the transfigured Messiah on Mt. Tabor and had witnessed Lazarus come forth from the darkness of the tomb; but he had not yet been converted.

It would require an immense effort in Jerusalem, personal sacrifice, and enormous self-conflict before he could be converted to the Gospel and bear witness of the Christ to his brothers and sisters.

It will not be because your soul has become fascinated by spiritual revelations that you will be transformed and converted to Jesus. Simon Peter had witnessed these revelations in the company of the Messiah himself, but it cost him much to do so. Therefore, let us work for our own conversion. This is the only way that we will be prepared to bear witness.

16

Make straight the way

“Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah.”— John the Baptist. (Jn. 1:23)

The exhortation of the Precursor continues to hang in the air, inviting men and women of goodwill to the regeneration of their usual ways.

All the time, we see people who come to the faith, eager for what Christ has to offer. They long for his peace and divine presence, but sometimes, after their best sentiments give way to unjust anxiety, they end up discouraged and defeated.

Where is Jesus? Why hasn't he answered their continual pleas? In what distant realm, so far from their sufferings, does the Master reside? They do not understand that Christ may be found every day right beside every true disciple in the kindly messengers of his love. They lack dedication to their own inner good. They run in pursuit of the Divine Master, heedless of John's counsel: *“Make straight the way.”*

In order for one to feel Christ's sanctifying influence, one must straighten the pathway on which one has been living. Many persons weep on the byways of wrongdoing; they mourn for themselves on the slippery slopes of continuous error; they call out to heaven but continue to hang on to the oppressing passions of the material realm. Under such circumstances, it is not appropriate for the soul to address the Savior, who accepted humiliation and the cross without complaints of any kind.

If you want Jesus to come and sanctify your activities, then make straight the ways of your life and regenerate your impulses. Get rid of the darkness that surrounds you and you will feel him beside you with his blessings.

17

Through Christ

*If he has caused you any harm, or if he owes you anything, put it on my account. – Paul.
(Philemon 1:18)*

In sending Onesimus back to Philemon, Paul wrote these inspired and happy words, telling his friend to bill him, Paul, for anything that Onesimus might owe him, Philemon.

Let us apply this exhortation to our own situation.

With each new day of struggle we become more indebted to Christ.

When everything seems to be going against us, the correct measures to take come to us from Jesus. When everything is just fine, it is because of his love that we utilize life's gifts, and it is in his name that we offer hope and consolation to others.

We are debtors to him for his boundless mercy.

We belong to Him, and in this fact lies our highest entitlement.

So why the pessimism and despair when slander or ingratitude attack us mercilessly, providing us a greater opportunity to evolve? If we are completely indebted to the Master's infinite love, then would it not be reasonable for us to grasp at least some notion of our immense debt by accepting, in remembrance of his name, a tiny share of our brothers' and sisters' suffering? Are they not his wards too, after all?

We should remember that, when we talk about peace, happiness and the higher life, we are acting in the area of trust; that is, we are making a promise on Christ's account, for only he can give abundantly.

In light of this, if you feel that someone has become a debtor to your soul, do not indulge in pointless worry, for Christ is your creditor in turn. You may put the damages on his divine account and go on your way.

18

Inner cleansing

Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you of double mind. (James 4:8)

Everyone has both an outer life, which is known and analyzed by everyone around them, and an inner life, which only they themselves know about.

This inner world is the source of all good and bad principles, and all outward expressions have their bases there.

As a rule, we all harbor serious inner deficiencies that need to be rectified.

But the work of cleansing is not as simple as it seems.

It is very easy for a person to confess the acceptance of religious truths, or to give lip service to spiritually constructive ideologies ... but it is quite another matter to accomplish the work of inner growth, making use of self-discipline, fraternal understanding and the spirit of sacrifice.

The apostle James fully understood the seriousness of this matter and advised disciples to wash their hands, that is, to rectify their behavior in the outer world and live differently in the eyes of others. But he also urged them to work on cleansing their sentiments in the sacred room of their conscience, which followers can only experience in the impenetrable solitude of their thoughts. This valorous friend of Christ, however, did not forget to affirm that this endeavor is for those of double mind, for such renewal can never be achieved only at the cost of fine-sounding words.

19

Spreading the Gospel

*“And some will tell you: ‘He is here!’ or, ‘He is there!’ Do not go, nor follow after them.” –
Jesus. (Lk. 17:23)*

The master’s exhortations to his disciples were too exact for there to be any uncertainty or indecision about them.

When so many sectarian factions use Christ to justify their intellectual abuses, it is important for those just starting out in the Consoler’s light to meditate on the exalted meaning of this verse from Luke.

In the genuinely Christian spreading of the Gospel, it is not enough to say that the Lord is here or there; it is crucial to demonstrate him by setting an example.

Many people search for Jesus in churches and at altars.

Changing one’s religious beliefs may be a modification of one’s path, but it can also be a continuation of one’s troubles.

It is necessary to find Christ in one’s inner sanctuary.

To Christianize one’s life does not mean adopting new outward forms. It means reforming one’s life for the good within one’s individual ambit.

Those who only state verbally that the Master may be found here or there are assuming a serious responsibility. Proselytism is always dangerous for those who are persuaded by fine-sounding words without having an edifying example to follow.

A sincere disciple knows that talk is cheap, but that exemplifying the Lord’s purposes in one’s own life is costly. It is essential to live the Good before teaching it to somebody else, for Jesus recommended that nobody should heed heralds who only tell them where God’s Son may be found.

20

The fellow servant

*“Should you not have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had mercy on you?” – Jesus.
(Mt. 18:33)*

People cannot act in isolation anywhere regarding God’s work, which is being carried out everywhere.

The Father established cooperation as one of the noblest principles of all the laws that govern life.

In the humblest place, you can find a fellow servant in life’s struggle.

In the home, this servant may be called “father” or “son”; on life’s pathway, he or she may be called “friend” or “like-minded comrade.”

Actually, there is only one Father, who is God, and one big family composed of brothers and sisters.

If the Eternal One has sent you an undesirable fellow servant, then always be compassionate and set an example.

Uplift those around you.

Bless the ties that Jesus has fostered for the good of your own soul and the souls of all those near you.

If this task entails obstacles, then remember the innumerable times that Christ has had mercy on your soul. This will attenuate the darkness in your heart.

Regard each fellow servant in the ongoing struggle or on this particular day as a blessing and an opportunity to attend to the divine plan for your life.

Are you experiencing difficulties, misapprehensions and misunderstandings? If so, show the mercy that Jesus has already shown you in giving you a new opportunity to sanctify and learn.

21

The moral way

He said to them: "Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." (Jn. 21:6)

For all of us, life should be a strict observance of the sacred interests of God.

Nevertheless, people too often try to set themselves above the divine purposes.

That is when imbalance sets in, for nobody can deceive the Divine Law. As a result, they must endure the task of reparation.

Some folks lose heart in the good fight for self-perfection and end up casting themselves into a veritable hell of inner darkness. They complain about their fate, they make accusations against the Creator's wisdom, and they shake their fists in the abyss of evil, forgetting that their own stubbornness and improvidence was what caused them to fall into it in the first place.

However, nearly twenty centuries ago Jesus exclaimed:

"Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."

Metaphorically speaking, the human spirit is an ever-evolving "fisherman" in the regenerative school of earth. Each one's situation is the "boat." On each new day, people get out of bed with their "net" of interests. Are we casting our "net" on the "right side"? That is, are our thoughts and actions based on true justice?

It would be best if we would appraise our inner life in our daily efforts, for Christ, in this particular teaching, essentially recommended to his disciples: *"Dedicate your attention to the moral way and you will find what you need."*

What are you looking for?

And turning round and seeing that they were following him, Jesus asked: “What are you looking for?” (Jn. 1:38)

Life per se is a divine group of experiences. Each separate lifetime offers the individual the benefit of acquiring new knowledge. The acquisition of religious values is the most important of all, because it entails the movement of the soul’s decisive illumination towards God.

In the inferior game of self-centered interests, people apply the corruption of their sentiments to this divine pursuit, however.

Worship places of stone are filled with unjustifiable promises and absurd vows.

Many worshipers actually believe that Divine Providence is a power that can be bribed with promises and favors. Others ask for help from the spirit world for the purpose of solving their petty problems.

They forget what Christ taught and exemplified.

The cross of Calvary is a living symbol.

Those who desire freedom must obey the supreme designs. Without an inward understanding of Jesus while going about one’s daily chores, the soul will continue to be prisoner to inferior concerns.

One mustn’t forget the fact that Christ stands at the threshold of all the world’s places of worship, asking those about to enter: *“What are you looking for?”*

23

Living by faith

But the just shall live by faith – Paul (Rom. 1:17)

In his letter to the Romans, Paul states that the just shall live by faith.

Not a few disciples have wrongly interpreted this assertion. They think that living by faith means strictly observing the outward rituals of religious worship.

Frequenting a place of worship, getting along with its clergy and respecting its sectarian symbolism would seem to point to a just person. However, a good worshiper and a good person are not always the same thing. Before anything else, it is necessary to be a man or woman of God in every circumstance of life.

Paul of Tarsus meant that a just person is always faithful and lives unwaveringly in genuine faithfulness to the Father who is in heaven.

Are our days joyful and peaceful? Let us remember not to scorn moderation. Are they dark and sad? Let us trust in God, for such a storm would not have occurred without his permission. Has the world forsaken us? The Father never does. Have infirmities, disillusionment, ingratitude and even death come upon us? These are all good friends, for they give us the chance to be just and to live by faith according to the sacred principles of Christianity.

24

The corroded treasure

Your gold and silver have become corroded. (James 5:3)

If directed towards the Good, people's sentiments about their impassioned ideas would always produce the most substantial fruit for God's work. However, the exact opposite is usually the case, obstructing the concretization of the divine purposes with regard to people's redemption.

Generally speaking, we see love expressed only as a fleeting emotion of the material senses. We see charity causing disorder among dozens of individuals that are all trying to take care of three or four sick persons; we see faith waging sectarian wars; or we see the sacred zeal of living creating fulminating self-centeredness. Here, forgiveness talks about how hard it is to express itself; there, humility asks for admiration from others.

All the sentiments that have been given to us by God are sacred. They make up the gold and the silver of our inheritance. But as the apostle affirms, we allow such gifts to become corroded over time.

Therefore, we must work industriously to eliminate the "corrosion" that has attacked the treasures of our spirit. To do so, it is indispensable to grasp the perfect selflessness and unconditional forgiveness of the Gospel story so that we may truly move forward to meet Christ.

25

Be calm

Jesus said, "Tell the people to sit down." (Jn. 6:10)

This passage from the Gospel of John is one of the most significant. It takes place when a crowd of nearly five thousand people out in the midst of nature are in need of bread.

The disciples are worried.

Philip says that not even two hundred denarii would be enough to solve this unforeseen problem.

Andrew brings the Master a boy who has five barley loaves and two fishes.

All the disciples discuss the matter.

Jesus, however, receives the morsel believing in its priceless significance. He tells them to have everyone sit down, and for there to be order and harmony. And to everyone's amazement, he distributes the food to all.

The greatness of this lesson is profound.

Starving for peace, people beg for Christ's assistance. They talk about him, pray for his help, and wait for him to do something. However, they are unable to establish inner order so that they may receive heavenly resources. They mingle Jesus with their imprudent acts, their crazy anxieties and their wrongful desires. Of course they despair and become more and more misguided because they do not want to listen to the invitation to calm themselves; they do not "sit down" to establish order; instead, they insist on staying imbalanced.

26

Suffering

Do not fear the things you are about to suffer. (Rev. 2:10)

One of Christ's major concerns has been to remove the ghosts of fear from his disciples' paths.

Acquiring faith is not a common event on the roads of life. It means total trust.

What does it mean "to suffer," after all?

Actually, the suffering of many persons is much like the suffering of children who have lost their toys.

Many people feel that they are exemplary sufferers because they cannot commit evil. Others rebel because God has not fulfilled their pernicious desires.

In order to lend due cooperation to the Gospel, we must join the faithful caravan that is on its way to meet Jesus. We need to understand that a loyal friend is one who avoids conflict and is always willing to do good deeds.

To participate in the spirit of evangelical service is to share in the Master's decisions, hence fulfilling the divine will of the Father who is in heaven.

Therefore, let us not fear what we might have to suffer.

God is a magnanimous and just Father.

A father does not dole out suffering. He provides correction, and all correction only improves.

27

Business

And he said to them, "Why have you been looking for me? Didn't you know that I had to be about my Father's business?" (Lk. 2:49)

Men and women of the world are always concerned with business having to do with their ephemeral interests.

Some of them spend their entire lives watching the stock exchange; others busy themselves in studying the markets.

Countries have domestic and foreign business dealings. Marvelous activities of the mind are utilized in this type of work. However, despite their respectable character when genuine, all these activities are precarious and transitory. The strongest stock exchanges will eventually experience crises; world trade is fickle and very often difficult.

Very few people dedicate themselves to their eternal interests. Frequently, they remember to do so only when it is too late, when their bodies are about to die. Only then do they try to correct this fatal negligence.

Nonetheless, people should understand that the best business is one's spiritual enlightenment, for such activity represents the interests of Divine Providence regarding us.

God has allowed business transactions on earth so that we may learn about fraternity in our activities of exchange. He has also permitted business to go on in order use it to teach us what the most important business of all is. That is why the Master clearly tells us in Luke, "Didn't you know I had to be about my Father's business?"

28

Scribes

“Watch out for the scribes, who like to walk around in flowing robes.” – Jesus. (Mk. 12:38)

The learned of the world have always consisted of “scribes, who like to walk around in flowing robes.”

Jesus is referring not only to ambitious intellectuals but also to eccentric “scribes,” who, under the pretext of offering something new, poison people’s minds with their sickly concepts, which originate from their excessive concern for originality.

It is necessary to avoid those who kill the simple way of living.

Intellectual poison normally destroys many lives.

But there are books whose useful function is to keep alive the flame of watchfulness in souls of a character founded on life’s noblest ideals. Even now, as humankind is going through disturbing and difficult times, the market of ideas is full of degenerate articles, begging for the intervention of a “spiritual cleansing.”

Would you nourish your body with rotten substances?

Likewise, your soul cannot be nourished with inferior ideas based on irreligion, disrespect, disorder and indiscipline.

Observe all the examples of intellectual decadence and sincerely ponder the peace that you secretly desire. This will be of great help in eliminating the aberrations of the intellect.

29

To be content

*I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content with what I have –
Paul (Phil. 4:11)*

The strong desire for possessions dominates the majority of people.

The simple life, a condition offered by the planet for relative happiness, has been forgotten by humankind in general. An overwhelming percentage of prayers do not manage to go much beyond the narrow confines of their origin.

Strange absurdities are asked of God. Very few persons are content with what they have received to provide for their needs, and fewer still ask only for their “daily bread” as a symbol of what is indispensable.

Illogical persons do not try to determine if they have the minimum needed for eternal life, because they are always anxious about getting the most from transitory opportunities. Usually, they are absorbed by perishable interests; they are dissatisfied and troubled by the bitter torment of excessive ambition. In the insane race for the immediate now, they forget the opportunity being given to them. They forsake the opportunities they have been given for their evolution and they throw themselves into adventures of unpredictable consequences for their infinite future.

If you have a good grasp of your Christ-related responsibilities, then examine the essence of your innermost desires. Remember that Paul of Tarsus – the apostle called by Jesus for spreading the divine truth – had to learn how to be content with what he possessed on the road of harsh trials.

Or are you waiting for someone to achieve such learning for you?

30

The world and evil

*“I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you deliver them from evil.” – Jesus
(Jn. 17:15)*

In religious groups, there are always a large number of people concerned about the idea of death. Many people do not believe in peace or love, except on planes other than the earth. The majority keep waiting for imaginary and unjustifiable situations without ever taking their own personal efforts into account.

Longing to die in order to be happy is an infirmity of the spirit.

When praying to the Father for the disciples, Jesus did not ask that they be taken out of the world, but that they be delivered from evil.

However, evil does not actually come from the world but from the people who inhabit it.

The earth itself has always been good. From its soil spring delicately fragrancéd lilies; its maternal nature is a repository of wonderful miracles that are repeated every day.

It will do no good for us to leave the planet if our evils have not been properly eradicated. In such circumstances, we are like human carriers of incurable diseases. We can change residences; however, the change means almost nothing if we bring our problems with us. Thus, it is necessary to beautify and improve the world by fighting against the evil that is within us.

31

The littlest things

*“Since you cannot even do the littlest things, why are you anxious about the rest?” – Jesus
(Lk. 12:26)*

Few people know the importance of doing the littlest things well.

There are those who, out of a sense of false superiority, look down on simple tasks as if they were dispensable for the success of more impressive works. A learned person mustn't forget that once upon a time he or she had to learn the simple letters of the alphabet.

Moreover, no work can be completed rightly if the details are not duly considered and understood.

In general terms, people are always fascinated by spectacular situations and dramatic or exciting events.

However, being prominent demands much prudence. Thorns and stones can also be prominent on the daily pathway.

That is why we need to attend to the littlest things on the road that God has reserved for us, so that what we do may be truly useful for our lives.

A symphony would not be played properly if one note were missing, nor would a poem make sense if one verse were omitted.

Let us mind the littlest things. They are an integral and inalienable part of great accomplishments. Comprehending the importance of this fact, the Master asks us in the Gospel of Luke: *“Since you cannot do even the littlest things, why are you anxious about the rest?”*

32

Clouds

A voice came from the cloud, saying: "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." (Lk. 9:35)

People's minds are usually focused on the clouds that appear on the horizon. These are clouds of disappointment, frustrated plans and dashed hopes.

At times, people despair, thus poisoning the fountains of life itself. They would prefer a blue sky overhead, a shining sun during the day and luminous stars to beautify the night. However, when a cloud appears, confusion suddenly takes hold of them.

The Gospel tells us a beautiful story about a cloud.

The disciples are dazzled by the sight of Jesus transfigured, with Moses and Elijah beside him, enveloped by an intense light.

Suddenly, things become dark. They can no longer make out the marvelous scene. However, from the midst of the thick fog, a powerful voice of divine revelation is heard: *"This is my beloved Son; listen to him!"*

At that moment, the voice of heaven is heard from the temporary darkness.

It is a fact that earthly existence imposes troubling anxieties and bitter afflictions on people. Nevertheless, they must remain serene and trusting during such difficult times.

The pains and disappointments of the planetary struggle contain profound enlightenment, hidden lessons and magnificent appeals. The wise and loving voice of God always speaks through them.

33

Recapitulations

For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God. (Jn. 12:43)

Glory followed by downfall seems to happen over and over again over the centuries.

The world is like a stage on which the scenes are constantly repeated.

Everything is unstable.

Might and right dominate alternately. Enlightened multitudes give way to new delusions. In its turn, the human spirit, considered separately, recapitulates bad experiences after having reached a right understanding.

How can we explain this anomaly? This is a peculiar situation because, deep down, every person is thirsty for peace and hungry for stability. However, it is important to realize that, over the course of millennia and for many, many lifetimes, individuals have loved earthly glory rather than the glory of God.

Countless men and women believe they have been forgiven as they say their evening prayers, but... what about the day that has just ended? In his boundless mercy, Jesus grants the hesitant worker a new opportunity. Day comes again. Existence is rebuilt. However, what does the worker gain by making use of the eternal benefits only in the shadow-filled evening?

Someone might ask you: What have you done with the clear morning, the bright sunshine and the instruments entrusted to you? Only at this point will you acknowledge the need to glory in the Almighty. People and nations will continue to undo what they have done wrongly so that they can begin the endeavor all over again.

34

Eating and drinking

“Then you will say: We used to eat and drink with you, and you used to teach in our streets.”
– Jesus (Lk. 13:26)

This verse from Luke refers to a father who has closed the door to his ungrateful children.

The picture portrays the situation of religious people of all schools of faith, who have only paid a lot of lip service to the name of Jesus. On the day of detailed examination, when death once again opens the door to the spirit world, they will say they used to “eat and drink” with the Master, whose teachings they learned and disseminated in the streets.

But they ate and drank only. They made selfish use of their resources. They ate and believed with an intellectual faith. They drank and transmitted what they had learned from somebody else. Making the lesson a part of their own lives did not interest their inconstant minds.

It is true that they knew the Master, but they did not manifest him in their hearts. Jesus also knew God. However, he did not limit himself to merely affirming the reality of this relationship; rather, he actually lived his love for the Father amongst humankind. Teaching the truth, he gave himself up for human redemption without thinking about recompense. He understood others even though they could not yet understand him. He gave us a supreme blessing with his coming, and he surrendered himself to death so that we could learn the knowledge of the Good.

It is not enough to believe in Jesus intellectually; we must apply his teachings to ourselves.

People should meditate on the problems that concern them each day. Irrational people also eat and drink. However, the sons and daughters of nations are born on the earth for a more meaningful life.

35

Sowing

“Yet, having been sown, it grows.” – Jesus. (Mk. 4:32)

It is right for people to try to understand the substance of what they do in their daily activities. Even when they are obeying certain worldly regulations that compel them to adopt certain attitudes, they still have to examine the nature of their personal contribution in each circumstance, for it is God’s law that every seed sown must grow.

The good sows life; evil sows death. The former is evolutionary movement on the ascending ladder to the Divinity; the latter is stagnation.

Many Spirits, from one physical body to the next, continue on earth, recapitulating their lives over and over again for millennia. Incorrect sowing has conditioned them to the so-called “dying in sin.” They spend their days redeeming heavy debts, but fail once more by sowing incorrectly again. Their existence is a large, vicious circle, because evil enroots them to the scorching and arid soil of unproductive passions.

Only the Good can confer the garland of supreme freedom, since it represents the only key that can open the sacred doors to the Infinite for the anxious soul.

Therefore, let us be careful each day, for once evil or good has been sown, it will grow right along with us according to the laws that govern life.

36

Heresies

*For there must be heresies among you, so that those who are true may appear amongst you. –
Paul. (1 Cor. 11:19)*

Let us welcome heretics sympathetically, and let materialists speak freely. Let no one oppose those who doubt. Let disbelievers have a platform and an opportunity to speak.

That is only fair.

Paul of Tarsus was profoundly inspired when he wrote this verse.

Those who criticize people who are down on their luck do not really understand divine love as they should. What would you say of a father who curses his son for having returned home sick and hopeless?

Anyone who cannot believe in God is unwell. In such condition, the word of those who are in despair is sincere because it comes from empty souls as a cry for help, no matter in what form, even if disguised by the shiny cover of worldly philosophical or scientific concepts. Even though unfortunate people of this sort may attack us, their futile efforts will result in benefits for everybody, giving us an opportunity to choose what is truly worthwhile in the work we have undertaken.

With regard to the supposed necessity of instructing disbelievers about the principles of faith, let us forget about pretending that we are capable of helping them and bear in mind that God has much to offer them. Let us receive them as brothers and sisters and rest assured that the Father will do the rest.

37

Honors

*“They honor me in vain, teaching doctrines that are the commandments of men.” – Jesus
(Mk. 7:7)*

Today’s Christianity offers us profound lessons regarding this declaration.

Nobody can doubt the Christian breath that has animated western civilization. However, it is important to realize that, in its institutions, the Christian essence has been merely a breath that has not brought about any substantial renewal, because right after the divine Master’s ministry, men began issuing orders and decrees in the presumption of honoring Christ. But the fact of the matter is that they only sowed separatism and destruction.

The past few centuries have been full of notable personalities such as monarchs, religious figures and politicians who have declared themselves to be advocates of Christianity and apostles of its light.

All of them have written or taught in Jesus’ name.

Rulers have issued famous mandates, popes have published bulls and compendiums, and legislators have written famous laws. However, in vain have they sought to honor the Savior. They have taught doctrines that are merely human caprice, for today’s world is as much of a battlefield of ideals as it was when Christ came to us in person. The only difference is that nowadays Pharisaism, the Temple, the Sanhedrin, the Praetorian Guard and Caesar’s court have other names. Thus, it is important to realize that, after so many years, it is necessary to change our overall understanding and to serve the Lord, not according to human principles but according to his own teachings.

Preaching

And he said to them, "Let us go to the nearby villages so that I can preach there also. That is why I have come." (Mk. 1:38)

In this verse from Mark, Jesus states that he has come into the world to preach. However, since the meaning of this concept has been erroneously interpreted, one should remember that, in saying this, the Master includes in the act of preaching all the sacrificial gestures of his life.

Generally speaking, the mission of teaching is highly disparaged.

Official knowledge has its cathedras, politics has its platforms and religion speaks from pulpits. However, with laudable exceptions, those who teach are nearly always characterized by two different ways of acting; that is, they exhibit certain attitudes when preaching, but they exhibit others in their daily lives. This causes general confusion because their listeners consequently feel free to change their own "garments of character."

Every sermon molded on the Good is useful. Jesus came into this world to do just that. He preached the truth far and wide, he gave talks about renewal, and he commented on the necessity of love for solving our problems. Nonetheless, he combined his words with a living testimony, from the first manifestation of his sublime mission up to final one on the cross. Therefore, the Master understood preaching to also entail life's sufferings. According to this meaning, the Gospel gives us a divine lesson when it says that the Master was wearing a seamless tunic at the supreme hour of Calvary.

Enter and cooperate

And trembling and astonished he said, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" And the Lord replied, "Rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you must do." (Acts 9:6)

This passage from the Acts of Apostles is clothed in great beauty for those who want to understand what it means to serve Christ.

If the Master appeared to the passionate rabbi from Jerusalem in the splendor of a divine and immortal light, and if he addressed these direct and unforgettable words to his heart, then why didn't he go ahead and finish enlightening Paul right then and there instead of telling him to enter Damascus in order to find out what he needed to know? It was because the law of human cooperation is the great and generous principle by which Jesus closely follows all humankind through the channels of inspiration.

The Master teaches and comforts his disciples through what they do for one another. The more they become attuned to his influence, the more able they will be to act as his faithful and just instruments.

Paul of Tarsus experienced the resurrected Christ in all his imperishable greatness, but then had to get help from Ananias in order to begin the redemptive endeavor that was entrusted to him regarding humankind.

This lesson should be well-heeded by those who eagerly wait for the death of the body, praying for their transference to higher worlds solely for having heard wonderful descriptions by divine messengers. As they ponder such teachings, they should ask themselves what they would do in the higher realms if they have not yet learned to use the education that earth offers them. Consequently, it would be more reasonable for them to leave the past and enter earth's daily struggle, because in the sincere work of fraternal cooperation, they will receive from Jesus the clarification about what they must do.

40

A time for trust

And he asked them, "Where is your faith?" (Lk. 8:25)

The storm had troubled the souls of even the strongest disciples. Disoriented before the fury of the elements, they cry out for Jesus' help.

The Master does help them but then asks, "*Where is your faith?*"

This scene suggests some heavy pondering. Jesus' question clearly points out the need for trust when everything seems dark and lost. In such circumstances, faith will rise to the occasion in its own time.

If there is a time for working and resting, for sowing and reaping, trust will also show itself at the appropriate hour.

Nobody needs to be optimistic when everything is going well. It is difficult to prove one's friendship in moments of happiness.

Of course, disciples should expect opportunities for more struggles, times when they can apply the teachings of the Lord more extensively and intensely. Otherwise, it would be impossible to tell just how much they have grown spiritually.

During these dolorous times, many invoke direct help from Christ. And help always comes because the heavenly mercy is infinite. But once the difficulty is overcome, there will always be the question: "*Where is your faith?*"

More obstacles will appear until the disciple learns how to serenely control, educate and overcome him or herself based on the lessons received.

41

The Golden Rule

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” – Jesus (Mt. 22:39)

Of course, Christ’s ambassadors of his wisdom and mercy had already taught the Golden Rule many centuries before his coming. However, it is important to note that this principle was transmitted with a greater or lesser exemplification by its expositors.

The Greeks used to say: “Do not do to your neighbor what you do not wish to receive from him.”

The Persians stated: “Do as you would like to have done to you.”

The Chinese declared: “Whatever you would not want for yourself, do not do to others.”

The Egyptians recommended: “Allow to pass the one who does to others what he would want for himself.”

The Hebrews taught: “Whatever you would not wish for yourself, do not do to your neighbor.”

The Romans insisted: “The law engraved on the human heart is to love members of society as you love yourself.”

In ancient times, every culture received the golden law of Christ’s magnanimity. Prophets, legislators, judges and philosophers acted as instruments that were in tune to a lesser or greater degree with inspiration from the higher spheres of life. However, because what they came to reveal to people was only fragmentary, their names were stricken from the temples of initiation or were forgotten with time.

With the Master, however, the Golden Rule is divine news because Jesus taught and exemplified it, not with partial virtues, but in the fullness of his work, his self-denial and his love before all humankind.

42

Praise to the good

But praise, honor and peace to anyone who does good. – Paul. (Rom. 2:10)

Maliciousness usually leads people to wrongful interpretations of the good if does not stem from their own particular religious confession, their own work environment, or the familial community of which they are a member.

Self-centeredness makes them believe that anything wholly good can only be done by them or by theirs. This is one of the worst characteristics of the personality.

The good emanates incessantly from God, and God is the Father of all. It is through good persons that the Most High toils against the sectarianism that has transformed his earthly children into consummate combatants that commit pointless and bloody acts.

No matter how forcefully spontaneous teachings from heaven convoke people to realize this truth, they continue their offensive, threatening and destructive attitudes towards one another.

Even so, the Father blesses the good wherever it is to be found.

It is crucial that we not focus on individuals per se, but that we observe and understand the good that the Supreme Lord sends us through them.

What does people's outward appearance matter, anyway? How does their nationality, name or color really concern us? Let us grasp the message they have brought us. Even if they are devoted to evil, they still deserve the good that we may offer them. But if they are good and sincere within their area of service, then they deserve peace and honor from God.

43

Advice

“In the law, Moses commanded us that such women must be stoned. What do you say about it?” (Jn. 8:5)

The spirit of bad-faith often approached the Master with certain questions, hoping for answers that would make him look foolish. However, Jesus’ word was always strong, incontestable and full of divine wisdom.

We make reference to this fact in order to invite the disciple to consult the wisdom, manners and example of the Master at all times.

Jesus’ teachings and actions are ready lessons for all of life’s questions.

People often spend a lot of money on professional advice. The advice of attorneys, for instance, sometimes comes at the cost of bitter sacrifice.

Jesus, however, gives profound and decisive advice for free. All the soul has to do is ask for it in an attitude of prayer, balance and quietude. The Master will speak to it through the Good News of Redemption.

Unexpected cases and problems frequently come up that are difficult to solve. Obviously, people know what traditions and customs would advise them to do, but it is essential for the disciple of the Gospel to ask in the sanctuary of the heart:

“But you, O Master, what do you say about it?”

The answer will be given without delay, as a divine light in the great silence.

The blind man of Jericho

“What would you like me to do for you?” He replied, “Lord, I want to see.” (Lk. 18:41)

The blind man of Jericho is one of the great figures of the gospel teachings.

Luke’s narrative tells us that this unfortunate man was walking along the way, begging ... When he senses the Master approaching, he begins crying out, begging for mercy.

People become angered by his insistent pleas. They try to make him keep still. Jesus, however, hears his appeals, approaches and asks with love:

“What would you like me to do for you?”

Receiving such broad freedom in the presence of this generous giver of divine gifts, the sincere beggar only responds:

“Lord, I want to see!”

The aim of this honest and humble blind man should be ours in all of life’s circumstances.

Whether immersed in the flesh or outside it, we are sometimes like the beggar of Jericho, begging by the side of the road. Life calls to us and work cries out to us; the light of knowledge blesses us; yet, we remain indecisive, without courage to press on towards the lofty goal that it is ours to reach. And when the opportunity for our spiritual encounter with Christ appears, besides feeling that the world is against us, forcing us to keep still, we rarely know how to ask wisely.

Hence, it is worthwhile to remember this poor man in Luke, because there is no need to come to the Master with a large number of requests. It is enough to ask him to merely give us the gift of sight so that we may accurately understand the particularities along the path of evolution.

Therefore, may the Lord enable us to see all phenomena and situations, people and things, with love and justice, and we will have all we need for our immortal happiness.

Conversation

Do not let any unwholesome talk come from your mouth, but only what is helpful for edifying others according to their needs, so that it may benefit those who listen. – Paul. (Eph. 4:29.)

The enjoyment of uplifting conversation and edifying talks is characteristic of relationships involving genuine fraternal love.

Souls that understand each other in this or that area of common activity love affable and knowledgeable conversations. Such souls are like God's living jewelry chests exchanging invaluable gems.

Conversation precedes all the worthwhile activities of life. It weaves the ideals of love; it stimulates the divine aspect; it develops civilization; it organizes families and nations.

Jesus bequeathed the Gospel by conversing. And all those who reach the highest level of manifestation prize loving and enlightening conversation.

When the enjoyment of conversing with someone stops, a person can tell that either the relationship is growing cold or his or her friend is bothered by something.

Moreover, besides those who think they are better than others, there are those who disfigure the sacred gift of conversation and use it to commit the greatest indignities. They are lovers of foolishness, mockery and wrongful habits. Nevertheless, conversation is such a sacred gift that even then it reveals to morally upright listeners the character of the spirit that insults and defaces it. They can see, right away, that such a spirit occupies the lowest place that is appropriate for it on the stage of life.

Conversation is a sublime ability. Therefore, do not neglect this concession from the Most High, for you will be known by your conversation.

46

Who are you?

There is only one Lawgiver and Judge who is able to save and destroy. But you, who are you to judge others? (James 4:12)

People should be very careful about voicing their opinions regarding other people's mistakes.

A mistaken or thoughtless opinion may cause disasters that are much greater than someone else's error if the error is made an object of judgment.

Of course, there are certain responsibilities that demand accurate and patient observations by those who have been entrusted with them. An administrator needs to analyze the elements of human composition that make up his or her work machine. A judge, paid for out of people's pockets, must examine matters of peace or social health, calmly and rightly deciding on behalf of the general good. Nevertheless, it is important to grasp the fact that individuals such as these understand the extent and delicacy of their spiritual responsibilities, and they suffer a great deal when they have to impose the work of regeneration on the wayward or sickly living pieces for whom they are responsible.

On the common road, however, we see a vast number of people addicted to hastiness and thoughtlessness.

We think it would be useful for disciples, when feeling the urge to voice insensitive opinions, to remember their exact role in their present life, asking themselves before responding to tempting situations: "Is this really any of my business? Who am I? Am I, in fact, in a position to judge anyone?"

The big question

“Why do you call me, Lord, Lord, but do not do as I say?” – Jesus. (Lk. 6:46)

In lamentable indifference, many people wait for the death of the physical body in order to hear the sublime words of Christ.

However, the reason for this is inexplicable; after all, the Master is alive in his Gospel of Love and Light.

We do not have to wait for solemn occasions to hear his sublime and clear teachings.

Many disciples come to the holy endeavor wanting direct revelations. They would have more faith – they state wrongly – if they could just hear the Lord personally in his divine manifestations. They think they deserve the gifts of heaven and they wind up believing that serving the Gospel is too much for human effort; consequently, they begin hoping for unexpected miracles without realizing that idleness has subtly become mixed in with their vanity, thereby annulling their efforts.

Such folks do not know how to hear the Divine Master’s immortal words. They do not know that their work is that to which they have been called, no matter how humble it may seem.

Whether as politicians or street sweepers, whether living in a palace or in a hut, people can do what Jesus has taught them.

That is why the Lord’s opportune question should be indelibly engraved in all places of worship so that, when pronouncing his name, disciples may never forget to sincerely abide by the recommendations of his sublime word.

Watch out!

However, these people speak badly of whatever they do not understand; and concerning what they do naturally understand, they corrupt themselves like irrational animals. (Jude 10)

Everywhere, we find people who are always ready to make an unseemly and ungrateful comment regarding what they do not know. They are thoughtless and inconstant souls who do not understand life's movements; thus, they are subjugated by their own unawareness.

And they are the ones who, in their instinctive expressions, behave irrationally regarding what they do know. They personally corrupt the most sacred issues; they insult the most benevolent intentions; they ridicule the worthiest achievements.

Watch out for the attitudes of these irresponsible complainers.

Christ has given us the light of the Gospel so that our judgment may not be cold and uninformed. Jesus-centered knowledge is the transforming light of life, conferring on us the gift of understanding the living message of each being and the meaning of each thing on the infinite pathway.

Only those who are aware of their own ignorance, who respect the realm of circumstances unknown to them, are capable of producing perfect fruit with the gifts of God that they already have.

49

Knowing and doing

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” – Jesus (Jn. 13:17)

There is a big difference between knowing and doing. Nearly everybody knows, but few do.

Generally speaking, all religious sects only teach what constitutes the good. All of them have officials, believers and disseminators, but true disciples are becoming scarcer and scarcer.

There are always voices capable of pointing out the way – it is the word of those who know.

Few individuals courageously enter upon the path. They often do so in silence; they are forsaken, misunderstood. This is the supreme effort of those who do.

Jesus understood the indecisiveness of earth’s children, and transmitting the word of the truth and the life to them, he set the ultimate example with his final sacrifice.

The existence of a lofty theory involves the need for experience and labor. If spiritually constructive work were unnecessary, then the simplest theory of the good would cease to exist due to uselessness.

John wisely points out the Master’s lesson. In this verse, he shows that only those who actually practice the Lord’s teachings can be blessed. There, in the area of Christian service, lies the difference between learning and practice, between knowing and doing.

An accounting of himself

Such that each of us will render an accounting of himself to God. – Paul (Rom., 14:12)

It is reasonable for people to devote themselves to solving all the problems having to do with the sphere that surrounds them. However, they need to know the kind of accounting they will have to render to the Supreme Lord when they finish the duties that have been assigned to them.

Most people worry about other people's destinies, yet neglect their own. There are those who fall into despair because they cannot make other people or certain institutions better.

However, to whom do the patrimonial assets of the world really belong? The answer is clear, for the most powerful owners will have to leave the planet's economy behind to new workers of God for the task of ongoing evolution.

But this fact could raise certain questions in the minds of the less informed. If the accounting in question is related to one's personal circle, what has the person to do with the accounting of his or her family, home or workplace? Hence, it is our duty to explain that family members, the possession of the home and the purpose of the group where one works all belong to the Supreme Lord, but regarding their own accounting, people will have to explain their line of conduct towards their family, the home that sheltered them, and the source of their daily activities. Of course, no one can answer for others; even so, regarding the effort that concerns it, each spirit will be compelled to explain the nature of its actions in the smallest areas of earthly life where it was called to live.

Spiritual infants

Anyone who is still nourished on milk is not experienced in the word of righteousness, because he is still an infant. – Paul. (Heb. 5:13)

Out of respect for those who are with us in the struggle, those who are part of our daily endeavors, we should avoid conflicts when failures and weaknesses unexpectedly appear. Before making any judgment, we should know the sum of the spiritual qualities involved.

We should never forget to show understanding regarding those who wander off the upright path. The road traveled by an experienced person is strewn with “infants” of such nature. God surrounds the steps of the learned person with those who are unlearned so that their darkness may receive light and so that this same light may be glorified. In this substantially divine interaction, the unlearned person learns and the learned one progresses.

Disciples of goodwill need a sincere attitude of observation and tolerance. It is natural for them to enjoy the rich and substantial food that has been given them to nourish their souls. However, they should not belittle other brothers and sisters whose spiritual organism can only tolerate the simple milk of fundamental knowledge.

Every infant is fragile and no one would ever criticize it for being so.

If your mind is free to take flight, do not forget those who are still in the nest where you yourself were born and where you stayed for a long time growing your feathers. The infinite lies stretched out before your wondering eyes. The others will join you some day, but just because they have not yet done so, do not forsake them, nor refuse them the milk that they love and still need.

52

Gifts

Every good and perfect gift comes from Above. (James 1:17)

Life on earth will take a new course when people finally realize that, unless God has granted it, they can possess nothing good.

A wise old saying goes:

“Do your part and the Lord will help you.”

Recognizing the lofty meaning of this exhortation, we are compelled to realize that, even regarding the acquisition of professional titles, people are still God’s children who must work hard for a number of years so that the Father may grant them a certificate of competence through human teachers.

As with material achievements, the same applies to the achievements of the spirit.

Obviously, every good and perfect gift comes from God. However, for us to receive the benefit, we have to “knock” at the door so that it may open to us, according to the gospel recommendation.

Do you want the gift of healing? Then begin by loving the sick and being interested in providing for their needs.

Do you want the gift of teaching? Befriend those who teach on behalf of the Lord through works and uplifting words.

Do you await the gift of virtuousness? Then discipline yourself.

Do you want to speak wisely? Learn to be silent at the right moment.

Do you desire access to the sacred circles of Christ? Then get close to Him, not only by means of uplifting conversation, but also through a self-denying attitude similar to his when he lived on the earth.

Such excellent qualities are gifts that come from God; even so, each one of them has its own door and requires a different key.

53

Peace

Jesus said to them again: "Peace be with you!" (Jn. 20:21)

Many people are troubled as they study communications between discarnates and new disciples of the Gospel. They anxiously question the possibility of spirits collaborating in human activities.

Why is it that the emissaries of the invisible world do not provide remarkable discoveries to the world?

Why do they not reveal ways to cure the diseases that defy medical science?

Why do they not prevent dolorous conflicts between nations?

Such inquirers have no notion of justice, nor do they understand that it would be a big mistake to relieve human beings of the elements of work, redemption and spiritual growth. They are often put off by the reiterated and loving recommendations for peace contained in communications from the Afterlife because they still have not harmonized themselves with Christ.

Let us observe the Master with his disciples when he returned from the spirit realm to comfort them. His word holds no disturbing message or the least bit of sensationalism, nor does it advance any concepts of supernatural revelation.

Jesus shows them that there is indeed life after death and that he wishes them peace.

Is that not enough for the sincere soul who is seeking integration with the higher realms? Are not the mere facts of acknowledging the afterlife and the certainty that you will be held accountable for your acts enough responsibility?

To work and suffer are the logical processes of spiritual evolution and ascension. That we may abide by these imperatives of the Law with sufficient peace is the loving and pure desire of Jesus Christ.

Let us make an effort to understand such truths, because there are many followers who are waiting for some extraordinary sign. They are like lazy individuals resting in the shade as they wait for the night-fire¹ of least effort.

¹ Latin: *ignis fatuus*: 1. A phosphorescent light that hovers or flits over swampy ground at night, possibly caused by spontaneous combustion of gases emitted by rotting organic matter. Also called friar's lantern, jack-o'-lantern, Also called will-o'-the-wisp, wisp. 2. Something that misleads or deludes; an illusion. (Answers.com – American Heritage Dictionary). – Tr.

The vine

“I am the true vine and my Father is the vinedresser.” – Jesus. (Jn. 15:1)

God is the Eternal Creator whose ways are incomprehensible to us. By his unveiled love, all beings are created, and by his wisdom, all the worlds move within the Unlimited.

Tiny and obscure, the earth cannot fathom the divine grandeur, and yet, the Father envelops all of us in the vibrations of his glorious goodness.

He is the soul of everything, the essence of the universe.

We are on the terrestrial field, of which he is the owner and the supreme giver.

Nevertheless, in order to sense his presence with our limited comprehension, he gave us Jesus as his ultimate personification.

It would be useful for people to regard the earth as an immense school of work. And before the grandeur of the universe, all of us should acknowledge our condition as humble beings in need of spiritual growth and illumination.

Because of our smallness, we would succumb to spiritual hunger and stagnate in the darkness of ignorance if it were not for that Vine of Truth and Love that the Supreme Lord gave us in Jesus Christ. From his divine sap proceed all our lofty achievements as we toil on the earth. Fed by that sublime source, we must realize that, without Christ, the world's organizations would crumble due to the lack of a foundation. In him we find living bread for our souls, and from the very beginning, his infinite love on the terrestrial orb has been the divine principle of all life's truths.

Branches of the vine

“I am the vine, you are the branches.” – Jesus. (Jn. 15:5)

Jesus has been love and the good from the very beginning.

All the benevolent ideas of humankind have originated from his divine influence. In this passage from the Gospel of John, he rightly tells his disciples that his sublime spirit represents the tree of life and that his true followers are the promising fronds. He adds that, if separated from the trunk, the branches would dry out and be fuel for the fire of purification.

Without Christ, without the essence of his grandeur, all human works are destined to perish.

Science is fragile and impoverished without the values of the conscience, and religious schools are doomed to failure as soon as they depart from the true and the good.

Jesus’ mercy is infinite in the activities of planetary life. At the center of any noble expression of life beats his loving heart, full of the sap of forgiveness and goodness.

Men and women are green branches of the glorious tree. Whenever they fail at their duties, they dry up because they isolate themselves from the sap and fall to the ground of bitter experience so that they may be purified in the fire of reparatory suffering, to be taken up again by Jesus in his mercy. Therefore, let us prove our faithfulness to the Divine Master, reflecting on the many times that we have dried up in the past, in spite of the immense love that sustains us throughout life.

56

Profits

“Now who is going to get what you amassed for yourself?” – Jesus. (Lk. 12:20)

Within all human groups beats the concern with making money. The spirit of profit reaches the simplest areas of life. Children who have barely left infancy display a desire to selfishly accumulating things. Nowadays, mothers abandon their homes to babysitters for several hours of the day in order to enjoy the lucrative life style. In this way, most people turn their evolutionary progress into a stress-filled race.

Beyond the grave – the final stop for all who have left the cradle – the truth is waiting and asks:

“So, what have you brought with you?”

The unfortunate ones will answer that they accumulated physical assets with which they intended to ensure their own and their loved ones’ peace-of-mind.

However, when their achievements are examined, they find out that such victories are crushing defeats instead. They hold no value for the soul, nor do they bear the stamp of lasting goods.

When they realize this fact, such travelers look back and feel cold. They are inexplicably attached to the results of everything they had accumulated while on earth. Their troubled conscience is filled with clouds and the voice of the Gospel resounds in their ears: *“Poor you; your profits turned out to be tragic losses! Now who is going to get what you amassed for yourself?”*

Money

For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil; and in such greed, some have wandered from the faith and have pierced themselves with much pain. – Paul. (1 Tim. 6:10)

Paul does not tell us that money per se is a calamity for humankind.

We often see the Master dealing with this subject, making his contribution so that our understanding may be expanded. After hearing the opinions of some people who present him with a certain coin of the time, bearing the likeness of the Roman emperor, he suggests that a person should render unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar, thereby exemplifying his respect for useful conventions. In one of his most beautiful parables, he uses the symbol of a lost coin, and during the daily activity at the temple, he comments on the widow's mite.

Money does not imply evil. Instead, the Apostle to the Gentiles explains that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. People are not to be condemned for their financial wealth but for their incorrect use of it, for it is by means of the obsession of ownership that pride and idleness – those two ghouls of human misfortune – set up shop within souls, thus compelling them to wander away from the light eternal.

The money that comes into your hands in the correct way, which only your conscience can examine under the divine light, is a friend looking for your wholesome guidance and humanitarian counsel. You will answer to God for the guidance you have given it; but woe to you if you have used this beneficial power in the dark edifice of iniquity.

To gain

“What good will it do a man to gain the whole world, yet lose his soul?” – Jesus. (Mk. 8:36)

Generally speaking, people have not yet learned how to gain. Nevertheless, the human spirit is on this planet searching for something. It is indispensable to acquire qualities of spiritual growth for the life eternal.

Jesus recommended that his disciples continue searching, persisting...

This means that a person is on the earth in order to gain over the course of the ennobling struggle.

In this regard, every sort of trouble comes from the corrupted minds of wayward souls.

People are always willing to conquer the world, but they are never willing to conquer themselves in order to gain entrance to a higher sphere. With this erroneous understanding, they subvert order in their daily efforts. If God grants them physical health, they use it to acquire life-threatening illnesses; if they manage to amass financial wealth, they try to monopolize other people's.

The Divine Master did not say that the human soul should go through life without any objectives or longings for gain; he simply pointed out the fact that people must know what they are looking for, what kind of gain they are longing for, and what purpose they propose for their earthly activities.

If all your desires rest on factitious acquisitions having to do with temporary situations or assets that are doomed to rot, then renew your spiritual vision while there is still time, because it is of no use to gain the world – which does not belong to you – and so lose yourself for an indefinite length of time on the path of immortal life.

Beloved friends

But we expect better things from you, beloved friends. – Paul. (Heb. 6:9)

The apparent prosperity of the Godless is to be regarded with great sadness.

Believers are amazed that people who know nothing about moral scruples are high up in the financial realm.

Many ask: “Where is the Lord, that he has not seen such questionable affairs?”

The question, however, shows more ignorance than common sense. In the end, what happens to the wealth that Godless persons have piled up? Even if they lived in fine health for a hundred years, they would still have to abandon their riches to re-start their learning process.

Eternity gives little importance to material assets. Those who only focus on accumulating temporary capital, while neglecting the inner realm of the soul, are worthy of pity. Nearly always, they leave everything to the whims of irresponsible heirs.

However, that is not the case with owners of spiritual wealth. They make up the beloved friends of God, and they feel at one with the Father wherever they may be. Even in the face of difficulties and troubles, they guard the joy of the divine inheritance laid up in their souls.

With regard to the Godless, we can expect indifference, ambition, greed and a preoccupation with thoughtless accumulation; with regard to the unknowing, we can expect to get absurd questions. Nevertheless, the Apostle to the Gentiles rightly states: “*But we expect better things from you, beloved friends.*”

Doing the good

For it is God's will that, by doing the good, you should silence the ignorance of foolish men.
(1 Pet. 2:15)

As the spirit increases in knowledge, it better understands the value of time and the opportunities that the greater life provides to it. It finally realizes the foolishness of wasting valuable resources on barren and pointless arguments.

The apostle Peter suggests that we remember that it is God's will for us to do the good in order to silence the ignorance and foolishness of human beings.

A dispute may last for many years and have grave consequences for the opposing parties. However, just one expression of selflessness is all it takes for an agreement to be reached in just one day.

In doing God's work, it is best not to argue, unless it is done in an atmosphere of charity. Doing the good is the compass to follow.

Before any argument arises, it is best to give a little of ourselves. This is useful and convincing.

The humblest good is a sacred seed.

When forced to argue, Jesus sacrificed himself.

By having transformed himself into a divine light, Jesus overcame the darkness of human ignorance.

He did not argue with us; instead, he converted us.

He did not ask for comprehension. He understood our foolishness, identified our blindness and helped us even more.

61

Ministry

Let each administer to others the gift he has received, as a good steward of the multiform grace of God. (1 Pet. 4:10)

Each person has received from the Supreme Lord the gift to serve. It is an essentially divine ministry.

If in their social struggles people cause so many problems that are hard to solve, it is because they are not yet capable of such a lofty teaching.

The stage of terrestrial evolution presents a division between the so-called “magnates” and the so-called “proletariats.” This is because, generally speaking, the world has not yet understood the dignity of honest work, no matter how humble it may be.

It is necessary for there to be garbage collectors, workers in unwholesome places, factory bosses and members of the press.

People have not yet understood that having the opportunity to take part in the toils of the earth makes them stewards of the grace of God. However, the time will come when everyone will feel rich. The idea of “capitalist” and “worker” will take on a new meaning. Both will be understood as industrious servants of the Most High.

Gardeners will feel that their ministry is the “brother” of the job entrusted to plant managers.

Everyone will manage the assets they have received from the Father in their own sphere of action, without the selfish idea of making money in order to enrich themselves, but of serving usefully in order to enrich themselves in God.

62

Kindred

“And he said, ‘Leave your country and your kindred, and go to the land that I will show you.’” (Acts 7:3)

In the circles of faith, many aspirants to the position of disciples of Jesus complain about ongoing opposition by relatives with regard to the principles they have embraced for acquisitions along religious lines.

Blood ties do not always bind souls that are essentially akin to one another. Quite often, due to the impositions of blood relationship, sworn enemies have to live together under the same roof.

Therefore, it is reasonable for there to be a division between the concepts of “family” and “kin.” The former would constitute the symbol of the eternal ties of love; the latter would symbolize the crucible of sometimes bitter struggles, in which we must purify the imperfections of the sentiments, merging them into the divine family of love for all eternity. Family would not be kin, but later, kin would become the most sanctified expression of family.

Let us remember such concepts in order to awaken the watchfulness of our uninformed fellow human beings.

On Jesus’ pathway, it would be best for faithful disciples to abandon the sphere of family squabbling and focus on fulfilling their sublime duty by living exemplary lives. That way, they will be silently exhorting their kin to share in the rights of the larger family, which is the family of Jesus Christ.

Who are you?

But the evil spirit answered them: “Jesus I know, and I know very well who Paul is; but you, who are you?” (Acts 19:15)

Any expression of commerce is based on the power of acquisition. In order to obtain, it is necessary to possess.

The interchange between the terrestrial and spirit worlds obeys the same principle.

In the commercial transactions of Caesar, coins or fiduciary documents with his likeness were required. In exchanges with the spirit world, highly individualistic qualities with the signs of Christ are required.

The currency of Jesus is love. Without it, no one can rightfully take part in the sacred commerce of souls.

The verse quoted above is a kindly warning to those who, for the enlightenment of others, invoke the Master without bearing a living title from his school of sacrifice.

Especially regarding relations with the invisible plane, one must be careful to avoid random statements.

Do not take your chances in such activities without the purchasing power of Jesus' love.

The unfortunate adversaries of the Master know who he is and they know who his true disciples are. The enemies of the light recognize their sublime worth.

Therefore, when you take part in this kind of endeavor, do not forget your own identity, because the agents of evil will probably ask you who you are.

The greatest treasure

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” – Jesus. (Lk. 12:34)

As long as places of worship are devoted to the Divinity of the Father, they are rooms in the boundless house of God, wherein Jesus administers his assets to souls on earth, regardless of their religious affiliation.

These subdivisions of the eternal sanctuary house the wards of Christ in their various degrees of understanding. Each one instinctively reveals to the Lord where his or her treasure is.

On account of this, in the diverse rooms of his house, Jesus is always receiving contradictory or counterproductive prayers from countless believers possessed of a childish mentality. He does not answer such prayers.

Selfish persons speak about their treasures, touting their precarious possessions. Misers talk about their petty preoccupations. Hedonists display insatiable appetites. Fanatics repeat insane requests.

They all present their wounded desires as being their greatest suffering.

Christ does in fact hear their prayers and waits for the opportunity to show them his imperishable treasure. He listens in silence, because the young plant needs time to grow. He waits trustingly, for he needs the collaboration of resolute and sincere disciples in order to extend his divine apostolate. When the time comes, they appear under his sublime influence and the scenery of earth's places of worship changes. These are not only believers who show up to pray, but resolute workers who have come to work. Full of courage and ready to die so that others may live, they exemplify self-denial and detachment. They reveal the Father's Will personally, and by doing so, they broaden the world's understanding of the larger treasure, which is summed up in the winning of the light eternal and love universal that have already enriched their enlightened spirits.

65

To ask

But Jesus answered: "You do not know what you are asking." (Mt. 20:22)

Most believers go to houses of prayer to ask for something.

Few go there as genuine children of God who are interested in his sublime will with regard to growing in knowledge, renewing of their inner qualities, and making spiritual use of opportunities received from on High.

Actually, people should see places of worship as being the sacred spot of the Almighty, where they should learn fraternity, love and cooperation according to his divine plan. However, most stubbornly insist on imposing themselves on God's paternal kindness in an attempt to bribe his Infinite Power. They are inveterate beggars who, due to their extreme rebelliousness in their relationship with the Father, most often forsake the moral course laid out for their lives. They complain so much that they are finally granted what they want.

Then disaster strikes; suffering results. Next comes weariness, which is always the child of the incomprehension of our duties.

We ask for certain benefits along the way, and like the prodigal son, we rush to ask the Father for our inheritance ahead of time. However, disenchantment results from the poison of imprudence and irresponsibility.

Weariness is always the bitter fruit for those in a hurry to receive legacies that are unsuitable to them.

Therefore, let us be careful about what we ask for, because above all, we should ask to understand Jesus' will for us.

66

How do you ask?

Until now you have not asked for anything in my name; ask and you will receive so that your joy may be complete. – Jesus. (Jn. 16:24)

Everywhere we go, we come across people who are disillusioned with prayer.

Did not Jesus promise that heaven would answer those who ask in his name? Many hearts are downhearted because death has robbed them of a friend or because an unexpected tragedy has stricken their pathway.

Nevertheless, we will say it again: the Divine Master taught us that we should ask in his name.

Because of this, in the mechanism of spirit manifestations, faithful souls, convinced of their fragility, should question their conscience about the content of their prayers to the Supreme Lord.

Are they really asking in the name of Christ, or are they asking in the name of the world's vanities? Complaining because of the arbitrariness that often darkens the pathways of the heart is the same as throwing the dust of earthly troubles at the Divine Sun. But asking in Jesus' name means accepting his wise, loving will and earnestly surrendering to him so that we may be given what is really necessary.

It is only by this act of perfect comprehension of his sublime love that we find complete delight and unbounded joy.

Observe the substance of your prayers. How do you ask? In the world's name or in Christ's? Those who are discouraged with prayer are confessing the childishness of what they are asking for.

Those living in the beyond

And two men, Moses and Elijah, were talking with him there. (Lk. 9:30)

Perhaps defending certain interests of the clergy, many religious groups claim that the Gospel offers no basis for communications between human beings and the discarnate spirits who have gone before them into the Great Beyond.

However, in this passage from Luke, we see the Master of Masters talking face to face with two spirit beings that had come from the invisible realm, to which the grave is the entryway.

Moreover, on several occasions we find Christ interacting with troubled or wicked souls to relieve the suffering of their unfortunate victims. Nevertheless, the dogmatic mentality continues to see these incidents as manifestations of Satan, the eternal and insatiable enemy.

In this instance, however, something sublime happened on Tabor. We see no diabolical demonstration, but two glorious spirits conversing intimately with the Savior. We cannot place this phenomenon in the sphere of generalities, because the two “friends from the other world” who were seen talking to Jesus on the mount are fully identified. The event was not recorded stating, for example, that it was a visit by an angel, but by Moses and Elijah, clearly meaning that the “dead” can, in fact, return from their lives in the spirit world.

The afterlife

If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ was not raised either. – Paul (I Cor. 15:13)

In an attempt to harmonize temporal and spiritual interests, eminent theologians have muddled the problem of death, thereby casting a somber shadow on what would otherwise be a simple solution.

Many of them, as if they were the sole masters of the elements indispensable for a definitive analysis, say that souls go to certain realms of punishment or purgation. There are others who have declared that, at the moment of the great transition, souls are immersed in a vague sort of sleep until the day of the Last Judgment.

Today, however, human intelligence understands that logic has evolved with all possibilities of observation and reasoning.

Resurrection is everlasting life. Life is work, joy and creation throughout eternity.

How are we to regard the intent of those who assign their neighbors and acquaintances to eternal hell? How can we believe that thousands of souls are asleep while waiting for the final moment of judgment, when Jesus himself is said to be constantly at work?

Theological arguments are laudable; nevertheless, we should not undervalue the simplicity of human logic.

In commenting on the subject from within the Christian endeavor, we must realize that those who deny the evolutionary progress of the human spirit after the grave declare themselves to be against the Gospel itself. The Master of Masters was resurrected to carry on his edifying work. Who, then, will cross the portal of death only to fall into incomprehensible idleness? We

are souls working on perfecting ourselves, and beyond the grave we will find both life and the continuation of that endeavor.

Communications

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God. (1 Jn. 4:1)

When they take part in groups that communicate with the spirit world, new disciples of the Gospel are usually very eager to establish clear and perfect communications with the Afterlife.

If they often seem to fail at this goal, if their experiments are unsuccessful, it is because that, in most instances, such inquirers are far more interested in their personal self-interests than in the spiritually constructive imperative.

This purpose of exclusiveness opens the door wide to deceit. Malefactors with noxious instruments may pass through it and enter the sacred place because such a disciple has shut his or her eyes to the horizon of eternal truths.

Beautiful and human is the strengthening of the bonds of love that unite incarnates to the loved ones who preceded them on the journey beyond the grave, but it is unacceptable for beginners to expect those who served them as parents or siblings to intervene in their personal affairs.

There will always be someone who dispenses light during gatherings of sincere individuals. However, preparations to receive such assistance cannot be organized very well by people who are often unaware of their own needs. Consequently, the apostle suggested that disciples not focus on the physical person who is speaking, but on the essence of his or her words in order to tell if the spirit visitor has really come from God.

Secret powers

And wherever he went, whether into towns, villages or the countryside, they placed the sick in the market-places and begged him to let them touch at least the edge of his cloak; and all who touched him were healed. (Mk. 6:56)

Quite often amongst spiritualist ranks there are eager learners who are trying to acquire secret powers that would place them in a position of distinction. Usually, in such circumstances, they make far-reaching assertions.

The longing for spiritual growth, the desire for stability and the intention of keeping the peace are wonderful purposes. However, it is recommended that such learners not yield to concerns about prominence. They should trudge the terrain of such thoughts as cautiously as possible.

Even here, the Divine Master provides the best example.

Nobody on earth has ever brought together such lofty examples of unknown powers as Jesus did. All the sick had to do was touch his garments to be healed of dolorous illnesses. His hands gave movement back to paralytics and sight to the blind. Yet, on the day of Calvary we see the Master wounded and insulted, without using the powers of his Divine appanage to remedy his own situation. Having fulfilled the sublime law of love in the service of the Father, he surrendered to the Father's will instead of taking care of his own interests. The Lord's lesson is highly significant.

It is understandable that disciples want to study and enrich their spiritual energies. However, they should remember that the good of others comes before our own, and when this good is distributed on the pathway of life, it becomes the voice that will speak for us to God and other people, whether today or tomorrow.

71

Being a witness

And this will happen to you so that you may be a witness. – Jesus (Lk. 21:13)

Of course, the Master does not like to see his disciples immersed in suffering. However, considering people's many needs, he understands the indispensable character of trials and obstacles.

Modern pedagogy is replete with selective efforts, with competitions involving skills, and with tests of intelligence.

The Gospel offers similar situations.

Friends of Christ should not be gloomy persons who expect suffering. However, knowing their place of toil on a plane like the earth, they should expect all kinds of difficulties.

For the counterfeit pleasures of the world, the planet is full of mistaken leaders.

How can we call upon the Savior to continue such illusions? When we are called to Christ, it is so that we may learn how to work for the bigger picture, remembering that service begins within ourselves.

There are many educated persons who have become mentors for those who would like to have the deceitful delights of the physical realm.

In the Gospel, however, that is not the case. When the Master invites someone to take part in his endeavor, it is not so that the person may weep in discouragement or lie around in idle contentment.

If the Master has called you, remember that he already considers you worthy of being a witness.

Transitory things

They will perish, but you shall remain; and all of them will wear out like a garment. – Paul.
(Heb. 1:11)

Ecclesiastes tells us about human vanities and affliction amid the maelstrom of unbridled earthly ambitions.

Ever since the earliest times of the human family, there have been individuals who were involved in the false values of the world. However, it would take only a few minutes of serious thought about how transitory everything is in the realm of forms to grasp the sovereignty of the spirit.

Just look at the ostentation housed in museums and in the ruins of dead civilizations. What was the purpose of building such monuments and arches of triumph? Everything has functioned as the clothing of thought. Ideas have evolved and the spirit has become enriched, whereas its old garments are long gone.

The calloused hands that built glossy columns learned the secrets of life through work. Yet, how much bitterness was experienced by the insane persons who fought to possess those columns, even to the point of death?

Therefore, take advantage of every chance to serve. Look at it as a sacred opportunity on your divine pathway to God.

Scarcity is invaluable because it brings discipline. Abundance is precious because it multiplies the forms of the good. Even so, both will perish someday. In the corporeal realm, glory and misery are merely temporary situations. They both pass away. Only Jesus and the Divine Law remain with us as doorways to life and redemption.

Opportunity

Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is now." (Jn. 7:6)

Bad workers are always complaining. When they are not attributing their faulty work to their tools, they complain about the rain; either they cannot stand the heat, or they deplore the frost and the wind.

They are blind people who are of little use because they see only the negative side of things.

Good workers, on the other hand, understand, before anything else, the profound meaning of the opportunity they have received. They not only make use of all their own resources but they also respect other people's. They do not depend on the seasons. They plant the fruits of the cold and heat with the same enthusiasm. They are friends of nature; they learn its lessons; they are upbeat; and they find the same contentment in both the hard work of sowing and in the joy of harvesting.

In this sense, the lesson of the Master is clothed in marvelous meaning. In the swirl of the world's incomprehension, we must not expect Christ's kingdom to be an immediate accomplishment; even so, the opportunity is ongoing for people to collaborate fully with the Gospel in order to spread it.

The blind in spirit will continue to complain. On the other hand, those who have awakened to Jesus know that their time of redemptive toil is now; it does not lie in the past or in the future. It is this very day. It is the blessed opportunity to serve in the name of the Lord here and now.

Clean hands

And God did extraordinary wonders using Paul's hands. (Acts 19:11)

The Gospel does not say that Paul of Tarsus did wonders, but that God performed extraordinary wonders by using Pauls' hands.

The Father always works like that, utilizing all his children who can show him that they have clean hands.

Many people, more conventional than actually religious, have found this passage from Acts to be a bit of information about certain privileges that might have been given to the Apostle.

Before anything else, however, it is necessary to understand that such a concession is not exclusive. Most believers would rather see Paul as a saint rather than valuing him as a hard worker.

But what did the Apostle's clean hands cost him?

Very few ask themselves that question.

Let us remember that the friend of the Gentiles had been a famous rabbi in Jerusalem and that he had been active in high positions of power in the public sector. Nevertheless, so that the Almighty could use his hands, he endured all kinds of humiliations and faced every sacrifice for the good of others. He taught the Gospel amid insults, whippings, afflictions and stoning. Although he wrote enlightened Epistles, he never abandoned the humble loom until his body was too old.

Consider the particularities of this issue and you will see that God is still the same Father, and that the Divine Mercy has not changed. He still asks for clean hands for edifying service to humankind. Such a demand is logical and necessary so that the work of the Almighty may shine on human pathways.

In Caesar's household

All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household. – Paul. (Phil. 4:22)

We often hear inappropriate remarks by certain believers with regard to others who have been called to difficult tasks involving money or power.

False piety is always ready to criticize the friend who, after accepting a laborious public position, faces more troubles than notes of harmony. A distorted opinion looks at everything maliciously. If the brother or sister in public service is compelled to participate in important social functions, he or she is stigmatized as a traitor to Christ.

One has to be very cautious when passing such judgments.

In apostolic times, Christians who lived pure lives were called “saints.” Paul of Tarsus, who was humiliated and persecuted in Rome, had the opportunity to know numerous souls of that type. And what is even more remarkable, he lived with many such disciples who were connected with Caesar's palatial household. Paul received attention, favors, assistance and care from them.

Writing to the Philippians, Paul made special mention of these friends of Christ.

Therefore, do not judge your brothers or sisters by their apparent fortune or political privileges. Before anything else, remember that there were saints in Nero's household. Never forget such a great lesson.

Constructions

You are the light of the world. A city constructed upon a hill cannot be hidden. – Jesus. (Mt. 5:14)

The Gospel is replete with loving invitations for people to grow in conformance with the Lord's example.

Christ's followers do not always grasp this great need for self-enlightenment in order for that great endeavor to be accomplished harmoniously. A vast percentage of modern-day disciples concern themselves with other people's spiritual growth, but they neglect the opportunity to achieve their own.

Of course, it is very hard to find such an opportunity amongst the gratifications of human existence, because the blessed resource of illumination is often hid in the obstacles, perplexities and shadows along the road.

The Master was very clear in his explanations. In order to become the light of the world, disciples should be like cities constructed upon hilltops, where they can never be hidden. So that workers for Christ may function as expressions of the light during their lifetimes, they must ascend the mount of exemplification, in spite of the difficulties of the arduous climb, presenting themselves to all as a Christian construction.

Such an undertaking lasts forever.

The vicissitudes of the passions cannot bring down a building of such nature; blows from stones leave it intact, but if anyone does manage to dash it to pieces, the fragments constitute the continuing of its light as a sublime remnant scattered all over the world; for it was in this way that the first martyrs of Christianity sowed the faith.

One should reflect

But everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger. (James 1:19)

Analyzing, reflecting and pondering are actually all forms of listening. It is essential for people to always be ready to determine the meaning of the voices, suggestions and situations around them.

Otherwise, it is impossible to carry out the simplest task in the ministry of the good. Only after listening carefully can a person speak in an edifying manner while on the pathway of evolution.

Those who listen, learn; those who speak, teach.

One keeps; the other spreads.

In the good experience, only those who keep can spread successfully.

Therefore, James's advice represents an undying appropriateness.

It is important to remember that, just as people should be quick to listen and moderate with their words, they should be slow to anger.

Of course, each and every day the human pathway offers various reasons to act quickly. However, whenever possible, it is best to put off till the next day any expression of anger, for that will often provide an opportunity to examine the matter more wisely and the cause of the anger might disappear.

We should bear in mind that all are born to carry out specific functions. If they always listen, they can be sure that they will serenely achieve the purpose for which they are destined; but if they are always talking, they might lose sight of their endeavor halfway through it; and if they are always getting angry, they will probably not accomplish anything at all.

Truths and illusions

“Yet because I speak the truth, you do not believe me.” – Jesus. (Jn. 8:45)

The world has always loudly honored expositors of illusions.

Nearly everywhere, one can see the success of verbose persons who promise miracles and marvels. Their listeners usually give them a lot of credit, and they need only disguise people’s infirmities, weaknesses, ignorance or defects to receive their respect. The same is not the case for those who cultivate the truth, no matter how obvious it may be. Down through time, society has reserved burnings at the stake, poison, crosses and implacable punishments for them.

In an attempt to avoid their anguishing spiritual situation, people invented “fortune-tellers.” However, they expect these diviners to hide the dark and harsh reality behind a golden mask. The charlatan who is the most skillful at fabricating captivating lies will enjoy the most numerous and lucrative clientele.

In the interchange with the spirit world, it is crucial for new disciples to be aware of dangers of this sort.

The tactic of praise, the eagerness to appear better than others, the temptation to stay ahead of others, and the longing to convert other people’s consciences are just big illusions. One must not believe in such things. It is more correct to grasp the fact that the work of enlightenment is hard and begins with the effort of self-regeneration. Friends of the truth are not always accepted. They are usually considered fanatical or deceitful ... But in spite of everything, for our own happiness, we must heed the truth while there is still time.

To each one

“Stand up on your feet.” – Paul. (Acts 14:10)

In general, when we are incarnate in the physical world, we see only those who are disabled in body, those who have lost their corporeal balance, or those who trudge painfully along bearing heartrending deformities. Our sight is not good enough to identify the ill in spirit, the lame in mind, or the vanquished in heart.

If there were a place inhabited solely by the blind, people would end up losing interest in their eyes and would forget about them. Likewise, on the earth, where the vast majority of people are actually paralytic souls as far as virtue is concerned, there are few who can grasp the disharmony of their spiritual health or who are aware of their undisputed needs.

Thus, we can see that the mission of the Gospel is much more beautiful and extensive than we could ever imagine. Jesus continues to pour out his blessings every day. And the secret wonders performed in the silence of his infinite love are much greater than those that happened in Jerusalem and Galilee, because, according to the apostolic narratives, the blind and the lepers whom Jesus healed became ill again and died. The healing of our infirm, paralytic minds is far more important because it occurs with an eye on eternity.

We must not lose ourselves in illusory conclusions. Let us sharpen our hearing and remember the word of the Apostle to the Gentiles. It is vital that each one of us stand up on his or her own feet because there are many people who are hoping for angel wings that do not belong to them.

Opinions

“Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is what their fathers used to do regarding false prophets.” – Jesus. (Lk. 6:26)

Undoubtedly, there are many people of estimable opinion to whom we may resort at opportune moments. However, we should never discount the opinion of our own conscience, because that divine sanctuary is where the voice of God usually enlightens us.

Hoping to count on everyone’s approval concerning our endeavor is patent madness.

When Jesus spoke the sublime exhortation recorded in this passage from Luke, he acted with a complete understanding of people. The Master knew that, on a plane of stark contrasts such as the earth, it is not possible to please everybody at the same time.

Persons who practice truth will be understood at the right time only by those who are truthful. Prudent persons will receive no applause from imprudent ones.

In his time, the Master did not receive everyone’s respect. Although loved by plain, sincere people, he suffered the merciless attack of conventionalists. For Mary Magdalene, he was the Savior; for Caiaphas, he was a dangerous revolutionary.

Time alone is the sole force behind widespread enlightenment.

If you are involved in edifying work, if your conscience affirms you, what do thoughtless or insincere opinions matter, anyway?

Fulfill your duty and press on.

Take the criticism of the ignorant and slanderers as a useful warning and remember that it is not possible to harmonize responsibility with

irresponsibility or the truth with a lie.

81

Human authority

For the Lord's sake, submit yourselves to every human authority. (1 Pet. 2:13)

As they approach Christ's lessons, certain impulsive temperaments see the Gospel as a set of principles that are destructive for the current world order. Others see the Master as an avid anarchist inflamed with sublime anger.

However, Jesus would never support disorder.

The novelty overflowing from the Gospel does not advise the humble to take up arms against their brothers and sisters, but to become even more humble by taking up their cross as the Savior did.

It is obvious that the Good News does not teach bowing down before insolent tyranny; nevertheless, it does ask for respect for human authority out of one's love for the Divine Master.

If persons of authority demand more than they should, if they become despots, then at the right time the Lord will correct them amid the circumstances that express his will. This certainty is one more reason for the peace-of-mind of the Christian servant, who, under no circumstances, should break the rhythm of harmony.

Therefore, do not be indifferent towards the authority at your place of work. It is possible that quite often it will not meet with your approval; even so, remember that Jesus is the Supreme Authority on earth, and he would not have put you where your efforts were not needed.

You have a sacred duty to fulfill right where you happen to be today. If you are rebellious, your efforts will be for naught. Remember this truth and submit yourself to human authorities out of love for the Divine Lord.

Dry trees

“For if they do these things to the green tree, what will they do to the dry one?” – Jesus. (Lk. 23:31)

Jesus is the eternal vine, full of divine sap, spreading his loaded branches, consoling fragrances and hearty fruit to all; in return, the world offered him nothing but the cross of affliction and an infamous death.

Since the remotest millennia, he is the Savior, the Pure One par excellence.

What should we expect in our turn, indebted beings that we are, symbolic still-dry branches on the tree of life?

With each lifetime, we need new experiences of reparation and correction.

We are like lifeless trees that the human passions have uprooted in their destructive rage.

Country folk make punitive holes in peach tree if their scrubby branches do not produce. The effect is beneficial and profitable.

The martyrdom of Christ was beyond anything we could imagine. As a sublime vine, he suffered for wanting to give us his abundant sap.

As trees that are dry due to the heat of evil, we suffer by necessity for our own good.

From a spirit of cruelty and ingratitude, the world brought about the tragedy of the cross for the Master; on the other hand, if we have crosses to bear along the pathway of redemption, it is not because God is unyielding in carrying out his laws, but because he is the Loving Father of our souls, full of wisdom and compassion as he educates us.

Afflictions

But rejoice in the fact that you share in the sufferings of Christ. (1 Pet. 4:13)

It is undeniable that in your earthly learning experience you will have to endure difficult days of harsh winter, days when you will have to resort to the provisions you stored up within yourself during the harvest days of stability and abundance.

In the disillusionment of beloved friends, you will see the world as a temple in ruins amid the furies of a cruel storm.

Hopes have withered away; dreams have been trampled on by ingrates. Friends have disappeared: some, because of indifference; others, because they have chosen the fleeting interests of the material realm.

When a day like that appears on your horizon, causing you anxiety and grief, of course you are not forbidden to weep. However, do not forget the divine companionship of the Lord Jesus.

Do you think that the Master of Masters dwells in a sphere that is inaccessible to people's thoughts? Do you think that the Savior does not receive ingratitude and sarcasm from people each and every day? Even before we were aware of the problem that afflicts us, he knew about it and suffered because of our errors.

Therefore, let us not forget that in times of affliction it is essential to accept his sublime companionship and press on, drawing upon his serenity and good cheer.

84

Rise

“Rise; let us leave this place.” – Jesus. (Jn. 14:31)

Before withdrawing to offer his final prayers in the Garden, Jesus spoke at length to his disciples, explaining the deep meaning of his exemplification.

After having revealed his sublime thoughts, he offered the wonderful invitation recorded in the Gospel of John:

“Rise; let us leave this place.”

This statement is packed with meaning.

When they rise, people of the world usually go in search of easy victories and are anxious for power as they throw themselves into the daily struggle. They might even trade their home for some ephemeral advancement.

However, with Jesus it was the exact opposite.

He rose to be torn because of what Judas would do. He left the place where he was in order to meet with affliction and death shortly thereafter.

Of course, he left for his glorious destiny of rejoining the Father, but we need to remember the steps he took to get there...

He rose and left to find supreme glory. The “six stages of the cross” are eminently instructive: Gethsemane, the Prison, the Praetorium, the Via Dolorosa, Calvary and the Cross itself constitute highly important points to bear in mind, especially today when countless Christians are expecting the trip to entail the luxurious cushions of the least effort.

Testimony

*Jesus answered him, "Is that what you yourself say or what others have said about me?" –
Jesus (Jn. 18:34)*

Christ's question to Pilate is full of meaning. Let us try to understand it and apply it to our own religious experience.

When we see the Master as being the Savior, what are we actually saying? Are we acting like phonograph records that merely repeat the words we have heard?

We must know why we attribute loving, reverential titles to the Lord. It is not enough to simply repeat exciting lessons learned from others, but to fully live the inner experience in faithfulness to the divine plan.

When anyone refers to another person by name, the latter may ask about the origin of such a reference.

Jesus is not a legendary symbol; he is a Living Master.

The superficial worries of the world appear, educate the spirit and pass on, but a religious experience is lasting.

In this respect, therefore, it is illogical to always rely on other people's experiences.

It is useful for all disciples to have their own testimony to offer, to illuminate their own hearts with the teachings of Christ and to make note of his sublime influence on both calm and stormy days.

So, let us acknowledge the praiseworthy attitude of persons who are inspired in their exemplification as faithful disciples, but let us not forget that it is counterproductive for us to rest on structures that are not our own, thereby neglecting our own duties.

Jesus and his friends

“No one can show greater love than this: giving his life for his friends.” – Jesus. (Jn. 15:13)

In the historical setting in which Christ lived and worked, we are impressed by the reality of his immense love for humankind.

He did everything possible in terms of selflessness and dedication to others.

His actions were celebrated in gatherings of camaraderie and love. The first manifestation of his ministry happened at a joyous party in somebody’s home. He kept company with publicans. He longed for his disciples to understand him fully. He was a faithful friend of the needy who sought the help of his immortal virtues. Throughout the lessons of the Gospel, we see his efforts to make himself understood by means of his infinite capacity to love. The Last Supper is a perfect example of complete devotion. He washes the disciples’ feet and prays for each one’s joy...

However, when he has his first clash with the destroying powers, the Master experiences the ultimate abandonment. In vain do his eyes look for the multitude of his friends, beneficiaries and followers.

The lepers and the blind that had been healed by his hands have all vanished.

Judas has betrayed him with a kiss.

Simon Peter, who had enjoyed his company in his own home, has denied him three times.

John and James have gone to sleep in the Garden.

The others have hurriedly agreed with the unjust accusations being made against him. Even after the Resurrection, Thomas demands proof.

When you are at the “narrow gate”, fulfilling your achievements for the life eternal, you too will be alone. Do not wait for your friends. They will not understand you; even so, keep on loving them. They are children. And every child is afraid and has many needs.

Why are you sleeping?

He asked them, “Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray so that you do not fall into temptation.” (Lk. 22:46)

Considering Jesus’ basic teachings, it is imperative to avoid comfortable situations that undermine activities for the good.

In this passage, Luke’s Gospel says that the disciples were “sleeping because they were sad” while the Master was fervently praying in the Garden. Thus, we can see that the Lord does not even approve of inactivity caused by troubles due to great suffering.

Modern-day disciples see the world as a field of labor for the Kingdom, where they are to make an industrious and watchful effort, understanding that Christ is still carrying out his redemptive work of redemption for all.

Remembering the prayer in Gethsemane, we are compelled to realize that innumerable Christian communities are asleep in their personal social circles, their trivial interests and ephemeral vanities. They talk about Christ and his undying exemplification as if they were sleepwalkers, unconscious about what they say and what they do, only to wake up in too-late tears at the moment of corporeal death.

Let us heed the Savior’s question, and let us seek spiritual growth and toil, where there is no room for what is useless or ruinous to our consciences.

As for you who are still in the flesh, do not sleep in spirit, inattentive to the interests of the Redeemer. Rise and toil, because it is in the sleep of the soul that, through nightmares or illusions, the most dangerous temptations are encountered.

Keeping watch with Jesus

And returning to his disciples, he found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Could you not keep watch with me for just one hour?" (Mt. 26:40)

Jesus came to earth to awaken men and women to the Greater Life.

It is worth remembering, however, that, when he felt the need for someone to be with him during his ultimate trial, he did not invite timid followers or recent beneficiaries, but disciples who were fully aware of their responsibility. And yet, they fell asleep, thereby making the Divine Messenger's loneliness even worse.

It is crucial that we recall the gospel text and remember that the Master's ministry is ongoing and he still invites devoted coworkers to take part in it. Obviously, he does not entrust tasks of fundamental importance to inexperienced or unlearned spirits. However, it is also essential to realize just how few there are who do not fall asleep as Jesus awaits the results of the tasks that were given to them.

They forget about the mandate that has been given to them and they are anxious to accomplish their own desires because they can see that the days of their physical body are quickly passing by. They forget that life is eternal, whereas earthly existence is symbolically nothing more than "just one hour." In view of this, when inattentive workers awaken to the reality of the spirit world, they weep under the whip of their conscience and long to find the peace of the Savior. But his words to Peter constantly resound in their ears: "*Could you not keep watch with me for just one hour?*"

In fact, if we cannot stay with Christ for just one hour, how can we aspire to be with him throughout eternity?

Peter's failure

But Peter followed him at a distance to the courtyard of the high priest, and upon entering he sat amongst the servants to see the outcome. (Mt. 26:58)

Failure, as much as any success, has its positive causes.

Peter's denial has always been an interesting subject in Christian communities.

Could the moral downfall of the Master's benevolent friend have been fate? Why would Simon refuse to cooperate with the Lord at such a difficult time?

In this particular, it is useful to examine Peter's carelessness.

The loving fisherman's failure lies in his lack of attention to the warnings he had been given.

There are a lot of modern-day disciples who share in those very same denials because they are inattentive.

The Gospel states that, in that hour of Christ's ultimate toil, Simon Peter followed him "at a distance"; he entered the "courtyard of the high priest" and sat amongst the servants to "see the outcome."

A careful reading of the text shows us the meaning, and we can see that even today, many friends of the Gospel fail in their aspirations and hopes by following Christ at a distance because they fear having to give up their immediate gratifications. When they are called to bear witness, they linger in the neighborhood of redemptive struggles amongst servants of utilitarian conventions, using binoculars in order to see what the outcome of others' toils will be.

Under such circumstances, every modern-day disciple will fail and weep bitterly.

The opportunity to do the good

Jesus asked him: "Friend, why have you come?" Then, stepping forward, they seized Jesus and arrested him. (Mt. 26:50)

It is very interesting to observe the Master's optimism as he created opportunities for doing the good till the very end of his glorious mission of truth and love.

Christ had known about Judas's betrayal and had lovingly commented on it in his last intimate meeting with the disciples. He harbored no doubts about the suffering that awaited him. Judas, his misguided coworker, approaches and kisses him on the cheek, identifying him to his executioners. With sublime serenity, the Master kindly acknowledges his greeting and asks, "*Friend, why have you come?*"

His merciful heart provided his troubled disciple with the opportunity to do the good even the very last moment.

Although Jesus can see that Judas has come with the guards to arrest him, he still calls him friend. He does not all of a sudden stop trusting him, nor does he curse him, indulge in futile complaints or turn him over to posterity with accusations or shameful words.

With this gesture of unforgettable spiritual beauty, Jesus taught us that it is necessary to leave the gates of the good open right up till the very last minute of the earthly experience, even when, at the end of our last opportunity, nothing is left but a way that leads to suffering or to the cross of ultimate witness.

91

The field of blood

That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. (Mt. 27:8)

Disorientated due to the dreadful consequences of his thoughtlessness, Judas went to the priests and gave them back their thirty coins, scattering them all over the temple grounds.

The teachers of Judaism regarded it as blood-money, so they quickly tried to get rid of it and bought a field meant as a burial ground for foreigners. From that time on, it was known as the Field of Blood.

This remembrance entails profound symbolism, and by understanding it, we can see that a lot of people continue Judas's thoughtless deed by unconsciously exchanging the Master for unjustifiable hopes, material advantages and temporary privileges. When they realize the extent of their error, they desperately go looking for the accomplices of their illusions and try to give them back everything they gained from the wrongful activities with which they compromised themselves in the human struggle. However, with such bitter fruits they can only purchase the "field of blood" of dolorous, harsh expiations, where they have to bury the corpses of their criminal nightmares, estranged from the divine ideal of perfection in Jesus Christ.

My dear brothers and sisters in humanity, who have not yet managed to leave the millenary field of reincarnations as you struggle to bury past wrongs that were not in accord with the Eternal Law: do not exchange the Imperishable Christ for a handful of miserable ashes; otherwise, you will continue to be restricted to the dark realm of the bloody flesh.

Mary Magdalene

Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned to him and said, "Master!" (Jn. 20:16)

Of all the highly significant events in the Gospel, Jesus' first visit after his resurrection is one of those that invite us to deep and accurate meditation.

For what profound reason would the Divine Master have appeared first to Mary Magdalene rather than to persons so much closer to him during his life?

We are naturally compelled to ask why he did not appear first to the selfless, loving soul that had served as his mother, or to his beloved disciples...

However, Jesus' gesture is deeply symbolic in its divine essence.

Of all the important figures of the Good News, none had put forth as much effort to follow the Savior as the unforgettable, obsessed Mary Magdalene. Not even Paul of Tarsus would do as much, because the conscience of the Apostle to the Gentiles was passionate for the Law, not for vices. Mary, however, had known the profound bitterness of habits that were difficult to break; she had been weakened by contact with evil spirits and had been "dead" in sensations that paralyze the soul. Nevertheless, all it took was one encounter with Christ and she left everything behind to follow him. She was faithful till the very end in her acts of self-denial and was firm in her resolution to take up her cross in the redemptive Calvary of her bitter existence.

It is understandable that many students ask why the Master did not appear first to Peter, John, his mother or his friends. However, it is equally reasonable for us to realize that, with his unforgettable gesture to Mary, Jesus confirmed the lesson that his doctrine would be, for all adherents and followers, the golden code of lives transformed for the glory of the good. And

nobody has ever transformed his or her life in the light of the redemptive Gospel as much as Mary Magdalene.

Christian joy

“But your grief will turn to joy.” – Jesus. (Jn. 16:20)

The disciples could not hide their pain and sorrow in the hours that preceded Jesus’ death on the cross. They were grief-stricken. As human beings, they could not understand any kind of victory except an earthly one. But with utmost serenity, Jesus encouraged them: *“Truly, truly I say unto you that you will weep and mourn; the world will rejoice and you will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.”*

Down through the centuries, the Gospel has been seen as a source of bad news: a selfless, pure Savior led to the cross meant for criminals; disbanded disciples; endless persecution, martyrdom and tears for all followers...

However, this heavy burden of sufferings lays the foundations for a higher level of life replete with peace and joy. Such sufferings represent God’s help for the barren land of human hearts. They come as a divine fertilizer for people’s sentiments so that lilies of hopes might spring up from contemptible swamps.

Troubled rescuers in the areas of politics and science often prescribe repose and pleasure, but the spirit weeps afterwards for an indeterminate length of time in the dark corners of a conscience wounded by morally delinquent attitudes. Christ, however, showing supreme wisdom, taught a natural way to acquire the eternal joys. He demonstrates that satisfying people’s desires, without awareness and limits, in their present state of evolution, is like putting dangerous substances in the hands of children. For this reason, he has reserved toil and struggle for his beloved followers so that they may not get lost in illusion, but rather arrive in the spirit world with a valuable patrimony of solid gains.

That is why Christian joy does not entail irresponsible pleasures but the sublime certainty that all suffering is the road to unending joy.

When saving ourselves

“Save yourself and come down from the cross.” (Mk. 15:30)

This cry of sarcasm by malicious men has continued to resound over the centuries.

People at that time could not comprehend the Savior’s sacrifice. As they went to their altars and monuments of stone, they only acknowledged victors who brandished weapons, covered in bloody glories, heroes of destruction and death.

That Messiah, however, had distanced himself from that customary standard. To be victorious, he gave himself; in order to possess, he did not want for himself anything from others; for the purpose of enriching life, he handed himself over to death.

As a result, there was no lack of mockers during his final moments, questioning the Divine Victor with sarcastic expressions.

By his example, the Master taught us that, when saving ourselves in the arena of malice and ignorance, we too will hear the cry of malice under the same circumstances.

If we remain attached to the illusion of prominence, and if we are workers interested exclusively in our temporary aggrandizement in the physical realm, forgetting the needs of others, there will always be a lot of people who consider us as privileged and victorious. But if we hold to our important responsibilities in the world, they will say we are crazy, and when we are seen going through trying experiences, clothed with the sacred pain that leads to the sublime spheres, they will approach us making sarcastic gestures and reminding us of the lofty principles we have espoused for our lives. They will exclaim scornfully: “Save yourself and come down from the cross.”

The unknown friend

But it was as if their eyes were shut so that they could not recognize him. (Lk. 24:16)

On their way to Emmaus, the downcast followers were discussing the terrible events of Calvary.

They were tormented with grief. Doubt had pierced their souls, leaving them discouraged and faithless.

However, an unknown man joined them on the road. He looked like a poor pilgrim. Without identifying himself, he explained the truths of the scriptures and praised the cross and suffering.

Both of the disciples had allowed themselves to get entangled in a web of ungrateful contradictions, but they now felt a pleasant well-being as they listened to his consoling argumentation.

It was only at the end of the journey, when they felt rejuvenated in the warm environment of the inn, that they realized that the unknown man was the Master.

There are still disciples on the “symbolic road to Emmaus” every day. They know the Gospel but are shocked by the sacrifices required for ongoing spiritual illumination. They do not understand the divine ambient of the cross, but search instead for distant “mental landscapes.” Nonetheless, there is always an unknown person walking beside those who waver and flee. He or she has the appearance of a misunderstood pilgrim, an unexpected companion, a benevolent old man or woman, or even a timid child. His or her voice is different than that of others, his or her explanations are firmer and his or her appeals are gentler.

Those who partake of the banquet of the cross for just one moment will never forget it. They may leave for the world outside and linger on dark

pathways. Nevertheless, a time will come when Jesus unexpectedly comes looking for these wayward travelers. He will support them until they are safe and free in the inn of faith.

The crown

They dressed him in purple, and weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on his head. (Mk. 15:17)

Nowadays, the level of thoughtlessness of many disciples of the Gospel who long for the crown of earthly triumphs is almost incredible. For many centuries, the churches of a defiled Christianity have taken pleasure in grand spectacles by enormous demonstrations of political power. It is crucial to realize that a large number of Christian-Spiritist associations – still very new to the world – tend to follow suit.

Individually, converts expect well-being, a path without obstacles, the honors of the world, everyone's respect, and the loyal acknowledgement of the lofty principles they have embraced in life by those outside the faith. But when this proves not to be the case, they feel persecuted, displeased and unfortunate.

But ... what about Christ? Should not the scene of the crown of thorns be enough to lessen our discouragement?

Of course the Master brought with him the Crown of Life, but he did not want to waste the opportunity to show that the crown of earth is still one of thorns, sufferings and incessant toil for those who wish to scale the mountain of Divine Resurrection. At the time the Lord inaugurated the Good News, the Romans were crowning themselves with roses. But bequeathing us a sublime lesson, Jesus means for us to understand that his faithful disciples should count on distinctions of a different nature.

Do you love enough?

He asked him a third time, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me?" (Jn. 21:17)

To less-informed disciples, it may seem odd that Jesus asked the apostle three times about the certainty of his love. Upon hearing this repeated question, Simon Peter himself became disheartened, thinking that the Master doubted his innermost sentiments.

However, the teaching is deeper than that.

At that very moment, Jesus was entrusting Peter with the ministry of taking part in the redemptive endeavor. The fisherman from Capernaum was going to contribute to the spiritual growth of Jesus' wards; he was going to preach the Gospel, acquiring new qualities for eternal life.

Therefore, the Lord's question was highly significant. Jesus does not ask the disciple about his own ideas, nor does he want to know how much Peter knows about him. He does not ask for a formal commitment. He only wants to know if Peter loves him, enabling him to perceive that, with love, all the other issues would be taken care of. If disciples have enough of this divine essence, then the hardest task becomes a ministry of promising blessings.

Thus, it is crucial to realize that your intellectual achievements are very important; that your questions are praiseworthy; but in reality you will only be an effective and efficient co-worker of Christ if you have love.

98

Cloaks

Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped up and came to Jesus. (Mk. 10:50)

The Gospel of Mark offers interesting information about the healing of Bartimaeus, the blind man from Jericho.

In order to receive the blessings of the divine approximation, he throws his cloak aside, runs to meet the Master and recovers sight to his blind, sad eyes.

Is there not a priceless symbol in this act?

People wear a large variety of cloaks. There are cloaks of monarchs and of beggars. There are many friends of wrongdoing who prefer the “cloaks of saints.” There are few who do not wear the mask of whatever may be convenient for them. It is said that the human struggle is filled with many different requirements and that one has to comply with the dynamics of the times; however, those who truly wish to approach Jesus in order to receive lasting blessings must throw the cloak of the transitory world aside and present themselves to the Lord as they are. And this should be done without the damaging concern of maintaining the pretentious intangibility of ephemeral titles, whether those of material fortune or those of an exaggerated notion of suffering. Keeping up false appearances before Christ or his messengers complicates the situation of those in need. Do not run to the Lord with improper demands or allegations. Throw off your worldly cloak and present yourself to him with nothing more or less than who you are.

To promise

Promising them freedom, they themselves are slaves to corruption. (2 Pet. 2:19)

It is imperative to be distrustful of all promises of an easy life.

Jesus, who could open up the vastest horizons to astonished eyes, promised people the cross, without which they could not distance themselves from the earth in order to go to meet him.

There are careless disciples everywhere who accept the deceit of unscrupulous ne'er-do-wells. They have not yet learned the living lesson of the endeavor they have been called on to do in order to develop a particular activity.

Those who incite revolutions and those who concoct absurd plans promise wonders. But if they themselves are victims of ambition, servants of inferior purposes, or slaves to terrible errors, how can they possibly achieve for others the freedom or ascension from which they themselves are so distant?

Do not believe in saviors who fail to show actions that confirm their own salvation.

You should know that you were created for a glorious ascent, but that a descent would be much easier. To ascend requires toil, patience and perseverance, which are essential conditions for finding love and wisdom.

If someone talks to you about the value of taking the easy path, do not believe it. It is possible that he or she is on the descent. But when you are enabled to see consoling vistas by means of sweat and personal effort, accept the opportunity joyously. Anyone who understands the treasure concealed in obstacles and uses them to enrich life is on the ascent and is worthy of being followed.

Help from the invisible realm

And after they had passed the first and second guard posts, they reached the iron gate, which gave entry to the city, and which opened for them by itself. They went through it and walked the length of one street, when, suddenly, the angel left him. [Peter]. (Acts 12:10)

People are always anxiously hoping for help from the spirit realm. It does not matter what such help is called. It is invariably the same in its essence. Amongst Spiritists, for example, it is known as “the guides’ watch-care,” whereas in Protestant circles it is called “the manifestations of the Holy Spirit.”

Such labels are secondary. What is essential is that we consider such collaboration to be a vital element in the activities of the sincere believer.

The help that Peter received while in prison is a lesson for us all.

Bound by heavy chains, the fisherman from Capernaum watches as the angel of the Lord approaches and sets him free. In the messenger’s company, he passes through the dangers of the prison and then walks with him down a street; however, the emissary then leaves him to his own freedom so as not to get in the way of his free will.

This is a typical example.

Help from the invisible realm is incontestable and unfailing in its multiform expressions when the time is right. But it is essential that believers not get accustomed to this type of collaboration, that they learn to walk by themselves, using their independence and will in things that are correct and useful, convinced that they are in the world in order to learn and that they are not allowed to ask their instructors to solve the problems that are necessary in their position as students.

Everything in God

“I by myself can do nothing.” – Jesus. (Jn. 5:30)

Pondering the transcendent conditions that govern the tiniest phenomena of life is an excellent exercise against personal pride.

Human beings can do nothing without God.

We have all seen people who emerge as dominators on the earthly stage, claiming to be mighty without the support of the Almighty. However, the only accomplishment they actually manage to achieve is to be inflated up by the world’s breath, only to become deflated at the first contact with the divine truths. When they first frighteningly appear, these wind-filled giants spread material destruction and spiritual affliction. However, the same world that puts them up on a pedestal later throws them into the abyss of ordinary disdain. The same group that inflamed them then undertakes the task of putting them back in their right place.

Sincere disciples are fully aware of the fact that all their abilities proceed from the friendly and wise Father, that the opportunities for spiritual growth, daily resources, and the blessings of loved ones have come from God, who, by the spirit of service, invites them to more-sacred endeavors. Thus, they always act with love, working for the good, clarifying everything for the truth, making pathways straight and lighting new lights, for their hearts know that they can do nothing by themselves; and so they honor the Father by taking part in his work in a saintly manner.

The Christian and the world

“First the stalk; then the head; then the full grain in the head.” – Jesus. (Mk. 4:28)

No one finds it easy to grow spiritually. The Master wisely resorts to living symbols from nature to facilitate our understanding of it.

The stalk is far from being the head, just as the head is far from the fully ripened grain.

In this regard, the strongest opponent for the soul that wants to follow the Savior is the world itself.

As long as ordinary people rest on the commonalities and futilities of earthly life, nobody pays any attention to them. Their attitudes are of no interest to anyone, whoever they may be. However, the moment the tender stalk of rectifying faith first surfaces in their heart, their life becomes an object of interest to everybody. Thousands of eyes that did not see them when they were astray in ignorance and indifference now follow their smallest gestures with heightened alertness. Humble aspirants to the title “disciples of the Lord” are still only stalks with promise, yet people already expect the heads of heavenly deeds. They are still a long way from possessing even the first growths of down on their spiritual wings, yet people expect them to demonstrate lofty flights over human miseries.

Consequently, many new believers get discouraged and return to obscurity, where others cannot see them.

The world forgets that these eager souls are still in their early hopes and are thus in a fierce struggle to burst through the shell of the lower passions in their longing to grow. Because of their ignorance, people only understand others in their animal-like state, but if any of them try to grow spiritually, then people suddenly expect the positive credentials of heaven, forgetting that no one can fool time or deceive the sequence of nature. It is left to Christians to

cultivate their sublime purposes and heed the Master's words: "*First the stalk; then the head; then the full grain in the head.*"

The esteem of the world

“If they called the head of the household Beelzebub, how much more the rest of his household!” – Jesus. (Mt. 10:25)

Many disciples of the Gospel are extremely attached to their predilections and points of view.

Erroneous conceptions cloud their outlook.

Almost always they are anxious for public acknowledgment of the virtues that adorn their character. They harbor the secret intention of being admired by everybody, and they are hurt if transitory earthly authorities seem not to appreciate them.

They forget that the Kingdom of God is not to be found in outward appearances. They do not realize that, for the time being, only the outstanding personalities in the financial and political forefront ascribe themselves as being holders of earthly prerogatives, and that these are the ones who are almost complete owners of personal praise and glowing obituaries.

The children of the Divine Kingdom rarely stand out and, in general, they fill the world with benefits that people do not even notice, just as happens with the Father Himself.

If Jesus was called a sorcerer, crucified as a malefactor, and taken from his loving mission to the infamous cross, what else can his sincere disciples expect when truly devoted to his cause?

Disciples should be fully aware of the fact that living on the earth results from the need for fruitful work and not from the use of ephemeral advantages that, in many cases, would nullify their ability to serve. If human powers tortured Christ, they will also torture his disciples. It is illogical to struggle for the esteem of a world that will later be compelled to regenerate itself in order to obtain redemption.

The symbolic sword

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but the sword.” – Jesus. (Mt. 10:34)

Many readers of the Gospel are troubled by this statement by the Divine Master, for the human concept of peace has been viscerally corrupted for many centuries. According to the usual definition, peace means having obtained external guarantees, in which the physical body may lounge about untroubled, surrounded by servants, rotting away in idleness, and avoiding the activities of life.

Jesus could never endorse this sort of tranquility. In contrast to the world’s mistaken idea, he brought the regenerative struggle, i.e., the symbolic sword of inner knowledge by divine revelation, so that men and women could begin the battle of self-perfection. The Master came to earth to implement the fight of redemption. A bloodless battlefield, which was destined to illumine the human pathway, was formed at the moment of his first teaching. He himself was the first to inaugurate testimony by means of supreme sacrifices.

The earth has lived beneath these renewing impulses for almost twenty centuries now, and woe to those who sleep, strangers to the sanctifying process!

To seek a false peace of idleness is to deviate from the light, thereby avoiding life and hastening death.

Even so, Jesus is also called the Prince of Peace.

Yes, Christ brought to this world the renewing sword of the war against evil, being himself the divine source of repose for hearts united in his love. In the most critical situations, these men and women find a lasting serenity in him. That is because Jesus began the battle for the salvation of humanity

while at the same time representing the pillar of sublime peace for all who are good and sincere.

Not everybody

And it so happened that, about eight days after having said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up on the mountain to pray. (Lk. 9:28)

The Master's reason for inviting only Simon Peter and the sons of Zebedee to witness the sublime manifestation on the mount, when Moses and another divine emissary would be in contact with Jesus right in front of those particular disciples, is worth noting.

Why did he not invite the others?

Would not Andre or Philip have been pleased by the sublime revelation? Was not Thomas an inquirer who was eager for spiritual elucidations? Nonetheless, the Master knew the reason for his decisions and only he himself could properly measure the gifts of superior knowledge.

This fact should be borne in mind by all those who want to force open the door to the spirit world.

Communication with this or that group of spirits in the Beyond is, of course, possible, but not all are ready at the same time to receive its responsibilities or benefits.

It would be unwise if we were to entrust a valuable piece of equipment, the handling of which depends on previous experience, to the first person that came along simply because he or she was well-intentioned. No one can betray the natural order of things and go unpunished. Not all learners and studious people can receive great revelations from the Beyond all at once. Each center of spiritualizing activity should be led by the best sense of harmony, effort and affinity. In this regard, besides good intentions, one must also possess a résumé of good personal deeds. In the world, many people are willing to do this or that, but very few of them are ready to serve and be instructed.

106

Giving

*“Give to anyone who asks you; and if anyone takes what is yours, do not ask for it back.” –
Jesus. (Lk. 6:30)*

Giving is one of the most sublime actions of life; still, many people are negligent and unreasonable when doing it.

Some people lightly give alms, while others forget to be cautious and give away what they have worked for to malefactors.

Jesus is our Master in the smallest events of our lives. If we hear him recommend that we be ready to give to “anyone” who asks, we also see him assisting all whom he met along his way not according to their desires but according to their needs.

He blessed the afflicted yet warned the moneychangers. Obviously, the unfaithful merchants were, at heart, asking him to keep the “status quo”, but his answer was an eloquent one. He brought joy to the wedding in Cana but reprehension in meetings with the disciples. He offered each situation and each person what they really needed, and when ingrates were about to take away his right to life, he did not ask them to let him finish the work that he had started.

He gave everything that conformed to the good. And he gave it generously. We must point out that, under the weight of the cross, he conferred sublime understanding on widespread ignorance without complaining at all, because he knew that the act of giving comes from God and that there is nothing more sacred than cooperating with the Father who is in Heaven.

The coming of the Kingdom

“The kingdom of God does not come with an outward appearance.” – Jesus. (Lk. 17:20)

The world’s religious groups nearly always concern themselves with converting others. Highly enthusiastic believers are eager to transform their friends’ ways of looking at things. In light of this, we are confronted everywhere by brothers and sisters anxious to spread proselytism in their circles of study.

Such activity is not always useful, however, because on many occasions it can interfere with more-worthy projects.

Jesus says that the Kingdom of God does not come with an outward appearance. The preoccupation with vainly displaying pomp and numbers is always ruinous to groups of believers. Transitory expressions of human power do not attest to the Kingdom of God. This divine event begins within people’s souls, constituting a glorious light within that inner temple. It does not show itself for common discernment, because most people go through the tunnel of the flesh half-blind, burying the wrongs of their guilty past.

The flesh is respectable and venerable because it is the vessel of purification that receives us for our precious redemption. However, for redeemed spirits it means “death” or “permanent transformation.” In view of the circumstances that govern his or her efforts, the man or woman of the flesh can only see what is “dead” or what is “going to die.” The Kingdom of God, however, divine and immortal, naturally escapes human sight.

Reincarnation

“Therefore, if your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life lame or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into the eternal fire.” – Jesus. (Mt. 18:8)

Only reincarnation can clarify the questions of being, suffering and destiny. On many occasions, Jesus spoke to us about its lovely and wise principles.

This passage from Matthew is extremely significant.

It is essential to remember that the Master was talking to a stagnant, almost dead society.

Strictly speaking, among the divine lessons they receive, Christians actually know only about one kind of death: the kind that comes over the guilty conscience for having broken the Divine Law. Most of Christ’s contemporaries were people who had no edifying spiritual deeds; their souls were hardened and their hearts, cold. The expression “it is better for you to enter life” represents the fundamental solution. Were not those who listened to Jesus human beings? However, the Lord was referring to the continuous existence, the ongoing life, during which every spirit awakens to its glorious destination of eternity.

In the lofty symbolism of his words, Jesus presents us with the underlying cause of pain-filled rebirths, in which we observe those crippled, blind or paralyzed from birth, who have asked for such trials as periods for the renewal and regeneration needed for their future happiness.

As for the image of “eternal fire,” it is highly appropriate to the lesson, because until people decide to live in Christ, they will be forced to do so by a thousand different ways. If their rebelliousness persists throughout the centuries, purifying processes will remain in place, like material fire, which

will exist on earth for as long as it takes as an indispensable resource for physical life.

We will always find

“For whoever asks, receives; whoever seeks, finds.” – Jesus. (Lk. 11:10)

Whenever believers feel the need for something, they automatically remember the Master’s promise when he assured a response for every request.

It is important, however, for us to know what we want. Of course we will always receive, but it is indispensable to know the object of our request.

Jesus said: “Whoever seeks, finds.”

It is also true that anyone who seeks evil will find evil.

There is a perfect correspondence between our soul and the soul of things. We are not talking about a hypothesis; we are stating a law.

To those who seek out thieves and listen to the false appeals of their inner world, every person is dishonest. This also applies to those who aspire to faith but who approach religious groups with suspicion. They will never find faith, because they analyze everything from the perspective of faithlessness. By manipulating the inferior purposes with which they nourish themselves, they try and insist so much that they do not find anything but the disillusionment they were expecting in the first place.

In order to find the good, we must search for it every day.

Undeniably, in a realm of jarring struggles like earth, hunting for evil is swiftly crowned with success due to the preponderance of evil amongst human beings. On the other hand, fishing for the good is not so easy. Nevertheless, the good will be found as a divine and eternal value.

Much care is indispensable whenever we decide to search for something, for the Master affirmed: “*Whoever seeks, finds*”; hence, we will always find what we seek.

Successive lives

“Do not wonder at my having said: You must be born again.” – Jesus. (Jn. 3:7)

Jesus’ word to Nicodemus was clear enough.

Deviating from it to senseless interpretations may be understandable within the organized clergy, attentive to the injunctions of the human struggle, but never amongst minds who love the real truth.

Reincarnation is a universal law.

Without reincarnation, earthly existence would be a vortex of disorder and injustice. Under its light we are able to understand every pain-filled occurrence along our pathway.

Humanity has not yet grasped the full extent of the divine mercy in the processes of redemption and readjustment.

Among humankind, criminals are often condemned to cruel punishments, such as death or prolonged suffering.

Providence, however, corrects lovingly ... It does not put offenders in damp, infected prisons. It only says that those involved in tragic events must change their clothing of flesh and return to the stage of human activity so that they may redeem themselves.

To Magnanimous Wisdom, not everyone who has erred is a criminal, just as not every victim is pure and innocent. God does not see only the evil that results from a crime. He also knows the dark mechanism of every circumstance that led to that crime.

The total criminal and the total victim are both unknown to humankind. The Father, however, sees the needs of his children and periodically reunites them by means of blood ties or the web of spiritually constructive

commitments so that they may learn the law of love amid the difficulties and pains of destiny, and with the blessing of temporary forgetfulness of the past.

World leaders

Jesus answered him: "You are a teacher in Israel, yet you do not understand this?" (Jn. 3:10)

World authorities often appear in religious circles, especially in Spiritist camps, demanding evidence for the existence of the soul.

The time will come when such demands will be considered childish, because, after all, these mentors of politics, education and science are, in fact, asking if they themselves exist.

Although it is referring to reincarnation, Jesus' answer to Nicodemus applies perfectly to this issue because today's leaders continue to ask about the essential realities of life.

Let us ask God to help human beings stop trying to enter the house of progress through the roof.

Until they acknowledge the reality of the spirit, unthinking doctors will continue to be confronted with pain-filled experiences in the area of medicine. Professors who concern themselves only with theories will continue to succumb to illusions. Improvident administrators will continue to expose themselves to serious errors until they face their responsibilities.

For this reason, Jesus' answer is completely appropriate for the questions of modern leaders. Making themselves out to be investigators, they cynically ask us for proof of the existence of the spirit; nevertheless, they guide others and get involved in the lives of our brothers and sisters in humanity. In light of this, and in addressing a problem that is so essential for them, they should not have to ask about such things, because they should already understand them.

Like Lazarus

And the dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped in strips, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him and let him go." (Jn. 11:44)

The return of Lazarus to active life is a profound symbol for all who toil on earth.

Repentant wrongdoers, sinners who return to the good, and those who "tinkle" the crystal of conscience understand the marvelous meaning of the phrasal verb "to start over."

Lazarus could not have been happy only because he was clothed again in perishable flesh, but because he was being given the chance to start the human experience once again with new values. On the path of evolution, every time a spirit receives from the Divine Master the opportunity to return to earth, it is undoing strong bonds ... relieving itself from anguish, regret and fear ... The sensation Lazarus felt in the tomb was like a tight cloth wrapped around his face...

Jesus, full of mercy, exclaimed to the world:

"Unbind him and let him go."

This gospel passage is marked with profound beauty.

People's lives are invaluable because Christ allows them to unbind themselves from their criminal links with the past, allowing them to return once again to the fountains of human life in order to rebuild and sanctify the ties of their spiritual destinies by means of the supreme gift of starting all over again.

Do not forget

*Because of him [Lazarus], many of the Jews were defecting and putting their faith in Jesus.
(Jn. 12:11)*

The Gospel of John states that many people were going to Bethany in search of the Master, not only to get a look at him personally but also to see Lazarus, who had been taken from the tomb. In doing this, many of them ended up being transformed, thus angering the Pharisees.

This remembrance by the Apostle is invaluable.

The situation today is exactly the same, however.

The soul that turns to Christ has almost always been resuscitated by his love, thus escaping the darkness of the intellectual nightmares that cause the death of the sentiments.

Many people are dead, buried in graves of indifference, selfishness and denial. Like Lazarus, when a person has the fortune of being touched by Christ, everyone becomes curious about his or her attitudes. They all want to know in what ways he or she has changed.

Therefore, if Jesus has blessed you; if the Lord has raised you up from the dust of the earth to the knowledge of life eternal, then remember that most of your friends may have some knowledge of the Master, but they are not yet ready to understand him fully. Like Lazarus, you will be a point of direct observation for all of them. They will only begin to receive the clarity of true faith through you and acknowledge the power of Jesus due to your transformation. Thus, if you have been called by the Lord of Life, it is up to you either to remain in the tomb of death or to be raised for the edification of those around you.

Letters from Christ

You have shown that you are letters from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the Living God; not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. – Paul. (2 Cor. 3:3)

It is remarkable that the Master did not bequeath to the world a compendium of principles written in his own hand.

Noteworthy figures have always marked their stay on the planet by leaving to posterity their message of wisdom and love either on tablets of stone or aged documents.

Such was not the case with Jesus, however. The Master made it a point to write his doctrine for humankind by inscribing it on the hearts of his sincere followers. His spiritual testament consisted of teachings to his disciples, but he did not write them down himself.

Human means would not have been sufficient to reveal the eternal richness of his Message. Human writing and reasoning usually leave room for controversy. In view of this, Jesus inscribed his teachings on the hearts of those who surrounded him, and even nowadays, disciples who are faithful to him are his divine letters to humankind. These living documents of the sanctifying love of Christ are very much alive in all religions and all climes. They are the pioneers who know about the greater life. They have experienced the sublime contact of the Master and have become his message to humanity.

There may be many controversies surrounding the most famous and lovely physical writings. However, for the soul that has become a living letter from the Lord, even if there are no lofty vibrations of comprehension, there will always be the divine silence.

Christ's ambassadors

So we are ambassadors for Christ. – Paul. (2 Cor. 5:20)

In the social realm, every person who has an honest job is in charge of a certain task.

Politicians and administrators have responsibilities concerning the State. Factory workers have jobs at the plants where they employ their efforts.

Every person of the good is a messenger from the center of accomplishments where he or she attends to the movement of life by means of ennobling activities.

The streets are filled with emissaries from offices, factories, institutions, inspection agencies, production, support and education, and their united interests work for the establishment of social harmony.

However, we must not forget that on earth there could be no qualities of the eternal life without representatives.

Sincere disciples make up Christ's permanent ambassadors.

It is important to remember that, in this statement by Paul of Tarsus, there is no allusion to a presumptuous clergy.

In any situation of life or in the remotest spot on earth, all collaborators who are loyal to Jesus are well known in the spiritual headquarters of divine service. It is through them – the devoted coworkers and often completely unknown benefactors of the world – that the Master works every day to spread the Gospel amongst humanity until the final victory.

In grasping this truth, take a hard look at your own tendencies, deeds and thoughts. Pay attention to whom you are serving, for if you have received the Good News of Redemption, then it is time for you to become an ambassador of his light.

Acting accordingly

They claim to know God, but they deny him with their deeds. They are abominable, disobedient and unfit for doing any good works. – Paul. (Titus 1:16)

As revived Christianity, Spiritism has a much more important role than being a mere arena of new technical discoveries for the unstable science of the world.

Up to now, the earth has had plenty of religious organizations that are replete with those who claim to believe in God but then deny him in the way they live their lives.

The interchange between the visible and invisible worlds aims to readjust the sentiments so that divine light may shine in people's day-to-day relationships.

How can we reconcile our knowing God with despising our neighbor?

Because the old religious schools wanted to be like the world's political entities and group themselves under the control of an organized clergy, they ended up stifling the impulses of faith by emphasizing outward worship practices, practices which demean the living power of the spirit.

Profoundly rooted in the Gospel, the consoling doctrine of the soul's survival after death and of the communication between the inhabitants of earth and those of the spirit world is flourishing with the characteristics of a new revelation so that, in their daily activities, people may be true examples of the good born of a living faith.

Productive land

Because land that soaks up the rain that often falls on it, thereby producing a crop that is useful to those who till it, receives the blessing of God. – Paul. (Heb. 6:7)

Christ's disciples can always learn great lessons from the book of nature.

In this verse, the convert of Damascus refers to productive land that produces abundantly by soaking up the rain that often falls on it, representing the best vessel for receiving God's blessings.

Let us transfer this symbolic expression to the land of the soul.

Only those spirits who are mindful of the spiritual blessings that rain down from heaven every day are capable of producing the useful things of divine service, thus holding on to these blessings from the Lord.

Not that the Father hands out undeserved favors. His merciful watch-care may extend to everyone indiscriminately, but not everyone receives it; that is, innumerable people have locked themselves up in the circles of selfishness and pride, enveloping their hearts in thick darkness.

God continuously bestows his blessings, but not all of his children are ready to receive them. Only hearts that have opened up to the spiritual light, those that soak up the divine dew, correspond to the ideal of the Heavenly Farmer.

The Most High is the Lord of the Universe, the supreme giver of blessings to all creatures. On planet Earth, Jesus is the Sublime Farmer. The human soul is the land.

Therefore, we need to understand that there is no tilling the soil unless we rectify it or wound it, and that only treated land can produce a usable crop that feeds and benefits God's House, thereby fulfilling the horticulturist's hopes.

The paralytic

Since they could not get close to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof of the house and lowered the cot on which the paralytic was lying. (Mk. 2:4)

Many people confess their need for Christ, but they complain that obstacles are keeping them from making the sublime approximation.

Some do not have time for meditation; others experience certain troubles that seem endless.

However, in order for us to get close to the Master and be genuinely interested in his immortal benefits, it is crucial that we extend our capabilities, expand our resources, and proceed to meet him in the light of a living faith.

The Gospel of Mark tells us about a curious decision made by a paralytic, who, upon finding a large crowd at the house where the Lord was, instead of wasting the opportunity, allowed himself to be lowered by his friends through an opening in the roof so that he could benefit from contact with the Savior, thereby making the most of the divine situation.

Therefore, remember the paralytic of Capernaum, and if you run into great difficulties of a material nature that keep you from enjoying the presence of Christ, address yourself to the Most High with the help of your spirit friends and let yourself fall at his divine feet, thus receiving new strength that will reestablish your peace and good cheer.

Christian glory

Because our glory is this: the testimony of our conscience. – Paul. (2 Cor. 1:12)

Ever since the times of the wild tribes that preceded the organizing of human families, the earth has been a huge stage for the exhibition of temporary glories.

Competition has intensified the search for transitory titles of honor.

The world has long known the bloody glories of homicidal war; the glories of greed in the coffers of dead fortune; the glories of pride in emblazoned, useless manuscripts; the glories of vanity in the deceitful pleasures that precede the grave; the glories of lifeless knowledge in ivory towers; and the glories of sectarian religions in their outward pomp and their efforts at proselytism.

In a realm where so many easy glories are sought for, the glory of the Christian is the most profound, the most difficult. The victory of the follower of Jesus is usually on the side opposite that of worldly triumphs. It is the side that is hidden, and few are able to see it with mortal eyes.

Nevertheless, this type of glory is so great that the world can neither provide nor take it away. It is the testimony of one's own conscience transformed into a tabernacle for the living Christ.

In the divine instant of this glorification, the soul is bedazzled before the perspective of the Infinite. This is because something unusual has happened within the mysterious crypt of the heart: the child has found its Father in the midst of eternity.

Watching out for oneself

Watch out for yourselves so that you do not lose what you have worked for, but instead, receive the entire prize. (2 Jn. 8)

The physical nature, notwithstanding the deficiencies of its expressions when compared to the spiritual greatness of life, provides a vast repository of lessons concerning watching out for oneself.

So that the spirit may receive the sacred opportunity to learn on the earth, it receives a body that amounts to a veritable sanctuary. The organs and senses may be its forces, but such a tabernacle could not be built without mother-like devotion. When individuals become self-aware, they spend a great deal of time cleaning, preserving and defending their temple of flesh. They need to take care of their skin, mouth, eyes, hands and ears.

What happens if any part of the body is neglected? Excrescence and filth poison one's life.

If the mortal, temporary and physiological body demands so much attention, then how much more does our dedication to the spirit with its eternal worth require?

If you have received a bit of light, make sure you do not lose it.

Intensify it within yourself.

Make a daily effort to cleanse your thoughts in the fountains of the Christ; correct your sentiments and renew your aspirations by focusing them on the Most High.

Do not stagnate.

Be watchful, because there are “intangibles germs” that can attack your soul and paralyze it for centuries.

121

Thistles

“Nor pick grapes from thistles.” – Jesus. (Lk. 6:44)

Christians are active combatants.

Waking up in the Lord’s field, they are perplexed by the vastness and complexity of the work to be done.

Difficulties, stumbling blocks, vine-tangled areas, weeds...

And the Gospel explains so well that one cannot pick grapes from thistles.

But would Jesus have made such a statement simply to make us cross our arms in false serenity?

Even if the land is covered by thistles, disciples have received many, many tools from the Master of masters.

Thus, it is crucial to get down to work.

Christ faced his sacrifice for all humankind head-on.

Could a few thistles really represent insuperable obstacles?

No. If the harvest is impossible today, let us attack the hardened ground. Let us plough the arid soil. Let us fertilize it with sweat and tears.

There will always be life-giving rains from heaven or generous springs from the earth to bless our efforts.

Divine Providence resides everywhere.

Let us not forget the imperative to toil, and later, instead of thistles, we will pick the smooth and sweet fruit of the vine.

122

Fruits

“Therefore, by their fruits you will know them.” – Jesus. (Mt. 7:20)

With its lofty characteristics of intelligence, today’s world needs fruits in order to test the seeds of principles.

Because of this, Christians need to learn a lesson from the good tree, which receives the elements of Divine Providence through its sap and makes them useful for God’s creatures.

Making an effort at self-analysis is necessary so that we may identify the qualities of our actions.

A lot of fine-sounding words simply give the impression of the fig tree that Jesus condemned.

Therefore, it is indispensable for us to know the fruits of our lives so that we can tell whether or not these fruits are beneficial to our brothers and sisters.

Earthly life represents a vast opportunity, with plenty of doors and horizons to the light eternal. Within their various circles, men and women can receive sap from the Most High each and every day and transform it into fruits of a divine nature.

Obviously, today’s world is in dire need of edifying teachings, but it can learn nothing without practical examples, especially because ever since ancient times, wisdom has told us that the hardest thing for people to do in the physical world is to live and die faithful to the supreme good.

123

To hope in Christ

If we hope in Christ only in this life, we are the most miserable of all men. (1 Cor. 15:19)

The analysis of this verse offers a clear lesson to the student.

It is natural to trust in Christ and to hope in him, but what about the anguish of tormented souls regarding earthly cares as they selfishly hope for Jesus to come and fulfill their immediate whims?

Would it be right to count on the Lord only in the temporary expressions of a fragmentary life?

It is indispensable to uncover the greatness of the concept “life” without mistaking it as being just “a life.” To live does not mean going from cradle to grave with stopovers in adolescence, adulthood and old age; no, it means participating in God’s creation through our sentiments and mind; it means being someone and something in the concert of the universe.

As incarnate spirits, few subjects are as confusing as those concerning death, which has been wrongly interpreted as being the end of that which cannot die.

Therefore, it is crucial to hope in Christ with a real notion about eternity. The philosophy of immediatism, however, turns men and women into children.

So, do not be overly concerned about the age of your physical body, of circumstances, or temporary conditions. Instead, ask your conscience if your life is focused on Jesus. And wait for the future, loving and doing good, convinced that true hope does not mean lying around, but entrusting oneself to ongoing work.

Firmness of faith

“The ones that fell upon rock are those who, upon hearing the word, receive it with joy; but since they have no root, they believe only for a while, and when times of trial come along, they fall away.” – Jesus. (Lk. 8:13)

The word “rock” usually symbolizes rigidity and obstacles; however, it is important to remember that Jesus sometimes used it to imply firmness. The Master once called Peter the “living rock of faith.”

The Gospel of Luke tells us about those on rock, that is, those who receive the word with joy, but who, because they have no root, fatalistically fall away in times of trial.

Many people do not understand this promise of trials. Nonetheless, trials should be looked at as essential experiences.

In the home, parents can take excessive care of their children while they are very young, but too much care is inappropriate when they need to make an effort by themselves.

A manager will patiently teach new employees, but afterwards he or she will rightly expect them to do the work by themselves.

Therefore, in this verse from Luke, we can see that in religious matters it is not advisable for someone to become dependent on the spiritual strength of others. As long as improvident individuals can rest on others, everything will probably be fine for them, but if they do not have their own firm roots, they will look outside themselves during difficult times for the strength of others.

Everything invites people to work on perfecting and enlightening themselves.

Thus, let us respect firmness of faith wherever it may be found, but let us never forget to strengthen our own faith to obtain a solid victory.

Children and servants

“Now, a servant will not remain forever connected to the home, but a child belongs to it forever.” – Jesus. (Jn. 8:35)

In his exemplification, Jesus taught us how to receive the right to be children of God.

Active and incessant work, detachment from the inferior interests of the world, and complete submission to the divine will were the fundamental characteristics of his lessons.

Many people of noteworthy goodness and adamant character, respectable clergy and sincere believers may all be dedicated servants of the Most High. But Christ has called us to be something more. He has invited us to be children, explaining that children belong to the home forever.

What about servants? Servants very often experience changes. They do not always remain beside the Father.

However, is not the earth also a part – though humble – of God’s house? This is the point of the lesson.

The Lord refers to servants as people susceptible of various interests of their own. Children, however, have interests that are in common with the Father. The former, serving God and themselves, expect to be paid, and they may endure anxieties, afflictions, delusions and dire suffering. Children, on the other hand, are always “at home”; that is, they will remain at peace, above the most difficult circumstances, for they recognize that, above all, they belong to God.

126

Idols

Abstain from things sacrificed to idols. (Acts 15:29)

Religious groups have not yet grasped the full extent of the concept of idolatry.

When we talk about idols, everything seems to relate exclusively to images set up on stone altars. But this is the simplest aspect of the subject.

Before anything else, people need to abolish other, more dangerous idols that disturb their vision and sentiment.

Very often, the soul dwells on false worship.

The above verse refers to “things sacrificed to idols,” and people are surrounded by the things of life. In using these things, they enrich their evolutionary patrimony. Nevertheless, it is necessary to know the difference between things that are consecrated to God and those that are sacrificed to idols.

According to Jesus, the ambition to acquire spiritual qualities is called virtue, whereas the plan to attain temporary advantages in the physical realm, that is, the plane of anxiety, is called folly.

The “first places” the Master recommends that we avoid can also be considered as idols. Therefore, by not sanctifying the things of life and of the soul to the cult of earthly immediacy, we can avoid an inferior form of worship.

Thus, whenever you are worried about failures and disappointments as an individual, do not forget that Christ, in accepting the cross, taught us the way to eliminate the idolatry on our pathway.

While it is still day

“As long as it is still day, I must do the work of him who sent me.” – Jesus. (Jn. 9:4)

We know that the Master’s divine work is incessant and that it takes place in a perennial and resplendent day of opportunities; however, in order for us to grasp the real meaning of our stay on the earth, Jesus tells us that he had to take advantage of the opportunity to directly interact with human beings.

If such an attitude was enough of a reason for the Master’s concern, what can we say about ourselves as we live in the physical realm or in the spheres closest to it and fulfill our obligations in the sacred realization of the eternal good?

Christ is not referring to the need of preaching about the works of God. He is referring to accomplishing them at the right time.

We know that, since he was the Most High’s Envoy to the world, then disciples of the Good News are, in turn, envoys of his love to the most recondite places on the terrestrial orb. Those who live with their hearts focused on the Gospel are emissaries of the Divine Lesson amid their companions in the physical life wherever they might be; and blessed are they who take advantage of the generous day to accomplish within themselves and those around them the sanctifying works of the One who sent has them.

So, never disdain the situation you find yourself in. Try to use it to the best of your ability so that your efforts may be a fount of blessings for others and for those closest to you. Never forget to take advantage of the time to acquire more enlightenment while it is still day.

Spiritual blessings

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them: "Do not tell anyone about what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." (Mt. 17:9)

If people need to be prudent as they go about their daily activities, then how much more they must be so when dealing with the spirit realm.

The Divine Master himself is an example of this.

After taking Peter, James and John to witness the marvelous revelations on Mt. Tabor, where he was transfigured and met with glorious emissaries from the Higher Realms right before their very eyes, Jesus ordered them: *"Don't tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."*

The Master did not ask them to lie, but advised them to hold on to the truth until the time was right.

Each situation demands a certain amount of knowledge.

Jesus knew that a premature disclosure about the sublime vision might cause misunderstandings and sarcasm in ordinary, idle conversation.

Let us not forget that we are all progressing towards God. Nonetheless, we must realize that the road is not the same for everybody.

If you already possess invaluable spiritual experience, then of course you may use it every day in appropriate doses to help those around you in their particular situations. Even so, do not take for granted what the higher realms have given you by sharing it with unscrupulous minds, for everything that is received from Heaven is an achievement that cannot be transferred.

The origin of temptations

But all are tempted when they are attracted and enticed due to their own concupiscence.
(James 1:14)

Usually, when great evils happen, those who are involved in them blame God for their disaster. They are slow to realize that the Father is Almighty and they allege that such temptation could only have been the result of the Divine Will.

Yes, God is Absolute Love, and that is why those who have fallen are still on their feet, counting on the eternal values of time and supported by his merciful hands. Temptations, however, do not come from the Heavenly Father.

Is the legislator responsible for the disrespectful acts of those who break the law created by him?

The Apostle James's references are profoundly touched by the light of Heaven.

“All are tempted when they are attracted and enticed due to their own concupiscence.”

Let us examine the nouns “temptation” and “concupiscence.” The former exteriorizes the latter, which in turn constitutes the perverse and corrupt foundation of primitive human nature. To be tempted is to listen to one's own guile and to give refuge to unworthy inner advice, because even if the evil comes from the outside, it can materialize and remain only if we attune ourselves to it in the innermost corners of our heart.

Lastly, let us take a look at the verb “to attract.” We can verify the extent of our inferiority by the nature of things and situations that attract us.

James's observation is the right course for us to take to analyze the origin of temptations.

Remember that each day entails specific magnetic situations. Thus, examine the essence of everything that attracts you over the course of the day and you will eliminate your evils, heeding the good that Jesus desires of you.

Sorrow

Godly sorrow brings repentance leading to salvation, which leaves no regret; worldly sorrow, on the other hand, brings death. – Paul. (2 Cor. 7:10)

According to this warning by Paul, there is “Godly sorrow” and “worldly sorrow.” The former provides a solution for the problems concerning the true life, whereas the latter leads to death, that is, death as a symbol of stagnation and the waywardness of the sentiments.

Many people regard incessant lamentation and on-going tedium as virtues. Some are sad because they do not have enough money for their excesses; there are others who lament the impossibility to do evil; and there are those who are addicted to complaining, incapable of working without incentives. This is the kind of sadness that keeps the spirit bound to corrective and perilous reincarnations.

Few people are touched by “Godly sorrow.” Very few contemplate themselves by taking a hard look at the extent of their defects on the pathway to restoring their lives either in the present or in the future. Those who proceed along that redemptive road may weep along the way, but they do not do so uselessly; instead, they use the time to make self-adjustments while struggling to construct a new destiny.

Human beings and angels

Even though angels are stronger and more powerful, they do not pronounce blasphemous accusations against them in the presence of the Lord. (2 Pet. 2:11)

It is sad to see the huge number of people who are always ready to pronounce blasphemous accusations against one another. Frivolousness dominates their conversations and pettiness corrupts their activities in the most diverse areas of their lives.

Except for the sincere cultivators of religious light, most people remain at the door of difficult situations, in which slander poisons their lives. They nourish unfair antipathies against their colleagues at work, against the neighbor who does not accept their ideas, and against anyone who is not in tune with their principles. However, since the law is one of compensation and exchange, they will receive back from these neighbors and colleagues the same destructive vibrations.

In this way, there are silent wars that often last for centuries.

Nevertheless, vainglorious people are always surrounded by the beneficent activity of enlightened and generous spirits, who, the more they are endowed with divine power, the more compassion they have for human weaknesses, stretching out their caring hands to them on the pathway of life, and never pronouncing condemnatory judgments against them in the presence of the Lord.

Therefore, whenever you feel compelled to judge what other people do, remember Peter's words. Remember that even angelic spirits – living and sublime wellsprings of might and power – never make accusations against you in the Lord's presence.

Going always forward

For whoever is defeated by something is made a slave to it. (2 Pet. 2.19)

In order to accomplish the lofty objectives of life, the incarnate spirit needs to recognize his or her role as a learner and thus profit from every experience, without becoming slaved to it.

Money, material needs, sickness and health are educational situations of immense worth to those who know how to make the most of such evolutionary opportunities in their true essence.

Unfortunately, generally speaking, people only recognize this fact when they approach transformation due to the death of the physical body.

Very few people go from one situation to the next with due dignity. Usually, whenever rich persons find themselves in a situation of want, they yield to extreme grief and wind up defeated like miserable servants of beggary. On the other hand, whenever once-poor individuals find themselves in a wealthy financial position, they often become overly demanding, enslaving themselves to extravagance and tyranny.

Much caution is crucial so that such transitory situations do not paralyze the ascent of the soul.

Therefore, maintain an upright conscience and dive into the edifying endeavor; then, whatever situation you find yourself in, you will see it as a chance to go higher and farther.

The supremacy of Jesus

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth: before Abraham was, I am!" (Jn. 8:58)

It is impossible to place Christ in history like some other human personality.

The divine revelation, of which he was the Ultimate Emissary, along with his teachings and examples, speaks louder than the ever-changing messages of the loftiest philosophers that have visited this world.

Before Abraham, or before the great historical characters of wisdom and love, the Christ was already the luminous focal point for human achievements. From his mercy came missionaries of the light, who, introduced into the earth's evolutionary development, fulfilled, more successfully or less so, their redemptive task amid humankind long before the eternal teachings of the Gospel.

The historical position of Jesus reminds us of the personal presence of the lord of the Vineyard. As God's Envoy, as the Wise and Loving Tutor, he came to blaze new pathways and to establish the redemptive struggle so that people could recognize their eternity.

The illustrious philosophers and friends of humanity spoke to humankind, revealing a kind of refracted, inner light, like the moon that illuminates the nights on earth. The appeals of those honorable and enlightened ambassadors were lovely and edifying, but they were always mixed somewhat with darkness.

The coming of Christ was different, however. In his Divine Presence, we have the fountain of positive truth, the sun that shines.

A little is enough

Judas said to him: “Lord, where have you come from, that you have shown yourself to us and not to the world?” (Jn. 14:22)

One of the most surprising facts about Christianity is the way the Savior chose to announce the eternal truths.

Jesus did not appear amid sensationalist decrees, revolutionary triumphs or situations of domination. No, he came in peace to a humble manger; he exemplified what he came to do; he talked to a few obscure people in a small village. And by doing just that, he prepared the transformation of all humanity.

However, for the inferior world, Judas’s question is still apropos.

Ordinary people only understand those who impose themselves on others, even when they have to listen to tyrannical sentences pronounced from blood-stained daises. They only comprehend shocking spectacles and the theatrical gestures of those who may be in a dominant position today, only to have to endure tomorrow the same transforming process imposed on the transitory world in which they took part.

Jesus, however, spoke to the immortal soul. That is why his revelations have never died. Furthermore, he showed that one’s financial or social status is not essential for one to be of useful service to God, nor is a city with its stately regimentations and resources. Edifying and simple principles, a nameless village and a few friends are enough.

The bearer of goodwill knows that this was the material with which Christ began the renewal of life on earth.

Non-transferable gold

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire so that you may become rich. (Rev. 3:18)

Ordinary acquisitions are always easy to come by. An ordinary person has no problem pursuing financial possibilities, attracting petty interests, and coming up with a thousand ways to achieve inferior objectives. However, those who adopt such norms do not know the sacred character of the humblest patrimony that comes their way. Instead, they abuse their possessions only to find out later on that they are more impoverished than ever.

The divine recommendation in the above verse is clear enough.

In order to become rich, one has to acquire the gold refined in the fire; that is, wealth that comes from the generous hands of the Most High.

This spiritual wealth acquired by means of arduous toil, of profound understanding, of victory over oneself, and an incessant effort, is the only thing that will confer on the spirit a position of genuine superiority and lasting well-being beyond the transformations imposed by the grave, and such a lofty achievement will only become possible after the spirit has surrendered completely to the Father for the grandeur of the Divine Endeavor.

Of course, individuals influenced by others may receive big salaries. However, we need to realize that this can change at any time, or that these assets can be transferred to someone else by the temporary holder. Nevertheless, when workers use their abilities selflessly for endeavors of the good and put the objectives of God's Work above their personal whims, struggling, loving, suffering and surrendering to him, they will certainly acquire eternal and non-transferable gold.

Earthly and heavenly things

“I have spoken to you of earthly things, yet you do not believe me; how will you believe if I speak to you of heavenly things?” – Jesus. (Jn. 3:12)

Individuals who study the interchange with the spirit world often complain about a lack of information from communicating spirits with regard to the activities they are involved in there.

Why are discarnates not more explicit about the kind of life they have been called to? What are their cities, homes and daily relationships like? By what means are they organized hierarchically? Do their governments follow earthly models?

Others ask why scientists who have been liberated from the physical realm do not return to their former centers of research and accomplishments to make known ways to cure so-called incurable diseases or to reveal new inventions that would accelerate world progress.

These are hasty arguments of human laziness.

If, in a methodical course of introduction to more-elevated tasks, communicating spirits have dealt almost exclusively with matters concerning incarnates but have not yet been paid attention to, what would happen if they put their serious obligations aside and began providing information before incarnates were ready for it?

People need to understand that God does indeed provide help for such matters, but each Spirit has to fashion its own glory.

As for the way it relates to incarnates, the great mission of the spirit world does not entail bringing them sensational and extemporaneous knowledge, but teaching them how to read the divine signs that earthly life contains within itself, thus lighting their way of progress towards the higher realms of the spirit world.

Eating with publicans

When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples: “Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners?” (Mt. 9:11)

Generally speaking, the many branches of the Christian community have not yet grasped the full meaning of the Master’s dining with publicans and sinners.

It was not only the Last Supper with his closest disciples that had singular importance. In that meeting in Jerusalem during Passover, Jesus reveals to us the sublime character of his relationship with his apostles. That event was about an intimate, familiar agape meal that solemnized both a loving farewell and a divine lesson at the same time.

However, we need to remember that the Master met with this circle of friends after having dined with publicans and sinners. He partook of the supper with his disciples on a day of high religious excitement, but before that he had participated in the joy of those who were far removed from the faith by benevolently meeting with them and giving them the same blessings of his love.

Jesus’ eating with publicans has special meaning in the history of Christianity. It shows that the Lord embraces all those who desire the excellence of his spiritual nourishment as they toil in his vineyard, and that not only on occasions of faith is he present with those who love him. At any time and in any situation, he is ready to help souls who search for him.

Jesus dined with sinners before he dined with the disciples for the last time. We must not forget that the divine table remains set for sublime service. It is up to the guests to make the most of this concession.

Intentions

I planted and Apollo watered, but God made it grow. – Paul. (1 Cor. 3:6)

The Corinthian church was full of allegations by troubled disciples.

Some of its members saw Paul's efforts as being more valuable, whereas others spoke in favor of Apollo's.

The advocate to the Gentiles was divinely inspired as he addressed the issue in his letter.

Why would there be individualist claims in an endeavor in which we are all beneficiaries of the same Lord?

Today, it is worthwhile to examine Paul's recommendation to the Corinthians, because it is no longer just the beneficiaries of the Christian organization who rejoice for having received the blessings of the Gospel through this or that laborer for Christ, but also the workers for the cause, who sometimes come to the arena of service showing off as if they were distinguished people in this or that work for the good.

The certainty that "every good gift comes from God" constitutes an excellent exercise for daily efforts.

It is interesting to see how people are always ready to take advantage of circumstances that elevate them in other people's opinions. While they are always willing to stand out in circles of the good to which they do not substantially belong, they rarely accept the blame for the mistakes they make. This is one of the odd contradictions about human beings.

Do not forget. The work belongs to everyone. Some plant, whereas others water. Live happily in the area of work that has been entrusted to your hands or to your mind, and serve without having any expectations, because men and women may be the ones who prepare the land and organize the

planting through the mercy of Providence, but it is God who puts the blossoms on the leaves and provides the fruit, according to what is deserved.

139

For love

He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts so they can neither see with their eyes nor understand with their hearts and be converted so that I may heal them. (Jn. 12:40)

The humblest levels of nature reveal the Divine Providence as a supreme expression of devotion and love.

Lilies do not weave and birds do not store up provisions, but a mysterious power provides them with all they need.

This observation about the lives of animals demonstrates the extreme tenderness with which the Father has watched over his creation from the very start: here, a wing; there, an extra tooth; and over there, an unheard of power of defense.

This proves the great revelation that love is in all things.

However, whenever the Father calls his children to take part in his works, ungrateful ones often appear, and instead of converting the blessings they have received into worthwhile and constructive duties, they demand even more. Consequently, their hearts harden even more, and since they are out of balance, they will have to endure suffering in the indispensable rebalancing of the external laws of that same divine love. When they cannot see anything beyond the material aspect of the transitory landscape, then, unexpectedly, the purifying struggle follows.

That is when Jesus arrives to work the cure.

Only then does the ingrate understand the Divine Magnanimity.

Love balances; pain restores. That is why we often hear: "I would have never believed in God if I had not suffered."

To the mountains

“Then let those who are in Judea flee to the hills.” – Jesus. (Mt. 24:16)

Referring to dolorous times that would mark the planetary renewal, the Master advised those who are in Judea to flee to the hills. The warning is profound because we should understand the word “Judea” to mean the “spiritual region” of all those, who, due to their inner aspirations, draw near to the Master for their supreme enlightenment.

Present day earth is a powerful picture of this. Devastation and fighting are widespread. Deadly poisons are being injected into the masses by unconscionable politicians. The “lowlands” are covered by thick fog. Holy places are filled with abominable darkness. People are attracted to the sinister light of the fires. The land is being fertilized with blood and tears for the sowing to come.

The time has come for those who live in Judea to flee to the “hills” of superior ideas. It is crucial for disciples of the good to live on the spiritual heights and not forsake the lofty endeavor that the Lord exemplified while on earth. There they must solidify their position as faithful collaborators, invincible in peace and hope, convinced that, once the men and women of perturbation – those who bring destruction and tears – are gone, the sons and daughters of the Lord’s work will sow joy once again and will rebuild the edifice of life.

Too bad for them

And he said to them: "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." (Lk. 4:21)

Taking his place amid the people of Nazareth, Jesus proclaimed, after reading a number of Isaiah's promises: "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Religious groups are nearly always sought out by curious people, who, at first sight, seem like itinerant vagabonds. However, it is important to realize that there is always a spiritual influence that has compelled their mind to examine and consult; they themselves would not be able to define that silent, subtle appeal that obliges them to listen to powerful sermons, lengthy lectures, expositions and explanations that would not interest them otherwise.

In many circumstances, they say they are putting up with it because of the code of kindness and mutual respect; however, that is not the case. There is something stronger than good manners that is compelling them to hear. It is because the moment of the spiritual revelation has sounded for them.

Many remain indifferent or recalcitrant, but responsibility for what they have learned already weighs on their shoulders, and if they could sense the truth more clearly, they would harbor the Master's proclamation deep within their soul: "*Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.*"

Mercy has been meted out. Jesus has given a bit of his infinite goodness. The Divine Word has been fulfilled. If they cannot benefit from it, then too bad for them.

One Lord only

“No servant can serve two masters.” – Jesus. (Lk. 16:13)

If Christians down through time have faced trying situations of perplexity on the roads of the world, it is because, ever since the time of the apostles and martyrs, most of them have been taking part in disseminating erroneous sentiments with regard to the Lord whom they should be serving.

Since Christ’s kingdom has not yet been established on earth, one cannot satisfy both Jesus and the world. Wickedness and responsibility cannot exist together in daily life.

What can be said of a person who tries to direct two centers of antagonistic activity at the same time?

Christ is the central focus of our thoughts.

After God, he is the sole Lord for the children of the earth. He has inalienable rights because he has been our light ever since the first day we began our evolution, and he reached out to us for our redemption with the sacrifices of his love.

We are his servants. We must humbly attend to his sublime interests. In order to do this, we are not supposed to run from the world or our responsibilities, but rather transform the area of service that has been entrusted to us into cells of Christ’s work.

Therefore, the main task of disciples is to understand the transitory character of physical life, devoting themselves to the Master as the center of their lives, and offering his divine benefits to their neighbors.

Legion of evil

Then Jesus asked him: "What is your name?" And he answered, "My name is Legion, for we are many." (Mk. 5:9)

The Master bequeathed an unforgettable lesson to disciples in this Gospel passage.

The giver of goodness and peace, Jesus approached the wicked Spirit, who received him in desperation.

Christ did not grow impatient but kindly asked him his name. The spirit replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many."

Jesus' followers did not know how to interpret this scene in its full symbolic meaning.

And even today, they still wonder about the meaning of such an odd incident.

The fact of the matter is that the Lord wanted to transmit an immortal lesson to his companions of the redemptive endeavor.

Jesus was alone as he faced this troubled and disturbed spirit; the spirit, however, called itself "Legion," symbolizing a large number of spirits with inferior and wrongful intentions. The Master was pointing to the fact that, for an indefinite period of time, the good would still be small compared to the overwhelming avalanche of evil.

Therefore, if you are working for Christ, do not forget to persevere in the good at all times, knowing full well that evil can make itself felt all around you like a threatening legion, demanding from you profound peace-of-mind, great trust in Christ, much effort and watchfulness, until the final victory.

What do we have to do with Christ?

“Ah! What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God!” (Mk. 1:24)

It is a big mistake to believe that the Divine Master finished his work on Calvary.

Jesus continues to walk in every direction in the world. His redemptive Gospel is triumphing little by little on the terrain of human hearts.

This fact must be remembered, for evil spirits are trying to repel the Lord every day.

Here, the Evangelist is referring to the evil spirits that took over a man's body. However, such infernal intelligences continue to dominate vast organizations on earth.

In the political area, for instance, which was created to maintain the principles of divine order, they appear under the names of discord and tyranny; in the area of commerce, formed to establish fraternity, they appear under the names of ambition and selfishness; and in religion and science, which are sacred organizations of universal progress, they answer to the names of pride, vanity, dogmatism, and sectarian intolerance.

It is not only the human physical body that can suffer obsession by evil spirits. Human organizations and institutions suffer much more from it.

And when Jesus draws nigh through the Gospel, people and organizations quickly ask: “What do we have to do with Christ?” that is, “What do we have to do with the spiritual life?”

It is necessary to be on the alert in the presence of such subtleness, for the enemy has also infiltrated the circles of evangelical Spiritism, dressed in the glistening tunics of false knowledge.

Spiritual counseling

*“Do not rejoice that spirits submit to you; rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” –
Jesus. (Lk. 10:20)*

We often see new disciples of the Gospel rejoicing because troubled spirits submit to them.

They talk happily about the results of emotion-filled mediumistic meetings, in which they have successfully counseled ignorant and perverse spirits.

Many of them become entangled in such remarkable incidents and seek to increase these so-called “practical endeavors,” desirous to enlighten, by direct contact, the unconscious or unhappy friends on the planes closest to the physical realm.

But Jesus suggests the proper remedy for such situations, where disciples, always interested in counseling others, little by little neglect their own learning.

Sincere counselors should rejoice, not because disincarnates submit to them in desperation, but because they should be convinced that the good is ministered in these circumstances not by them personally, but by caring and charitable emissaries of Jesus, who uses them as channels for Divine mercy. May such joy stem from the chance to serve the good with their conscience attuned to the Divine Master amid the sweet certainties of the faith solidly stored in their hearts.

The word of the Master to his companions was very expressive and can amply benefit today’s enthusiastic disciples.

Dealing with the invisible world

So Jesus asked them, “Why would Satan cast out Satan?” (Mk 3:23)

This verse from the Gospel is extremely instructive for today’s disciples who, in the endeavors of Christian Spiritism, are involved with helping unhappy discarnates regain their balance on the redemptive path.

No one should expect immediate success when trying to help spirits that have lost their way.

The collaboration of time is indispensable for those involved in human tragedies to become enlightened, and as we know, not even Jesus’ disciples were able to immediately convince troubled spirits about their perilous situation. However, disciples can do a lot in this area of enlightening activity without having a sterilizing attitude. Today, those who devote themselves to this kind of service still suffer persecution from the enemies of the light, those who claim that such disciples have formed a dark pact with evil powers. Religious sectarianism calls them “minions of Satan,” imposing torment and humiliation on them.

However, the same senseless accusations and recriminations were cast at the Divine Master by the organized priesthood of his time. By caring for the sick and obsessed – those in the grip of the destructive powers of darkness – Jesus was labeled as a sorcerer, a son of Beelzebub. This is something worth remembering because it will be highly comforting to new disciples.

147

A challenge

“Well, what are you waiting for?” (Acts 22:16)

In telling the crowd about his unforgettable experience at the gates of Damascus, the Apostle to the Gentiles says that, due to his perplexity, Ananias asked him in the form of a fraternal warning: *“Well, what are you waiting for?”*

Such a question deserves to be pondered by all those who have received invitations, appeals, blessings or help from the spirit world.

Innumerable beneficiaries of the Gospel are attached to all kinds of obstacles in the nebulous province of complaining.

If they have been blessed by the light of faith, they lament not having found the truth in their youth or in days of plenty. However, in adulthood or in times of material difficulties, they hang on to the same inferior tendencies that used to mark their lives when they were still ignorant.

Their words always express goodwill, but when they are called on to actually do something, they immediately complain about a lack of money, health, time or strength.

They are conflicted workers, for when they experience organic equilibrium, they demand rest, but in times of physical illness, they say they miss working.

It is crucial to combat these destructive expressions of the personality.

In any situation and at any time, we are surrounded by opportunities to serve the Savior. It is to all of us who have received the divine blessings in a thousand different ways that the sublime challenge is issued: *“Well, what are you waiting for?”*

Watch yourself

Persevere in watching yourself and the doctrine carefully, because by doing so, you will save both yourself and those who hear you. – Paul. (1 Tim. 4:16.)

There are platoons of the army of pessimists everywhere. Their arms are crossed in discouragement.

They do not understand work, trust, peace-of-mind or living faith, and they usually employ phrases that make great impact as they criticize people and situations.

At times, these soldiers of negativity are people who have taken on the responsibility of guiding others.

But despite the importance of their position, they are in the wrong.

Earthly difficulties are enormous indeed and they demand a great effort from noble souls in transit on the planet; nevertheless, each disciple must watch him or herself. It is essential to watch one's inner life carefully, to value and accept discipline, and examine the needs of the heart. This procedure leads our spirit towards vaster horizons, enabling it to broaden its understanding, which makes us harbor an inner, sacred respect for every area of evolution. This in turn expands our patrimony of constructive hope and renewing optimism.

To watch ourselves carefully entails working on our own salvation and the redemption of others. This is the logical way to acquire lasting values.

To circumscribe oneself to theoretical excesses and avoid spiritually constructive service means that one is resting on the margins of work, gradually placing oneself on the thankless terrain of diabolical criticism about everything that is not the object of one's attention and experience.

Ownership

But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. (Mt. 19:22)

The ownership instinct has been the cause of bloody revolutions. Everywhere on the planet there are people who are anxious for material possessions. They cling to their temporary things and are ready to die to defend them.

This shows that human beings have not yet learned what ownership means.

In posing this argument, we do not intend to induce people to forget the prudent ant and adopt the careless cicada as a model. We only invite our readers to be mindful of the precariousness of ephemeral possessions.

Every achievement should benefit the soul as a force of evolution.

Humans will gain a sanctifying impulse when they grasp the fact that they only truly possess what they find within themselves regarding the spiritual content of their lives. Everything that has to do with external things – whether people, land or transitory goods – belongs to God, who grants them according to merit.

This reality, when felt and practiced, is a bright light on disciples' pathway, teaching them the sublime law of use, so that ownership does not become a source of anxiety and sadness, as was the case with the young man who was instructed by Jesus.

150

Goads

“It is hard to kick against the goads.” – Jesus. (Acts 9:5)

The evolutionary way is covered with goads.

Otherwise, we would not be able to see the redemptive door.

God gives himself to the children of his entire creation, sharing with all of them the treasures of his infinite love, stimulating them to evolve by means of a thousand different ways. Still, there are many spheres like earth, where the inhabitants have not yet grasped these glorious realities, and so they halt their own progress, slumbering on the bed of illusion.

Because of such inertia, the messengers of Providence, who have been entrusted with the task of illuminating those stuck in the darkness, provide them with what they need for their awakening.

Aware of the fact that God gives human beings everything – life, pathways, infinite goods, inspiring spirits – these divine messengers only ask them to make their way towards the Father’s arms; and out of love for their wards, they set up goads.

According to this plan, Jesus has created the noblest stimulations for the terrestrial sphere. Thus, wealth and poverty, homeliness and beauty, suffering and struggle are actually goads or opportunities implemented by Christ for the benefit of humankind.

Each existence has its particular difficulty, as does each person, but this symbolizes a blessed opportunity.

Examine your life, identify your goads and do not rebel against them.

If a spirit as great as Paul of Tarsus could not kick against the goads, just imagine what will become of our efforts.

Youthfulness

Flee the desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace with those who call on the Lord with a pure heart. – Paul. (2 Tim. 2:22)

Those who are involved with young people usually assign them so much power that they end up misguided, deceived and careless. Too much is expected of them.

We agree that young people do have incredible potential, but we need to remember that this phase of earthly existence is the one that requires the most guidance.

Young people can and will do a lot if older and more experienced persons do not withhold their help in the work to be done. Young people cannot build anything new if they do not use the efforts of those who preceded them. In everything they do, they rely on their predecessors.

Youth can be compared to the promising departure of a ship on an important voyage.

Childhood was the preparation for it, and old age will be the arrival in port. Every phase of the trip requires lessons from experienced sailors to learn how to organize and finish it successfully.

It is crucial to support the mentality of the young appropriately; however, no one should offer them promises of illusory power.

The desires of most young people do not always represent a future safe harbor.

Young people may be able to do a lot, but in everything they should pursue “righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord with a pure heart.”

Knowledge and love

Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. – Paul. (1 Cor. 8:1)

Knowledge may be replete with power, but only love benefits. In every epoch, scientific knowledge, for instance, has achieved innumerable evolutionary advances. Science demonstrates achievements that used to seem impossible. Great machines cross the skies and the depths of the oceans. The spoken word is transmitted over long distances without wires. The press divulges thoughts all over the world. But concerning this very knowledge, it does not matter whether human beings use its fruits for good or for evil. It understands neither disinterestedness nor sacred aims.

Love, on the other hand, approaches scientific endeavors to rectify them and provide them an awareness of the good. Love teaches us that every machine should be used as a divine tool on humankind's way to God; only edifying words as a gift from the Most High should be transmitted; and only lofty thoughts should be published for the redemptive effort of humanity.

Knowledge may have discovered explosives, but love has shown how to use them to construct roads to connect peoples. The former may be able to write a book, but the latter teaches how to write the consoling truth. Knowledge may materialize many useful works, but only love can accomplish the best works possible. We do not doubt that the former, when well applied, can endow people with a courageous heart, but only the latter can provide an illuminated one.

The world is stuck in darkness and suffering because knowledge has been supported by hatred, which destroys and perverts. It will only reach a safe port when it surrenders completely to the love of Jesus Christ.

Passes

And he pleaded earnestly with him: "My daughter is dying; please, come and lay your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." (Mk. 5:23)

Jesus used to lay his hands on the infirm, transmitting the benefits of health to them. Due to his loving power, he knew about the smallest imbalances of nature and the means needed to restore harmony to it.

No action of the Divine Master was without meaning. Aware of this truth, the apostles began the laying on of fraternal hands in the name of the Lord, becoming instruments of Divine Mercy.

Today, in revived Christianity, there is once again help from the invisible world through the laying on of hands. Passes are transfusions of psychic powers, by which precious spiritual energies emanate from the messengers of Christ to both donor and beneficiary. They represent the continuance of the Master's efforts to alleviate suffering in the world.

Of course, it would be audacious for modern-day disciples to expect results as sublime as those obtained by Jesus when he healed paralytics, mentally disturbed individuals and agonizing people.

The Master knew, whereas we are learning to know. Nevertheless, we cannot disregard his lessons. We must continue his work of love by means of fraternal hands.

Jesus' providential service may be extended to wherever there is a sincere mental attitude for doing the good.

How the good is done does not matter; what does matter is recognizing the fact that it can and should be done in his name.

Renouncing

“And everyone who has left homes, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or lands for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit life eternal.” – Jesus. (Mt. 19:29)

In this verse from Matthew, the Divine Master encourages us to renounce worldly goods in order to gain eternal life. The Messiah states that it is necessary to leave father, mother, wife, brothers and sisters behind. However, it is necessary to clarify what renouncing means, exactly.

Jesus explains that victory will belong to those who have renounced the things of the world for his sake.

At first sight, this divine advice seems like nonsense.

Why should we forsake the sacred duties of existence if Christ came to us to sanctify them? In times past, rash disciples did not grasp the real meaning of the text. Many brothers and sisters of the faith withdrew to the gloom of the cloister, forgetting about their superior and urgent obligations.

However, it is easy to see how Christ practiced renouncing.

After his resurrection, he appears in his glory to the companions that had abandoned him. In spite of his friends' hesitation, he shares the eternal joys with them in the upper room. To the ingrates who crucified him, he offers the sublime road to salvation by means of the Gospel, and he has never neglected anyone for even one minute.

So, let us make note of what renouncing for Christ's sake actually means. It means giving up the hopes of the world to gain those of heaven.

If parents lack understanding, if one's spouse is ungrateful, if brothers and sisters seem cruel, then it is necessary to renounce the happiness of wanting them to be better or perfect, and commit to them even more in order to work for everyone's evolution with Jesus.

Are you, perchance, misunderstood at home? Are your brothers, sisters or friends mean or indifferent? If so, stay by their side anyway, postponing till later the joy of meeting those who are perfectly attuned to you. The only way to renounce your loved ones is by doing all the good you can for them out of devotion to the Master. It is only with this type of renouncing that you will gain life eternal.

Among Christians

“But it is not to be so among you.” – Jesus. (Mk. 10:43)

Ever since remotest times, religious groups have strived to obtain favors from heaven.

In the most ancient times, Providence was called on only on dolorous or extremely serious occasions. Believers offered up sacrifices for domestic happiness when infirmities attacked the home. They would build shrines during times of public calamities.

God was on their side only during times of happiness.

The purifying storm was the work of evil spirits.

Christ, however, inaugurated a new era. Humbleness was his pathway; love and work, his example; martyrdom, his victory laurel. He demonstrated the fact that, among his disciples, the principle of faith would never entail the easy attainment of favors from heaven, but would require an effort for one's enlightenment and the fulfillment of God's designs during both the calm and stormy times of life.

The greatest lesson from the Master of all Masters is that, instead of offering conventional vows and sacrifices, or mechanical promises and actions so as to avoid our responsibilities, our first duty is to surrender to the wise imperatives of Providence, submitting to the righteous and merciful will of God so that we may be perfected by his hands.

Intuition

For prophecy was never produced by the will of any man; instead, holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:21)

Everyone shares in the powers of intuition in the divine tabernacle of the conscience, and everyone can develop their intuition in the realm of spiritual growth. Great phenomenological manifestations of mediumship are not essentially necessary to establish communication between the visible and invisible worlds.

Every idea that dignifies human life comes from Higher Spheres. These ennobling ideas are not produced by any human will, because, in its ingrained selfishness, earthly reasoning per se is always inclined towards materiality.

Divine revelation – that which points to the best of humankind – entails cooperation from the sublime planes, brought to humanity by Jesus' collaborators through the exemplified lives, actions and words of righteous men and women, who, by means of blows from their own efforts, break the circle of banalities to become instruments of renewal.

The intuitive faculty is a universal institution. Through it, people receive vibrations from higher realms, leading to religious, philosophical, artistic and scientific contributions, and increasing sentimental and cultural achievements. This collaboration is not the result of human will but of God's permission.

Do this and you will live

And he said to him, "Do this and you will live." – Jesus (Lk. 10:28)

The case of the doctor of the Law who asked Jesus about what he should do to inherit eternal life is highly significant for all those in search of Christ's blessing.

This passage from Luke is very enlightening.

Jesus is not surprised by the question, and since he was aware of the lofty intellectual condition of the inquirer, he asked him about his conception of the Law. Jesus thus enabled him to see that the answer to his question was within himself, inscribed on the mental tablet of his knowledge.

"You have answered correctly," replies the Master. And he adds: *"Do this and you will live."*

This statement is highly significant because Christ is speaking to a man who is in the prime of life; even so, he declares: *"Do this and you will live."*

In fact, the meaning of the word "live" is not limited to bodily activity or certain conventional titles. Life encompasses higher spheres and other realms of superior achievement of sublime spirituality.

This same Gospel scene is repeated in many areas of daily life. There are many modern-day disciples who are fully aware of their responsibilities but who still insist on asking for guidance from the Divine Messengers as to what is the best way to live their lives while on earth. But the answer is within them, in their heart, which fears responsibility, making decisions, and hard work.

If you have received the light of the living faith, if you have benefitted from the principles of salvation, then heed what you have learned from our Divine Master: *"Do this and you will live."*

158

Baptism

And those who heard this were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 19:5)

Down through time, in the various areas of Christian activity there have been controversies concerning the issue of baptism into the faith.

To deal with the matter, the clergy created rituals and sacraments. The Roman church, for instance, baptizes newborns, whereas certain evangelical communities only baptize adults. However, believers should duly study the subject and logically arrive at the best conclusion. Spiritual renewal does not occur merely by using more or less water, nor does it depend on the candidate's physical age.

Such materialistic rituals were understandable in the ancient times in which they were practiced.

We know that teaching children in primary school requires using drawings so that their memories may cross over the threshold of knowledge.

This passage from Acts, however, sheds much light on the question of baptism.

“Those who heard this were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

There lies the sublime truth. The blessed renewal of the soul belongs to those who hear the teachings of the Divine Master and put them into practice. Every day, many people hear about the Gospel, but only those who actually heed it will be transformed.

Whom do you follow?

But you did not learn about Christ like that – Paul. (Eph. 4:20)

Human beings naturally receive a lot of different advice along the way. It is not only in the material realm that they receive advice that may keep them from worthy achievements. The invisible sphere, the one closest to the circle of their thoughts, may also offer them certain suggestions that are inconsistent with the elevated duties that life should entail.

In light of this problem, sincere disciples grasp the fact that they must focus on Jesus' teachings.

Whenever they forget this imperative, the worst troubles may surface.

Disciples less focused on the Master's principles believe they can serve two masters, and they often think they can satisfy all the lures of the senses without damaging the peace of their soul. They justify this attitude based on new doctrines, the children of the scientific novelties of the times; they follow pseudo-philosophers who give too much importance to the instincts. However, in doing so, they are preparing themselves for great failures because the necessity of spiritual growth remains alive and becomes more and more imperious. They might resort to the ideas of the world's pseudo-scholars, but Jesus did not teach like that.

The man from Macedonia

That night Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia, standing and begging him: “Come to Macedonia and help us!” (Acts 16:9)

In addition to life’s daily activities, people also take part in intense spiritual activity, whose phases of interchange cannot always be perceived by the ordinary mind.

Discarnates are not the only ones who can communicate via psychic vibrations. Incarnate spirits can do the same under identical circumstances if they are capable of it.

Someday, most people will be able to demonstrate this ability and grasp how wonderful it is.

Actually, this is nothing new; when Paul of Tarsus was in Troas, he was visited in spirit by a man from Macedonia asking for his help.

The apostolic narrative is very clear. The friend of the Gentiles had a vision that entailed neither an angel nor a divine messenger. It was a Macedonian, who the ex-doctor from Tarsus identified by the man’s clothes and words.

It is useful to remember such an event so that sincere disciples may be absolutely sure that the Gospel is the bearer of all essential and necessary teachings. It does not impose on us the need to resort to difficult nomenclatures that are far-removed from the simplicity by which the Master bequeathed to us the letter of redemption, in which he asks us for our loving attention rather than complicated theories.

Let us make the most of it

“You are witnesses of these things.” – Jesus (Lk. 24:48)

Jesus always made the most of the least to produce the most.

With only three years of ministry, he illuminated humankind for millennia.

By assembling a small group of twelve companions, he renewed the world.

By preaching on the mount, he inspired millions of souls to seek the life eternal.

He made a widow’s alms an imperishable lesson of solidarity.

By correcting troubled spirits, he transformed earth’s judiciary system, implementing the “love one another” for human happiness.

He used five loaves and two fishes to feed thousands of hungry people.

From the act of the well-intended Zacchaeus, he left an edifying lesson for the stewards of material wealth.

He used the attitude of a proud Pharisee to demonstrate a truth that confused less sincere believers.

By healing the sick, he established spiritual medicine all over the world.

He made a mustard seed a marvelous symbol of the Kingdom of God.

From a lost drachma, he left an unforgettable lesson about spiritual love.

From a crude cross, he taught the greatest lesson in history about the Divinity.

As beneficiaries, we are witnesses of all that, and because of such knowledge, we must heed our conscience. Are we making the most of the

opportunities on our pathway to do something good?

162

Let us hope

He will not break the bruised reed and he will not snuff out the smoldering wick until he makes justice triumph. (Mt. 12:20)

In evil circumstances, avoid passing judgment.

The Supreme Lord utilizes the fertility of the swamp's mire.

He makes use of the stone's hardness.

From dry sand, he makes useful things.

From a bitter substance, he extracts a health-giving medicine.

A criminal today can be a helpful friend tomorrow.

Under certain circumstances, a malefactor may show noble, previously unknown qualities, which life uses in order to write poems of love and light.

God is not the author of destruction.

He is the Father of mercy.

He does not break the bruised reed nor snuff out the smoldering wick.

His hands repair damage; his Divine breath always recomposes and renews.

Therefore, do not despise wavering light or imprecise virtues. Do not abandon the swampy land or desert the grove of trees suffocated by weeds.

Work for the victory of the good and give help incessantly.

If God, the Absolute Lord of Eternity, waits with patience, why cannot we, imperfect servants, also wait?

Not believing

“But whoever does not believe will be condemned.” – Jesus (Mk. 16:16)

Those who do not believe are left behind. For them, every expression of life is reduced to finite sensations that lead to the vortex of death.

Those who devote their souls to the higher life are saved. Their days of toil are steps on the infinite ladder of light. At the cost of their valorous effort and hard struggle, they distance themselves from other people, and although they acknowledge their own imperfections, they grasp the situation around them and recognize the paths of evolution. With a positive outlook, they perceive the ascent to love and wisdom in the laborious task.

Nevertheless, those who do not believe restrict their horizons and see only with eyes destined for the grave; they have not yet awakened to reflection and discernment.

Jesus said that they are condemned.

At first sight, such a statement seems incompatible with the magnanimity of the Master.

Condemned to what and by whom?

God’s justice is combined with mercy; eternal hell is a dogmatic image.

However, it is crucial to realize that those who do not believe in the greatness of their own destiny are, in fact, condemning themselves to the lowest spheres of life. Due to their habit of only believing in what they can see, they remain kissing the dust because of their voluntary incapacity to access higher realms, whereas the others press on toward the certainty of immortal life.

Belief is a friendly lamp, whose luminosity is maintained by the infinite sun of faith. The wind of denial and doubt can never put it out.

Disbelief, however, only knows life by the darkness that its movements project, and it does not understand anything besides the night and the bog to which it has been condemned by its own choice.

Let us not disturb

“Therefore, what God has joined, let man not separate.” – Jesus. (Mt. 19:6)

This divine word does not refer only to matters of the heart. The ties of love are characterized by sacred bases, and the marriage commitment or household commitments are always linked to higher principles. Human beings cannot deceive the authority of the Law by making use of material means to flatter their senses. By breaking the natural order that governs their pathways, they disorganize their own lives. Nevertheless, the principles that harmonize life will always surface, correcting and restoring...

Jesus’ warning is much more significant, however.

“Do not separate what God has joined” can also mean “Do not disturb what God has harmonized.”

No one can say that they are unaware of the divine purpose. A duty, no matter how hard it may be, is always the Lord’s Will. Furthermore, unless a person is still asleep at the level of the brute, his or her conscience – that vigilant sentinel of the Eternal – is capable of differentiating between “obligation” and “escapism.”

The Father has created beings and joined them. He has also created situations and things for the common good.

Those who disharmonize the divine works must be prepared to restore them. Those who violate a Divine Law are shackling their “self” to the consequences of their unfortunate action and they often spend centuries unshackling it.

Nowadays, an overwhelming percentage of people – millions and millions of them – after having separated what God has joined, that is, having

wrongly disturbed what Providence established for the good, are working to repair what they have done.

Let us esteem the organizations of the Righteous Judge, organizations that the notion of duty points out to us in every situation. Sometimes it is possible to smile while disturbing his works, but we will be invariably forced to repair them with sweat and tears.

External possessions

“A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” – Jesus. (Lk. 12:15)

“A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

The Master’s word refers to any circle of human activity and at any time.

Individuals may possess huge amounts of money. But what are they doing with it?

They may wield great authority over many people. But how are they wielding it?

They may have a lot of real estate. Yet, how are they utilizing this temporary patrimony?

Perhaps they have lofty plans. But how many of them have they completed?

Or perhaps they have innumerable ideals of perfection. Are they actually living up to them?

Maybe they have written thousands of pages. But what is the content of their work?

Perhaps they have lived a long time. Nevertheless, what have they done with all of it?

Or perhaps they have many friends. But how do they conduct themselves when around them?

Our life does not consist in the numerical wealth of things, favors, acquisitions or titles. No, our peace and happiness depend on the use that we

make of the opportunities, gifts, situations and help received from the Almighty at this very moment, wherever we happen to be.

Do not attempt to imprudently accumulate what has been given to you on loan. Make wise use of the resources that have been placed in your hands.

The Lord will not recognize you by the treasures that you accumulated, the blessings you received, or the years you spent in the physical body. He will recognize you by the use that you made of your gifts, the quality of your achievements and the works that you left behind in your steps.

Permanent possessions

“I have come so that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” – Jesus. (Jn. 10:10)

If having peace does not consist in an abundance of earthly possessions, it does depend on the abundance of permanent qualities the soul has.

Therefore, the Divine Master came to us so that we may have an abundant life, replete with light, love and eternity.

For our own sake, we should never neglect the lasting gifts to be amassed in our spirit.

In the pursuit of outward pleasures, we will never find the enlightenment we need.

Springtime is a wonderful season, but winter follows it.

The youthfulness of the body is a phase of many pleasures, but old age will soon arrive.

The most harmonious and healthy physical body will experience infirmity or death someday.

Every manifestation of existence on earth is a process of an ongoing transformation.

It is crucial to build our inner castle, from where we can raise our sentiments to the highest areas of life.

Jesus has filled us with his sublime presence not so that we can have ephemeral possessions, but so that we may possess imperishable riches; not so that we can surround ourselves with outward advantages, but so that we may concentrate on lasting acquisitions.

Let us be bearers of the immortal life.

Christ did not visit us as a giver of ordinary benefits. He came in order to connect the lamp of our hearts to the power plant of God's Love, transforming us into lights that never go out.

167

Praying

“Lord, teach us to pray.” (Lk. 11:1)

Prayer, in Christian circles, is characterized by an infinite gradation in its manifestations because there are so many different kinds of believers.

Restive followers pray for the fulfillment of fickle purposes.

Selfish ones pray for the fulfillment of inferior desires.

Those ignorant of the good pray for harm against their neighbor.

Sad ones beg for solitude, enveloped in idleness.

Desperate ones pray for death.

Countless beneficiaries of the Gospel pray for this or that regarding the progress of the matters that interest their physical lives. In short, they are seeking a means of escape. They want to avoid difficulties, toil, and dignified struggle.

Jesus patiently puts up with all these ranks of candidates for his service and enlightenment. He holds out his kindly hands to them, tolerating their unreasonable complaints and unacceptable tears.

However, whenever he accepts someone as his disciple, something happens within that person's soul.

Noisy supplications cease.

Tumultuous desires are soothed.

Prayer becomes an edifying endeavor.

The disciple stops complaining. And the Master, answering his or her prayers, modifies his or her desires with each passing day, extracting inferior objectives from his or her thoughts.

A heart united to Jesus is a happy and silent servant.

The Master says to his disciple: Get up and follow me. And the disciple gets up and follows him.

168

Meditating

So they went away by themselves in a boat to a secluded place. (Mk 6:32)

Your hands get tired from doing and undoing.

Your eyes are filled with the anxiety caused by surrounding disturbances.

Your feet hurt because of painful recapitulations.

Your feelings come and go due to tumultuous impulses, influenced by a thousand different people.

Your heart is in torment.

All this is natural. Our mind needs peace as much as parched land needs cool water.

Thus, go to a secluded place in the land within yourself in order to rest a bit. Forget societal boundaries, the restrictions of the home, your family's lack of understanding towards you, difficult issues, disquieting problems and inferior thoughts.

Withdraw from the ordinary places to which you are normally attached.

For a few minutes in Christ's company, concentrate while in the boat of your purest thoughts, on the sea of daily worries.

He will relieve your trouble-filled mind.

He will soothe your wounds.

He will give you healthy advice.

Just keep quiet and his voice will speak to you in the sublime silence.

Offer him a valorous heart full of faith and accomplishment, and his divine hands will do the rest.

In this way, you can return to the circles of struggle, reinvigorated, strong and happy.

Your heart will be with him so that you may act successfully in the valley of toil.

He will be with you so that you may tirelessly climb the mountain of the light.

The real picture

“I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.” – Jesus. (Jn. 17:14)

There will always be followers of the Gospel who wrongfully expect an easy life.

The Lord did not promise his disciples anything other than an ongoing effort against the darkness until the final victory of the good.

Christians are not ornamental flowers in isolated churches. They are “the salt of earth,” the power for the preservation of divine principles in the sanctuary of the whole world.

Jesus’ word in this particular leaves no room for doubt:

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.”

“Love your enemies”

“Pray for those who persecute and slander you.”

“Bless those who curse you.”

“Lend without expecting repayment.”

“Do not judge so that you will not be judged.”

“Among you, the greatest is the servant of all.”

“Seek the narrow door.”

“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves.”

“In the world you will have tribulations.”

In light of such clear statements, it is impossible to see Christ as a giver of an easy life. No one should come to him without a sincere desire to learn and grow spiritually. If Christianity is sublime hope, heavenly love and renewing faith, it is also incessant toil, sacrifice and growth.

As the living example of his divine lessons, the Supreme Master lived serving and died on the cross.

Spiritual control

“I am not alone, for my Father is with me.” – Jesus. (Jn 16:32)

During distressing situations, people show what the external forces that control their soul are.

In critical moments, as in moments of suffering or death, the greedy clamor for ephemeral possessions; the arbitrary demand obedience, and the oversentimental yearn for the object of their affection.

However, during his final hours, Jesus showed that he was absolute master over himself, thereby teaching us sublime oneness with the Father’s will as the most effective resource for one’s self-control.

He was naturally connected to a wide range of powers, but on the day of Calvary, he did not feel attached to any of them.

He loyally submitted himself to the human government, but Pilate did not frighten him.

He respected the Law of Moses, but Caiaphas did not impress him.

He tenderly loved his disciples, but affection did not control his heart.

He dedicated himself admirably to his work of teaching, helping, healing and consoling, but the possibility of remaining on earth did not seduce his spirit.

He did not curse Judas for what he did.

The ingratitude of those who received his benefits did not cause him to despair.

The tears of the women of Jerusalem did not weaken his firm will.

The sarcasm of the crowd did not break his silence.

The cross did not change his serenity, and while on it, he asked forgiveness for the crowd's ignorance.

His lesson of spiritual self-control is profound and imperishable. It reveals the need for us to be "ourselves," facing the most difficult moments of our life with a peaceful conscience focused on the Divine Justice and a faithful heart guided by the Divine Will.

A mother's words

His mother said to the servants: "Do whatever he tells you." (Jn. 2:5)

The New Testament is an illuminated script with Jesus at its divine center. In this Letter of Redemption, which revolves around his heavenly character, there are many beloved words, memories, blessings and bits of information by those who were his true collaborators.

We must not forget the letters by Paul, John, Peter and other friends of the Lord.

In this Sacred Document, we also have a record of some of Mary's reminiscences. Let us examine her priceless words in Cana, for they are full of wisdom and maternal love.

Usually, when children ask for their mother's loving help, it is because they feel discouraged or in need of joy. Consequently, wherever we go, it is normal to see children arguing with their fathers or crying to their mothers.

Rightly regarded as a guardian angel of Christianity, we often appeal to Mary in moments of extreme affliction.

Of course, this verse from John does not refer to a dolorous situation. The incident takes place at a wedding feast; even so, we may use its sublime symbolic meaning.

We too are taking part in the wedding feast of the Gospel. Although almost twenty centuries have gone by, the jubilation is still that of a wedding feast because the perfect union has not yet happened ... In this grand concert of the renewing idea, we are humble servants. On many occasions, the wine of our hopes has gone dry. We feel worn out and disillusioned ... We implore the maternal tenderness, and Mary answers: "*Do whatever he tells you.*"

This advice is wise and profound and it was placed at the beginning of Jesus' deeds of salvation.

As we heed this Mother's advice, let us see if we are really doing everything the Master has told us to do.

172

Tears

“Come to me, all you who are weary and oppressed, and I will give you rest.” – Jesus. (Mt. 11:28)

No one has spread so much joy and encouragement on earth as Christ did. In view of this, many disciples argue against tears and they loathe expressions of suffering.

There would already be heaven on earth if nobody had any reason to weep. Thus, Jesus – the Master of confidence and optimism – used to call to his heart all those who were weary and oppressed under the weight of earthly disillusionment.

He did not scold the sad but invited them to consolation.

Many people see tears as a sign of spiritual weakness. However, Mary wept on Calvary; Peter shed tears after his denial; Paul burst into tears at the gates of Damascus; and the first Christians wept in the circuses of martyrdom ... but none of them shed tears without hope. They wept and followed the path of the Lord; they endured and proclaimed the Good News of Redemption; and they suffered and died faithfully in supreme trust.

Weariness experienced out of love for Christ becomes strength, and chains taken to his magnanimous eyes become divine bonds of salvation.

Tears are characterized according to their specific origin. Whenever they are the result of sincere and constructive suffering, they are filters of redemption and life; but if they proceed from despair, they are deadly poison.

Devotion to the good

Who is going to harm you if you are devoted to the good? (1 Pet. 3:13)

To fear those who do evil is to demonstrate that the good has not yet taken root enough in our soul.

Peter's statement is clothed with enormous meaning.

If there is a solid purpose of doing good on your path; if you practice the good with care; then who can mobilize enough power to annul what God has built?

The issue, however, resides in the need for it to be understood. We are still incapable of examining every aspect of a matter or all the angles of a situation. What seems like true happiness today could turn out to be a cruel delusion tomorrow. Our human desires change in light of the cleansing outpourings from the evolutionary wellspring. Therefore, it is necessary to attune ourselves to the Divine Law, to reflect on its sacred principles, to submit ourselves to the Higher Purposes, and to work incessantly for the good wherever we are.

Personal susceptibilities, false necessities and unchangeable prejudices very often lead to blindness of spirit. From them proceed huge disasters for all those who intend to do good but listen to their lower selves instead.

Those who practice obedience to the Father within their hearts are able to find opportunities to be constructive with his love.

Therefore, those who have arrived at genuine understanding cannot fear evil. They never feel lost in excessive expectations or sentimentality. For these souls, who have found the inner satisfaction of serving without asking, every failure, trial, infirmity and obstacle is merely a new decision by the

Divine Powers regarding their task, a decision that is meant to lead them to the Greater Life.

Our daily bread

“Give us this day our daily bread.” – Jesus. (Lk. 11:3)

Have you ever had to think about your daily bread?

Because people have plenty of bread, they usually take it for granted, like thoughtless persons who only think about their health when they are suffering from an infirmity.

If most children of the earth could understand thankfulness in its true aspect, there would be enough daily bread for earth’s communities to have a perfect notion of the existence of God. The heavenly goodness is so magnanimous that, providing resources for the maintenance of humankind, it goes unnoticed; otherwise, people would understand life better and would accept their responsibilities in the area of work to which they have been called for the purpose of self-perfection.

The Most High lets people think that earthly bread is the result of their own efforts, so that they may perfect themselves appropriately in the task of serving. Actually, however, one’s daily bread, in all its aspects, comes from Divine Providence.

People till the soil, plant the seeds, watch over them and cooperate with nature, but the germination, growth, heading-out and ripening all belong to the Almighty.

Daily nourishment entails a sublime lesson of collaboration between Creator and creature, which very few people are willing to observe. People put forth the effort, but the Lord gives them the tools they need.

Servants work and the Most High blesses their sweat.

It is in this process of close collaboration and natural understanding that the Father expects to someday reap the sweet fruits of perfection in his

children's spirits.

Cooperation

He replied, "How can I understand unless someone teaches me?" (Acts 8:31)

Ever since Jesus came, the renewing movement of education for the good has been one of the most impressive.

Places of worship have been built everywhere and books containing sacred principles have been disseminated.

In all this activity, we can see the subtle and magnanimous working of the Master, who is not wasting the opportunity to attract Gods' children to his Infinite Love. Amid this blessed endeavor, however, the fraternal cooperation that Christ left us stands out as an essential norm for the ongoing illumination of the world.

Nobody should ever expect to evolve without being helped by others, although this does not mean that a person should seek to behave like a parasite. We are referring here to solidarity, profitable support, edifying assistance. Those who learn something always make use of the lessons left by those who preceded them, and they can go no further if their contemporaries fail to show them at least a minimum of interest.

The apostles needed Christ, who, in turn, made it a point to connect the teachings, of which he was the Divine Emissary, to the old laws.

To understand his own situation, Paul of Tarsus needed Ananias.

Let us observe the above verse taken from Acts: Phillip was working unconcerned at the moment when an angel of the Lord appeared to him, asking him to go to the road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza. The disciple acquiesced and so came upon a man who was reading the Law without understanding it. Both began a sanctifying effort of cooperation.

Nobody is ever forsaken. The messengers of Christ always help out, even on the remotest roads. Still, the soul must accept its condition of need and not waste the chance to learn with humility, for we should not forget that, in this evangelical text, the one begging for understanding was the chief steward of the Queen of Ethiopia, the guardian of all her treasures. Moreover, he was traveling by chariot, whereas Phillip was on foot.

A living lesson

“This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” (Jn. 6:60)

Christianity is the supreme religion of truth and love, inviting souls to the highest life possible.

Since religion literally means re-connecting, it is of first importance that we return to God, that is, to the arena of the Divinity.

Jesus presented his platform of immortal principles. He blazed the way, but he did not mislead anyone with regard to its difficulties and obstacles.

The Lord explained that we must set our vanity aside, to repent of our wrongs and convert to the good.

The evangelist wrote down the comment of many disciples: *“This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”*

Yes, it really is indispensable to break with the alliances of moral failure and sign the pact of redemption. It is also indispensable to follow in the footsteps of the One who is the light in our life.

In order to do so, fine-sounding words and intellectual artifices are not enough. The problem is “who can accept” the Divine Message, understanding it according to Christ and following in his steps.

Conventional opinions

The crowd answered, "You are demon-possessed; who is trying to kill you?" (Jn. 7:20)

Do not become excessively attached to the crowd's judgments. Habit and conventionalism exert a great power over it.

If you tolerate offenses with love, you are called a coward.

If you truly forgive someone, you are considered a fool.

If you suffer with patience, you are worthless.

If you spread the good with selflessness, you are mad.

If you display characteristics of a sublime and sanctifying love, you are said to be mentally ill.

If you dislike common pleasures, you are declared to be abnormal.

If you show compassion, you are tired and old before your time.

If you adopt simplicity as a way of life, you are mocked behind your back.

If you respect order and hierarchy, you are a flatterer.

If you obey the law, you are fearful.

If you are prudent and honorable, you are a disturbed fanatic.

However, through the voice of their leaders, this same multitude teaches love towards our neighbor, respect for the law, and duty as a religion. Nevertheless, in its circles, the excess of words does not allow for the reign of comprehension.

Therefore, it is essential to understand their lack of conscience so that we may fruitfully attend our tasks before God.

So, do not become angry or be discouraged.

Illogically, unreasonably, Jesus himself was a target of the sarcasms of public opinion.

The divine door

“I am the door; if anyone would enter through me, he will be saved.” – Jesus. (Jn 10: 9)

On the paths of life, every person who is endowed with a little more intelligence than average naturally becomes someone whom we cannot help but follow, and each person who goes before us opens doors for our spirit.

Those who are discontented open ways for rebellion and indiscipline.

Machiavellian types give passage to slavery, in which they exert domination.

The writers of futilities open the way for wasted time.

Slanderers lead those who listen to them to poisonous wellsprings.

The corrupt break the beneficent barriers of fraternal respect, disclosing steep cliffs where peril is incessant.

Lazy persons wage war against constructive work.

The wicked open the doors to the abyss of crime.

Although you may not have noticed, many people open doors for you every day by means of the spoken or written word, or by means of actions or examples.

Therefore, examine where you enter with the sacred deposit of your trust. Quite often you will take a long time to return to the way that is best for you.

Let us not forget that Jesus is the only door to true freedom.

Through many seasons in the fields of humankind, we have probably had fruitful experiences, harvesting them at the cost of terrible disappointments.

But only in Christ, in the sacred climate of living by his principles, can we find the blessed door to our final salvation.

The new commandment

“I give you a new commandment: love one another, as I have loved you.” – Jesus. (Jn. 13:34)

An inattentive reading of the text would lead the reader to see these words of the Master as being identical to his teaching concerning the golden rule.

However, there is a big difference.

“Love your neighbor as yourself” is different than “Love one another as I have loved you.”

The former entails a duty, and in fulfilling it, people should not expect the understanding of others. The disciple will love his or her neighbor as himself or herself.

Jesus, however, broadens the formula to create a new commandment for the Christian community. The Master refers to this during his final, intimate gathering with his dear friends.

The commandment, “Love one another as I have loved you” assures a system of true solidarity among disciples; it warrants fraternal trust and the certainty of mutual understanding.

In their everyday relationships, Christians are to love their neighbor as themselves, understanding, however, that in the home of their faith, they can count on brothers and sisters who actively support one another.

This is the new commandment that has established true closeness among those who have given their lives to Christ. It means that, in their area of toil, there are those who sacrifice themselves and those who appreciate the sacrifice, those who love and those who feel loved, those who do the good and those who know how to be thankful for it.

In any circle of the Gospel where these characteristics do not mark the way Christians relate to one another, the implications of the Good News may have reached inquirers' minds but they have not gained entrance to the sanctuary of their hearts.

Let us shine our light

“So let your light shine among men.” – Jesus. (Mt. 5:16)

In comparison with the glory of the evolved worlds, the sublime spheres that fill the Universe, the narrow area in which we live is certainly a limited circle of action.

But if it were merely a matter of physical space, we would have nothing to complain about.

The small, humble house joyfully illuminated by the sun is a paradise of happiness.

The anguish on our plane comes from darkness.

Darkness has invaded every path in every direction – darkness born from ignorance, wickedness and foolishness, enveloping nations, institutions and individuals; a fog that assails consciences, minds and sentiments.

In the midst of this long night, we need to kindle our light; otherwise, it is impossible to find the way to freedom. Without the shining radiations from our own being, we cannot be seen very easily by the Divine Messengers, who lend aid in the name of the Almighty, nor can we effectively help anyone, whoever that might be.

It is indispensable to organize our inner sanctuary and illuminate it so that the darkness does not overcome us.

It is possible to progress by using other people’s light, but without our own, we are in constant danger of stumbling. The owners of the lighted lamps may go a different way than ours, summoned by lofty mountains that we do not yet deserve.

Therefore, take advantage of the sources of light along the way; use the wick of goodwill, the oil of service and humility, and kindle your torch for the

journey ahead. Thank those who light your way for an hour, for a few days or for many years, but do not neglect your own lamp if you do not want to slide off the road and down a cliff!

The fundamental issue of redemption, my friend, is not limited to spoken or written words. It is very easy to make wonderful speeches and give excellent information, while remaining blind ourselves.

Our basic need is our own light, our inner enlightenment, our self-education, and the real conversion of the “self ” to the Kingdom of God.

You can speak marvelously about life; you can argue brilliantly about the faith; you can teach the values of belief and eat the bread of consolation; you can exalt peace, gather the flowers of the good and enjoy the fruits of other people’s generosity; you can win the ephemeral crown of easy praise and accumulate various titles that adorn you as you traverse the valleys of the world...

All this can, in fact, be done by the spirit that tarries indefinitely on certain spots along the way.

However, it is impossible to advance without light.

Publishing Committee:

Jorge Godinho Barreto Nery – President
Geraldo Campetti Sobrinho – Publishing Coordinator
Cirne Ferreira de Araújo
Evandro Noletto Bezerra
Maria de Lourdes Pereira de Oliveira
Marta Antunes de Oliveira de Moura
Miriam Lúcia Herrera Masotti Dusi

Publishing Producer:

Fernando César Quaglia

Translated by:

Darrel W. Kimble
Marcia M. Saiz
Ily Reis

Cover:

Luciano Carneiro Holanda

Layout:

Fernanda F. W. Chaibub

Cover Photo:

<http://www.dreamstime.com/> Eti Swinford

Technical Standardization:

Biblioteca de Obras Raras e Documentos Patrimoniais do Livro

E-book:

Diego Henrique Oliveira Santos