

# Thoughts for young people

## Exercise for the soul

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## Introduction

Dear reader, you are holding in your hands a little book of phrases, more or less short, having as an objective to help you think and find good solutions for your live of faith. Life is a peregrination in search of our so desired destiny. There are moments when we walk among pleasant surrounding with a good climate. Other journeys are more complicated and the places we go through less pleasing; some moments of the journey are attractive and other are not, there even dangers to face; but what is most important is to go on to the end; turning back would be a defeat.

In the same way, our walk toward the celestial mansions, which is our glorious destination, will have better moments than others. Christian life is full of great joys, but it also has sufferings and tears. Many among us will have to go through the valley of the shadows of death as the Psalmist describes it (Psalm 23: 4), but what is most important is not to forget that Jesus is with us and He will not abandon us, for His staff will comfort us.

The word of God tells us that whosoever will endure until the end will be saved (Matthew 24: 13). What is important is to go on walking, step by step, day after day, until the end. With this little book we would like to help you not to be discouraged and with the help of God to focus your attention on the positive things surrounding you which come from heaven and are to create a wonderful melody in your hearts. Jesus has offered you the most important gift ever given to mankind; He desires to see you happy and one day share with you the eternal delights

Dear youth, receive this work as a contribution to stimulate you to continue without discouragement in your peregrination toward the celestial homeland.

The author

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# ASPIRATIONS

(Dreams, ideals, projects)

Wings! What a nice word! To have wings to fly to the infinite. To have wings to escape from this contaminated earth. To have wings to observe the earth from above and obtain dimensions incapable to perceive while nailed to the ground. Angels have them and with them they serve God. Wings! Wings! What a nice word!

To dream does not cost anything. Everybody can let his imagination free and fly into the space of wonderful thoughts. But while you dream, do it with your feet on the truth of God's word.

Monotony is like a virus nibbling at one who shelters it. Each day introduce something new in your life. Develop your intelligence, so that your spirit can get rid of the monotony phantom.

He who has a dream is surer to obtain what he desires than he who complies with his fate. Do not let go of your dream, for if it is according to God's will, you will obtain it in good time: "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Psalm 37: 4.

A pattern to live! A pattern to die! You need a noble pattern! The soul dies without ideals. Do whatever you can to obtain an ideal inspired by God.

The body is nourished, is preserved and develops with material food. The soul is nourished by ideals. Without them we would become sick with spiritual starvation.

How wonderful to have ideals and live according to this objective. To serve humanity and love those who surround you, that is a lovely objective for you.

It is true that not all dreams will come true, but it is also true that without any dreams it is impossible to obtain whatsoever.

For many, death is the end of biological life; in reality one can die when there is nothing to fight for, nothing to dream about, nothing to hope for, and nothing to believe. Jesus spoke about living dead: "...let the dead bury their dead." Matthew 8: 22.

When your soul is united to Christ and you accept Him as your guide, when you give Him you will, His power becomes yours and the principles coming forth from His word inspire your life to fashion your character and attain the most noble ideals. Do not wait to offer your heart to Jesus.

The devil knows that an idle spirit is the best place to establish his workshop of destruction and death. If your spirit searches for noble and elevated ideals, the enemy of your soul will find no place in you.

Noble aspirations can grow cold and you have to know why: when you have friendships with unbelievers, when you let yourself go to slothfulness and selfishness; when you are making plans for a wedding that God cannot approve, offering your life to someone who does not share your faith; when you transgress deliberately god's law; when you abandon

prayer and the reading of the Bible; when you cease contemplating Jesus; when you resist to repent from your sins. Oh! No, dear young people! Do not allow your aspirations languish and burn out.

If you have a noble purpose then live for it, talk about it, act in such manner that your life corresponds to the purpose you have set yourself, remain firm as a lighthouse which guides seafarers, like a compass pointing north.

Lack of ideals is the antechamber of desertification in the life of a person. Great wildernesses were once pleasant forests. You have to decide on what kind of land you wish to build your life.

# AUTHENTICITY

(Coherence)

Jesus is our Master, the climax of all Christian aspirations; the gospels speak of Him saying that when He taught the people, He first preached with His works and then He spoke. It seems that there are many who do the second part quite well while forgetting the first part. This is a good intention, so give yourself body and soul to working more than the talking.

Incoherence abounds in our world, people one day say one thing and the other do something else. Do not be like this.

A responsible and authentic person is worth more than gold and jewels. Maybe the world esteems you at a low price, but for God you are worth the blood of His Son.

Truth is revealed to all men but only a few accept it. Be careful, it could be that truth knocks on your door and you would not open it.

Your authenticity, your coherence, your unmovable fidelity to God's principles will be your protection against depression, discouragement, cowardice, and fear.

Appearances deceive. Do not let yourself carried away by external appearance nor live to show off. Be authentic, but search to become like Christ. Let the world see in you someone honest; do not be one of those who want to appear one thing but on the inside they are someone else.

Everything that shines is not gold. What seems to have value and importance often is only sham. A character like Christ is the most beautiful jewel you can possess; leave the rest aside even if it shines.

Our modern society is mainly based on external appearance. Fame, money, power are captivating thousands under their spell, but people do not realize that these things disappear as the morning mist when the sun rises. What is important is to live according to the will of God, in order to endure.

Everything passes away, only the Lord remains steadfast and with Him those who hold on to His word and live by it: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." Isaiah 40: 8. Would you not be pleased to remain forever?

The compass points to the north always, it is faithful to its function. How many people has it not kept from being lost and even saved from death. Be faithful to the Lord, be faithful to your mission; is that not a wonderful work?

"O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!" Deuteronomy 5: 29. Here you have a clear indication of what you have to do if you want everything to be well with you. Obedience to the Lord is your efficient shield against the enemy's attacks.

Many are those who believe that faith is the only thing necessary to enter eternal life. But they forget that faith goes along with works, meaning obedience to God's Holy Law: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Romans 3: 31. Your faith is strong, steadfast, and authentic in the measure that it leads you in faithfulness.

You cannot be loyal to the Lord with your own strength. Loyalty is the fruit that comes after having surrendered your will to the Lord and the result of the working of the Holy Spirit in you. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philippians 2: 13.

Strict obedience to God's law is your safeguard for life and your warranty to attain happiness and peace that men so long for.

A quiet conscience is the most potent weapon to obtain the most precious victories for your soul.

Maybe your principles will not be shared by others, but your faithfulness towards them and your coherence will be admired by all.

## BALANCE

Extremism is the fruit of spiritual blindness. Protect your soul so that not one particle of this terrible disease may enter. It is cancer of genuine faith.

In human behavior one can often note a phenomenon that can be called 'the pendulum attitude'. Today we are capable to die for an idea; tomorrow we could kill those who defend it. How important it is to be balanced! It is your noble duty to make decided efforts in that direction.

Would you not like to possess the four precious gems of the crown of a happy king? The first gem is wisdom, the second honesty, the third love, and the fourth moderation. Without wisdom, ruling one's life is an act of foolishness and one ends by losing the throne. Without honesty, words have no power. Without love, life is sterile and void. Without moderation, existence is converted into slavery of bad habits.

The transcendence between 'being someone' (a living being) and 'being something' (dust) is the most tragic moment in the life of a human being. Christianity helps us to accept the reality about death, in the hope that from being something (dust), we will become someone (glorified beings) when Christ will grant us eternal life. This hope must always give us happiness for it is a divine promise. (1 Thessalonians 4: 16).

Make all efforts to be moderate in everything. It is a great virtue. Moderation in language, in diet, in work and especially with emotions; for these are as changeable as the weather. If everything goes well for you, do not be over enthusiastic, know that things can change to the worse at any moment; if everything is going badly, do not fall into despair: think about better days coming. Moderation!

It is easy to lose one's balance in unfavorable circumstances. Few people stay calm, lucid, in control, serene, measured, and wise in their actions or in their opinions when they are confronted with the cold wall of adversity. Christian ideal teaches us to keep our balance. How to achieve it? Faith, prayer, contemplation will work in your favor. The Lord is always willing to give you a hand to help you remain firm.

The tightrope walker walks without falling off the rope helped by his pole. With the pole of true faith you can maintain balance on life's tightrope.



# BIBLE

(Word of God, Scriptures, the gospel)

How wise is the Lord! He is capable to do things so well. No, do not be surprised by our world's deterioration; it is not His work but that of the devil and man. In spite of this the Lord has a plan to restore all things. Study the Bible and you will find His restoration program.

The word of God restores the soul just like bread restores the body. You will be mentally strong if you take time daily to study the Bible.

When reason, enlightened by God's word, will speak to you, you must submit your feelings to it.

If you doubt God's word you will be without defense against the enemy's attacks. Do not swing back and fro between hope and doubt: "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8: 12.

Commit yourself to the exercise which does well to your soul and keeps it in good health: Read the word of God daily, meditate upon it, rejoice in His promises and put His principles into practice. From now on unto eternity.

The Bible is the lesson book for every human being. It must be read in order to know how you function spiritually.

Life's limited span and fragility should drive us to search for a purer and higher atmosphere where one can breathe the pure oxygen of truth uncontaminated. Founding one's life on the word of God is investing in the bank of heaven: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." Isaiah 40: 8.

In the youthful mind there is a great dose of fantasy and this is dangerous. It produces fog that makes it difficult to see things in an objective manner; fantasy blows up or minimize things according to the whims of the moment. Prayer and Bible study will help you keep your footing.

The Bible is a cultural intellectual medium; it guides our thoughts toward the Creator and reveals the character of Him who has no beginning and no end. Its teachings lighten your life's dark path: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119: 105.

Million of youth are lost for not making the Scriptures the fountain where they could quench the thirst of their soul. Would you not like to guide them to this spring? : "If any man thirst let him come unto me, and drink." John 7: 37.

Many are searching for riches along paths that surely lead them to defeat. If you want to be successful in all matters of life, take heed of God's word instructions seriously.

The Bible presents the origin of humanity, its fall and also the promise of redemption: Jesus' life, the lamb offered before the earth's foundation, His death, His resurrection and His ascension to heaven, His intercession before the Father for us all and the promise of

His second coming in glory and majesty. Do these themes not merit to be studied in depth?

Your unique safety against trials and temptations is to position yourself on the principles in God's word.

Remember that you have a finite mind and with this finite mind you have to approach the Bible created by an infinite mind. How can you comprehend with your own capacities? You need God's help, to be able to discover the important truths of revelation.

Beware when you study the Bible not to deify your mind for it is still stained by your feeble humanity. Humbly ask the help of the Holy Spirit; your study will become beneficial and your mind stronger and uplifted: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1: 5.

The Bible is not a common book such as Cervantes' Don Quichotte, or Tolstoy's War and Peace. The Bible is not comparable to any other book. It is the Lord's book and contains the necessary revelation for your present and future happiness. The only problem is that as with diamonds, their wonderful truths need to be extracted "by digging", that is by in depth studying.

The actual tendency of church going people is to read the Bible quickly and superficially, in spite of the fact that Jesus said to search the Scriptures (John 5: 39). To search is to examine, to find out, and to carefully prove something. Take time for your precious Bible.

Television, Internet, various pastimes and actualities can bring people to neglect time spent with their Bible. Be moderate and selective in your habits in order to never lose your interest for the study of God's word.

In our days many entertainments steal your precious time and what is even worse: they can undermine your eternal salvation. Close the gate to your soul so these robbers cannot get in and grab away your love for the Lord's truth: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Proverbs 4: 23.

The word of God is the best and the most important way to assure your education; it is also the source from which emanates the most precious knowledge. Devote yourself to study it.

# CHILDHOOD

(Children)

Children can also talk with God. In spite of their young age and their little experience, they can establish a close relationship with their heavenly Father, who is the children's best Friend.

The Lord has a special predilection for children. To prove it He asks us to become like one of them in order to enter His kingdom. The Lord was incarnated in Mary and He came to this earth as any other child. During His ministry He said about the children: "Suffer the little children to come unto me." Respect children and never do them any harm.

We all have been children; it is a pleasant stage of life and the most important. Depending on the way we will live it so will be our future life. If one day God gives you children, educate them to live one day in heaven and not to become mundane.

Children copy more what they see and not so much what they hear. This is the way their minds work. They are susceptible to example. If you want to touch their hearts live out the things you want to teach them.

Considering that the future of the world depends on today's children, how much governments, education institutions and also families should form the little ones with Christian values that would give them emotional stability, trust, dignity and sensibility. Our world is adrift and we live in a pond of filth and the children are right in the middle.

It may be that your neighbor's child or even yours becomes a brilliant lawyer, a famous architect, a renowned surgeon; or a consecrated minister who will bring many souls to Christ; he can also become a thief or a criminal, or an average individual; or even a pedophile... What will determine the future life of a child? The atmosphere at home. Take the decision to build a home where your children can grow honoring the name of the Lord.

A child is like a sponge: he will be nourished with whatever surrounds him. And of course it is evident that if he grows up in surroundings where he will hear swearing, where everyday bitter attitudes are repeated, one cannot hope that the child will grow correcting these defects in a natural way. No! The child will become what home has made of him. Oh! May every young Christian take the decision to build a home where the angels of God will be glad to live in!

Maltreated and abused children will normally grow up into abusive adults. Only Christ's love accepted in the heart can transform such a sad life and change its course. Many notable Christians were desperate men and women plunged in misery.

If you want to educate a child, do first yourself what you would like to teach him, and then educate him.

The value of a mother who humbly and warmly educates her children in Christian faith has no price; the world owes much toward these mothers.

Start educating your children from the day the Lord gave them to you, so that they will have a strong influence to transform the world. There are enough evil people.

## CHRISTIAN STRUGGLE

How many times did you not fall in discouragement? Certainly, many times. But your duty is to overcome every struggle, to reach heights above your limitations with the help of God.

If today, while you are thinking that you have not given what you should have given, that you did not do what you should have done, if spiritual vision, humility or compassion failed you, do not despair. Tomorrow is another day to put things in order. Leave everything in Jesus' hands.

It is never too late to straighten things out. Surrendering to defeat is a kind of suicide. Do not surrender, I beg you, you would lose so much. However if you try again you will have the possibility to reach the goal.

The path is long. Do not despair now, after having walked this far; it will not be long...go on walking.

One surpassed obstacle will give you the right tools to overcome the next.

A person becomes important when he knows how to recognize his errors; but he becomes more important still when he desires and does his best to correct them. Would you be of that class of people?

It is not pleasant to be sad. Sadness steals the energy of the heart. If that sadness is constant, it will convert itself into an obsession that can destroy you. Search for the cause that brought you to such a situation and you will see that it is not worthwhile to be downcast. Arise above your miseries and...go forward toward your noble task!

When someone is sad, all the wonderful things lose their enchantment. Sadness leads us to a fictive world and creates a crust of anxiety and discomfort around the heart. Extract the root of it with the help of God.

The stone on which you stumbled and made you fall is just behind you. Do not turn back to look at it for while you are looking behind you, you will not notice the next stone just in front of you. Look always forward.

If you are a thinking person, do not lose the occasion that the Lord offers you to perfect your Christian life. Grow day by day until the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Each step you take forward is a step less to reach heaven. This was the apostle Paul thought: "...reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark." Philippians 3: 13, 14.

Experience is no more nor less the sum of your victories and your defeats. Do all you can so that the pages of your life may be filled more with your victories than with your defeats, virtues more than failures.

It seems that the world has gone mad. Unheard crimes in history, extortion, robbery, rape, armed assault. Each day brings its share of frightful news and how cruel is man toward his

neighbor. There is no doubt that Satan is at work. Be on the side of the solutions, of peace, harmony, and joy in this life and not on the side of the problems and difficulties.

Self is man's worst enemy, and paradoxically it is best treated of all. It is exalted, it is proclaimed king on the throne of one's heart, it is ever glorified, one forgives it everything, it is protected from every outside threat, it is corrupted and one day it destroys you. Become right now the enemy of your egoism.

Renouncing self is the key to happiness. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John 12: 24.

Do not let your bad moments ruin your glorious future. Take Elijah's example. In one instant he became discouraged, but he did not let himself carried away by the flow of his negative emotions, on the contrary he stood up at the Lord's command and followed his way toward duty. Stand up and go on your way! It is worth it!

## CONTENTMENT

(Renouncement, sacrifice, abnegation)

Often we enslave ourselves with things we do not need. Learn to live with little and not depend on material things for your happiness. If you live this way you will be filled with gratitude and thankfulness in whatever situation you will find yourself in.

When you learn to renounce, you enrich the field of your blessings: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Matthew 16: 24.

Denying oneself is not synonymous of negligence or abandonment of good habits; it is simply death of self so that Christ can live in your heart.

In Christian life death of self is gain; on the contrary self gratification is death. Take the firm decision not to be slave to self.

The seed of wheat cannot live if first it does not fall into the ground; in the same manner you will bear fruit when self will have been buried in the earth of renouncement. Give glory to Jesus, hiding self in Him.

Corruptible treasures bring you poverty sooner or later and separate the heart from Jesus. Renounce these things before it is too late. "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Luke 14: 33.

Satan possesses a long chain by which he keeps his victims prisoners; the only problem is that it is invisible and people do not take notice of it. What is this chain made of? Love for the world. Christ wants to break it if you let Him: renounce to whatever enslaves you.

If Christ lives in you, self must die. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Galatians 2: 20.

Only when you renounce everything degrading, you will be able to reach a higher plane. Only when you bury your selfishness will you rise to full liberty.

Jesus' life was free of selfishness and vanity, He has thus opened a way in history through which we have to walk: "But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Acts 10: 35.

A person is not important by what he possesses but by what he has become.

Be exacting with your own mistakes and you will discern your errors better; your eyes will be less fixed on the flaws of others. It is a good blow against your selfishness.

Exaltation of self is putting oneself on top of the mountain of pride from which one will surely fall to destruction. This was Saul's case. David preferred to hide his life under the Rock's protection.

Only if self dies can you live and obtain precious spiritual victories: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” John 12: 24.

# COURAGE

There are many things that need to be supplemented. Will you do them?

The word 'impossible' is only in the dictionary of those who have little courage. If you look for it in the dictionary of the brave, it does not exist. David met Goliath the giant and defeated him in the name of the Lord. The other Hebrews said to themselves: "it is impossible". Delete this word from your dictionary. "All things are possible to him that believeth." Mark 9: 23.

You think a person of little courage, coward and irresolute can accomplish important things in life? Courage is a virtue that maybe you have not inherited but you can cultivate it to undertake great projects and confront extreme situations.

The courage to denounce injustice with the proper spirit is not a gift that everyone possesses; in reality they are few those who dare to expose injustice and more, they are even fewer those who do it with the spirit of Jesus.

Without courage, how humans would have discovered new continents, evangelized hostile and dangerous territories, planted flags on the highest peaks of the earth, pumped oil from the seabed, invented airplanes, walked on the moon, ended slavery and many other things? Each of us decides to stand on one side or the other: the cowardly or the brave. What have you decided?

How would the Lord have asked Joshua to be courageous (Joshua 1: 7), if Joshua could not achieve that target? If the Lord encouraged him it is because He knew that with His help Israel's leader could make it. Today, the Lord offers the same target to every young person. It's yours! Reach out for it!

If men like Daniel, women like Esther decided to have courage in difficult moments of their lives and obtained great success for the cause of God, why would it not be possible for any youngster to do the same today and get the same result? It depends on the degree of dedication. What is your level?

Soldiers are asked to have courage to fight in wars; if one thinks about it, they are asked to kill the enemy with courage, fearlessly, resolutely, and millions of soldiers have died with this determination. If for this earthy cause we give so much importance to courage, how much more should courage be manifested in each youth in the battle against evil.



## DECISION

We all must face life's adventure. The result will depend on each one of us: your life can be a heroic adventure or on the contrary a disastrous mischance. Paul said: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." Ephesians 5: 15.

It is sad not to be able to see with one's own eyes, but to have a blind heart is a tragedy. Physical death is an inevitable end, but the human being can spare himself spiritual death if he chooses. It is your decision.

It is most important to know how to face life's transcended situations. A decided and vigorous 'yes', can transform your destiny. Sometimes, on the contrary, a firm and timely 'no' will contribute to your happiness. Ask the Lord to give you the necessary wisdom to know what kind of answer to give.

Take the decision to live the present to the full. We must absolutely live today for the future is in God's hands, and the past...does not exist anymore.

It is not sufficient to understand that you have come to this world to fulfill a mission. You must also put it into practice. So, shake off your passivity and your indolence and get at it! Have zeal for the work Christ has given you! Take the decision to do it with God's help.

You will have to make a decision for what you want to undertake. A meditated decision and taken according to the will of God is success' antechamber.

The Lord desires that you be a decided youth, a faithful and courageous youth; it is worthless to have plans, dreams, purposes and projects if you act without the Lord's help.

Your loyalty to eternal principles asks for exertion of your will in the good direction. When you reach the conviction that you have to take a step in favor of faith, take it! Do not postpone your decision; millions will be lost even if they had the best intentions. "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Hebrews 3: 7, 8.

The Lord will not do for you what you can do yourself. Remember, He has given you brains, hands and feet for the good of your neighbor. Take correct decisions and act trusting in divine help. There is so much to do for this poor humanity!

Certainly you have never heard about someone who repented after having taken correct decisions... but too often we hear about those who took wrong decisions and lament about them all their lives.

## DILIGENCE

(Work, enthusiasm, activity)

Idleness provokes deterioration of the most elevated and pure thoughts. Be diligent.

When you do something while being in a bad mood or unwillingly, the results are mediocre, limited and disappointing. It is natural! Only enthusiasm is the engine of efficacy. Be fully determined to do your best so that each task can be done well with joy and love.

Work elevates; idleness lowers. It is true that even the most dignifying work does not lead to the happiness and personal satisfaction that perhaps you are seeking. In this case, do your best; do it in love and that activity will not seem so unpleasant.

Work ennobles, idleness belittles. Remember that Adam was created and appointed to live an active life. He did not sloth away his days in Eden. He gave a name to all the animals, flowers, and trees... He studied his surroundings to receive knowledge about nature and its customs. Even after his falling in sin, work continued to be a safeguard against the ills of idleness.

Sometimes people spend their time in idleness with the argument that there is not much to be done. But it is better to do simple little things, than to do nothing. Flee from idleness as from leprosy.

Great performances are the results of small accomplished duties. A grain of sand is insignificant, but all of them united make up a beach!

If you are still a student, do your best. This enterprise is yours today. The professional outcome you will obtain tomorrow will be the result of your actual sacrifices. More you surrender to your duty, more satisfying fruits will you gather. Less renunciation: less fruits and more frustrations.

If you keep your mind occupied with a noble work, with the study of the Bible and the contemplation of beauty; if you are diligent in accomplishing your duties and if you love the Lord above all things... then you have an extraordinary recipe and the right ingredients to elaborate the most succulent dish of your life.

Things that are done diligently for the world can give you satisfaction, but only in a transitory manner; things that are done diligently for the Lord give you happiness on a permanent basis.

When God created the human being, He gave him work to do; this proves that idleness was not in God's plan.

## EQUALITY

Kings and rich people suffer and cry also, this proves without mistake that all human beings are the branches and leaves of the same tree. You do not need to feel inferior to anyone.

There is not one race better than the other: we were all created by God. To feel superior to others is a sign of inferiority. Accept yourself as you are and do your best to change the evil traits that are in you with the help of the Lord. But never feel superior to others.

Black, white and half-caste can live peacefully together with the gospel as reference. Your skin is no better than another, it is simply different.

Many people feel inferior to others because of their race, their social position, their nationality, their education. May this not be your case. You are the child of the heavenly King with capacities that can be developed; your place of birth does not matter, the Lord is ready to reproduce in you the traits of His character. Do not feel inferior if Christ lives in you!

While facing human laws a man or a woman may feel discriminated because of his or her race, his or her financial situation, his or her education, etc. but before God's law we are all equal, we enjoy the same rights, the same opportunities, privileges and responsibilities: "God is no respecter of persons." Acts 10: 34.

Do not mount the horse of racial discrimination, it will surely throw you down.

In spite of the fact the men and women have the same rights, we are not equal; God created us with biological and psychological differences we have to know and learn to respect.

Feminist or machos discussion will find no echo's in Christ's church: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus... There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3: 26, 28.

If equal opportunities are given to people, they can all attain their goals. The problem is that not all of them make use the opportunities given to them. If you want to have success, make use every opportunity coming your way.

# FAITH

“Faith moves mountains”, said Jesus. This is why so many people have moved mountains of difficulties in their lives. May faith be your life’s most prized treasure. Pray for faith, live for faith, cultivate faith. Remember how the disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith. (Luke 17: 5).

The difference between one who has faith and one who has not got any is very clear. On one hand there is one who believes and hopes, and on the other... one who tends to concentrate his thoughts on the impossible and mourns his insipid life. What great joy can you not obtain if you only have faith!

Faith without works is as dead as fire without oxygen. Reconsider your faith and your works.

One glance toward Calvary can silence many doubts, heal many pains, resurrect hope, give courage, dry tears. One glimpse of faith can redeem your soul.

Blessed is he who believes in the Lord, for even when contrary winds blow his house will remain standing. Faith must be accompanied by effort and every effort must be accompanied by divine power. Without the Lord, it is not possible to overcome.

Many are capable to die for an idea, that after a certain time do not believe nor embrace it anymore and reject it; thus they spend days and years of their life defending ideas for a while and changing again. Some call this ‘faith’s evolution’ but generally it is a turning back or a loss of their spiritual way.

Paul teaches us that we must not be “children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness.” Ephesians 4: 14. Be firm in faith, hold on to the Lord and do not let yourself be tossed to and fro.

Many say they have faith but they have been destroying it little by little. Do you know how to destroy faith? By saying you love God but not loving you neighbor; praying in church and getting angry with a member of your family; singing in church and cursing someone in the street. Little by little, the power of the gospel dies and what remains is just a label on your lapel.

A bell that does not resound does not give its sound; a path, even beautiful, if not followed does not lead anywhere. A music instrument, if not played upon will not produce melodious sounds. If you do not live up to your faith, you are not transforming your character.

You can have your spirit doubt about everything but this will ruin your spiritual life. It is good to cultivate a critical spirit when you are doing research; it becomes a problem when one indulges in questioning the irrefutable.

If you concentrate reading any book coming your way or read books presenting errors, it is as if you pretended to manipulate radioactive matter without being contaminated.

Doubt is evil if you host it in your heart and feed it. It is like taking a half dead snake and warming it up in your bosom. Well...you know what you are risking! Once doubt sowed into the spirit will develop slowly until it will infest with insidious weeds the whole field of authentic faith.

There is enough evidence to believe in God. Collect these evidences as one collects lovely flowers. You will have a garden full of proofs of the Creator's existence, making you happy, giving you satisfaction, stimulating you and confirming your faith daily.

Faith, motivated by feelings, will easily die. On the contrary, faith propelled by biblical principles will develop and produce unnumbered blessings. What kind of faith are you developing?

# FAITHFULNESS

(Obedience)

Everything passes away in this world; only God is eternal. If you hold on to this life, you will only pass through it, if you hold on to the Lord through obedience you will live forever.

The laws that the Lord has established are laws of immutable character. To transgress them is like knocking your head on the wall. What is the result when someone does not breathe? Death. What happens when you do not eat properly? You get sick. What is your reaction when one mistreats you? It grieves you and it is normal. Your life's duty is to know the divine laws and with the help of the Lord to respect them.

Abraham was asked to go through a fiery trial: to sacrifice the son of the promise. When he lifted up the knife obeying the Lord's order, an angel stopped him, it was enough. Abraham would have offered Isaac as a burnt offering out of love toward Him who had given him a son in his old age. This is perfect faith: faith that submits its will unconditionally to the will of God through love.

Today's society throws human beings and especially young people into a deep pit full of vices and blocks it up with the heavy stone of slavery. This suffocates faith, love and purity and the vital breath of the soul. Dare to say 'no', confront this destructive stream by Jesus' grace, who said: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13: 5.

The three young Hebrews decided to obey God rather than king Nebuchadnezzar. The death sentence by cremation was not able to separate them from their strict faithfulness. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the human heart. Today this same power is at your disposal so you may be more than conquerors in your battles of faith.

Remain faithful to the duty shown in the word of God, and leave the rest in the wise hands of the Lord. Did He not close the lions' mouth so they would not hurt Daniel? Did He not open the Red sea to offer a dry path for Israel? Did He not make water come out of the rock to quench His people? Did He not free Peter from prison in spite of the heavy chains, the guards and the high walls? Did He not multiply the Zarephath widow's oil and flour? Did He not multiply the bread and the fishes so that twelve baskets remained? Did He not raise Lazarus? Your part consists in obedience and trust. The Lord will know what to do.

Obedience is a pleasant perfume going up to God's throne. It is true that it is not your obedience that will open heaven for you, but if you do not obey, you thus show that the work of grace is not operating in you. Jesus not only died to give you the right to be in heaven but also to give you the same power that enabled Him to obey His Father's commandments.

Joseph, the son of Jacob took the decision to remain faithful in any kind of situation; and even if it is true that without God's help nothing is possible, it is also true that without the willingness of each one of us, the Holy Spirit cannot do anything.

Joseph took his decision and concentrated all his interest and his energy to accomplish what he believed; the Lord worked in him and that is why he was able to say to the perverse woman: "I cannot give you what you are asking for, because for me it is more

important to obey God; I do not want to sin". This is an example to follow. You can be faithful if you want to.

# FORGIVENESS

(Reconciliation, repentance, justification, mercy)

Can you say in your prayer: "Forgive my trespasses as I forgive those who have offended me?" If your answer is negative it is better not to ask God for forgiveness. God can only forgive you in the measure you are willing to forgive your neighbour. First ask the Lord to give you a heart willing to forgive and forget. You will experience great relief in your life. Bitterness only obstructs the arteries of your heart.

There is a word that you must enjoy a lot, "Mercy." If all human beings tried to put themselves in their neighbour's shoes, they would not judge others so lightly. Who alone can know the true motives of the heart? Only God.

If Jesus stood between you and your brother when you accuse and disqualify each other, He would say: "Whoever among you is without sin cast the first stone", which of the two would throw it first? Would your hand keep on clinging to the stone of hatred?

You lose nothing in giving others another chance. Christ, the Redeemer of the world, taught that we must forgive our neighbour when he asks forgiveness: "I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven." Matthew 18: 22.

Stirring the garbage causes stench to pervade everything. Spending the entire life stirring up old dissensions, causes the bad smell of suspicion, mistrust, jealousy, discouragement, discussion. What you could do effectively turns into a morbid and fruitless toil. Leave the past in the hands of the Lord.

God's forgiveness is absolute and complete. It ensures absolute oblivion of your sins if you repent, "I will not remember thy sins." Isaiah 43: 25. So there is no sense spending hours thinking if you have been forgiven or not. You dishonour God by this attitude.

People have the ability to forget with extraordinary ease all the good you have done them. However they have an excellent memory to remember all the injuries received. It is to possess great wisdom when not forgetting the good that others have provided to you and ignoring the insults; forgetting evil strengthens you to do good.

Vengeance can give intense satisfaction to one who practices it, but it will always be momentary. On the contrary pardon and oblivion of the offense gives eternal satisfaction. Do not retaliate, leave your cause to God: "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense." Deuteronomy 32: 35.

Kindling a fire with wood from a fallen tree can pervert the very essence of the gospel. With the parable of the prodigal son Christ taught a very thorough lesson: The Father is waiting with great interest the return of the son who has abandoned home. You have no right to denigrate he who has fallen. Instead you have a duty to help him recover.

What you have done in the past marks you as the chisel engraves wood or metal. But there is no mark so deep that Christ cannot repair with His perfect justice.

The difference between Peter and Judas was not so much in the nature of their sin, for what both did was very serious. It was rather the manner of their subsequent reaction. One



was afraid of the consequences of his act; he despaired and finally took his own life, a precious gift that belongs only to God. The other, wept bitterly and felt deep repentance and Jesus forgave him.

## FORESIGHT

Before doing anything, however insignificant it may seem, you must ponder the how and the why of what you want to accomplish.

When you decide to do a work, your first step is to give a spiritual projection of your intentions, because anything that has no spiritual projection will vanish. Interlace all the material with the spiritual.

Always think before you do something. It is better doing so to avoid having to think how to solve problems that might arise as the consequence of not having thought beforehand.

Foresight is not a sin, on the contrary it is important and a vital virtue. Anticipating future contingencies, without lapsing into anxiety, will give you many future joys.

By observing ants you can get a useful lesson. They show the extraordinary results of patient and constant toil. They tell us of the tenacity we need to overcome obstacles, they teach us how important it is to plan for tomorrow.

The Lord is farsighted and we as His children must also be. We see an example of this from the fact that God had foreseen the terrible appearance of sin. Will you not also be prudent in your life?

You must be circumspect in all areas of your life: spiritual, social, family and work.

Think carefully before doing something, because when it is done you must face the result. It is better to anticipate the results and plan your decisions based on this prediction: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" Luke 14: 28.

# FRIENDSHIP

(Fellowship, loyalty, brotherhood)

A real friend is the one who is at your side in good moments as well as when everything goes wrong. Those who abandon you when you are going through difficult times, where not friends.

Real friends will respect you always; surround yourself with such persons who can understand this.

Sometimes one speaks of friends, but are they really true friends or just acquaintances? A true friend is a treasure to be highly appreciated.

A foul apple in the basket will foul all the others. It has never been seen that healthy apples have turned the foul one into a healthy one; it is a natural law. Surround yourself with good friends. The devil will take charge to bring you the corrupted ones, but do not tie yourself up with them.

The real friend is at your side at any moment. False friends disappear when misfortune assails you.

You have a work to do with your friends who do not know the Lord Jesus. Speak of the love of God, who gave His Son to save them and is waiting for them to go to Him as they are. Here is a special work to be done and with results.

If your friends separate you from God, separate from that kind of friends; it is better to live without them and one day enter heaven than to live with them and lose yourself in this world.

It is better to fall in difficulties or to lose your friends than to stain your life with sin. Because sin destroys, degenerates, ruins life forever. However with the help of the Lord problems can find solutions, and friends? ...do not worry, others will come.

Special circumstances can separate you from your good friends, but nothing and no one can separate you from the Holy Spirit who is always by your side to comfort you, to help you, to sustain you wherever you are.

A good friend is worth more than gold. It is truly an invaluable treasure, but remember: true friends love God with all their heart and their neighbor as themselves.

As cold water puts out a fire, selfishness puts out friendships. Now you know...uproot everything susceptible to be selfishness.

The message of Jesus is a message of peace. If you receive this message in your heart and put it into practice, you will see happiness and harmony poured out into your life, for Jesus' religion unites closely all those who love God.

The gospel must help you progress in your social relationships, helping you become a better person, teaching you to be humble, natural, considerate and taking care of others:

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to... godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” 2 Peter 1: 5, 7.

Your character and your experience must be impressed by the working of the Holy Spirit if you want to be able to influence your friends positively and be a savor of life unto life.

To convince others of Christ's transforming power, you must know this power in your life by experience.

Do not speak of insignificant and superficial things, life is full of that. Be yourself, someone special; do not be influenced by the banality of those with whom you cannot help coming into contact with.

## FUTURE

(Fruits, expectative, tomorrows)

If you respect life, life will respect you. Each of your actions has a repercussion. If you sow cabbages, you will gather cabbages; if you were harsh with someone, someone will be harsh with you. If you give love, you will receive love.

If you plant roses along the path, you will soon have a lovely rose garden.

The best preparation you can do for the future is to make good use of today.

What would you like to gather tomorrow? You will gather what you have sown today. Do not forget that the law from the cause to effect has an inevitable character. Work your field in such a manner that the seeds you sow are from the kind you would like to gather. This is what the apostle Paul taught: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6: 7.

Sow the seeds of respect, love, faith, comprehension, forgiveness. The efforts you will need to sow this kind of seed are the same as if you sowed the seeds of lack of respect, lack of love, unfaithfulness, incomprehension, and resentment. The difference is seen in the fruits you reap. And what a difference!

You will meet a great number of people who are hoping for happiness in the future, who think they will obtain it when they will have done such and such a thing. This is a trap and they will never find happiness in such a way. Live today, the present moment concentrating all your energy in enjoying life. Tomorrow is as uncertain as the next minute.

Beware young people! As the future is uncertain and you should not worry about it because it is in the hands of God, so the past should not condition you. What has been has been. Start building your present on a firm foundation, learn from your mistakes and use them as valuable lessons in order to grow.

Make an investment in God's bank when you will have decided to obey and love Him, you will assure yourself a happy future: "...But be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off." Proverbs 23: 17, 18.

Many people fear the future. They fear sickness, losing their job, to be unable to finish their studies, unable to reimburse a loan, not meeting their ideal partner...fear comes into the mind like swarms of birds. This is what you have felt maybe in many occasions. But do not fear the future for the future belongs to God. He will scare away the fears of your life.

Take hold of God's promises like the shipwrecked holds on to a trunk he has found in the middle of the high sea as his only hope. You can only have a happy future when you live by faith, trust, and remaining faithful to the Lord. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." Psalm 37: 37, 38.

You can tell yourself: "I have a good future". Trust that the Lord will help you and sustain you in moments of crisis or difficult situations. Repeat and repeat again: "With Jesus I have

a good future". It will be so, keep in mind that Jesus will not let you down nor abandon you. Joshua 1: 5.

If you behave badly now, you are preparing for yourself a difficult future in which it will not be easy to be happy. But if on the contrary you behave well in the present time, you will assume tomorrow's problems successfully.

What you have or what you will be in the future depends on what you are deciding to be today. If your past was bad, take the firm decision today to be a better person; it might be that you cannot forget the evil you have done but if today you decide to do things well with the help of the Lord, the past will not overcome you to destroy you, and you will head forward stronger in the respect of yourself, in dignity, in faith and in love.

# GRATITUDE

Could you imagine your own father, that person you love so much, who gave you life, who has worked so much so that you would not die of hunger, carrying a cross on his shoulder, bleeding, suffering, ragged and stigmatized, passing in front of people who spit in his face, insult him unjustly and depreciate him? And then in some place, see how a cross is elevated and he being nailed on it, dying, speaking his last words. And all this because he is your father, who loves you and does not want to abandon you? This is what happened in reality to Jesus. Do you love Him for what He did for you?

Gratitude which is reflected only by words and does not touch the facts of life is the sister of faith without works. Be grateful in a more practical manner and not so theoretically.

Did you know that frustrations, internal conflicts, sicknesses and tears could be avoided if people would cultivate a thankful and praiseful spirit toward Him who gave us all? If you want to enjoy life, be thankful toward God and praise Him for everything He gives you.

The sun of envy burns the little coherence you could have and leads you to suffer the sunstroke of discontent. On the contrary, gratitude develops contentment and you enjoy the shade and the fruits from the tree of wisdom.

Sincere and constant gratitude is to the soul what exercise is to the body. More you are grateful more you will have reasons to be happy.

Thanking the Lord for everything is a demonstration of submission, of acknowledgment of His authority: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." Colossians 3: 15.

The fact you have received the promise of God's kingdom should induce you to be constantly thankful; you will thus show that you appreciate the greatest of all gifts: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Hebrews 12: 28.

What would you think of that person who after having received from you many presents would never express gratitude? It is even worse not to thank the Lord after having received so many things of Him.

Make the habit of thanking sincerely and with kindness all those who do you a favor. Your good Christian conduct will be your visit card.

# HAPPINESS

One cannot find happiness on sale at a newspaper stand; it is not a product that can pass from hand to hand. Who possesses it knows well that it cannot be bought neither sold; one receives it in a natural way as a consequence of thoughts and attitudes. Reflect each day on your thoughts and your attitudes to be sure that they do not drag you out of the way and impede you to reach true happiness.

You are living in a world that rejects sacrifices and creates attractive slogans inviting you to live an easy life. True happiness is not found in this manner, it could only be deceptive. True happiness is of great value. Are you ready to pay the price?

Jesus has the keys of death (Revelation 1: 17, 18). He has also the keys of your life, of your success, of every problem that comes your way, of every situation without issue; He possesses the keys to your happiness. Why should you fear?

Perfect happiness does not exist in this world. The Lord Jesus said: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." John 16: 33. This does not mean that you will not have inner peace and well being that nobody will be able to take away from you. This is the Christian's happiness. Before saying these words, Jesus said: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace..." His sentence ended with a promise: "but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

On the contrary, circumstances in your life can tire you out, upset you and even hurt you, but they can never take away the joy of your faith, for it is safely guarded by the Lord in the safe-box in heaven.

Many go in search of happiness thinking to find it in money and perhaps in this world's vanities, in a certain person or a certain philosophy. But true happiness is near us: to be in harmony with God and with men and faithfully accomplish your work.

When does the scale dip toward happiness? When one possesses faith and hope. Faith is like a rope you climb mountains of difficulties with or summits of painful problems. Hope is the air that gives you life in those heights where oxygen is rare. Believe and hope this is the key to your happiness.

Turn towards good: do works of mercy, uphold the oppressed, comfort the afflicted, give what is needed, be kind with everyone...there will you find much joy, for "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20: 35.



# HEALTH

A disorderly life leads only to destruction. Worldly pleasures, vices, bad habits, lead man on the precipice from which he will undoubtedly fall into the abyss of disease. Be correct in your lifestyle.

Youth is full of vitality, but as old age approaches, the body decrepit, youthful vigour vanishes, one loses one's sight, hands shakes, bones become brittle, and strength weakens. Get ready today, so that when the autumn of your life arrives you will have learned to accept this with gratitude and simplicity of heart. You will enjoy the whole experience of the past and live with dignity, joy and profit. Not many old people do that. Ah! And be careful now that you are young, so you will not have to suffer the problems of old age, which can be avoided by living a healthy lifestyle.

Temperance is the best preventive measure against disease. If you want to live many years with good quality of life, observe the natural laws established by God.

The best prevention that exists in the world against the weakening of human energy, health included, is to cultivate the fruit of the Holy Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Galatians 5: 22, 23.

When you love life it smiles at you. The only thing to clarify is how you should love life. The answer is clear: doing nothing that is contrary to natural and spiritual laws: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10: 31.

The Holy Spirit is the best medicine against disease. If you let Him work in you, He will boost your health positively.

A spirit tilled by the plough of faith in which the seed of the gospel is planted and watered by the water of the Spirit and illuminated by the sun of Christ's righteousness, is the ideal place for growing the fruits of physical and spiritual health.

Depending of what you eat and drink you can improve your health or weaken your physical strength to the point of losing it completely. The Bible teaches that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6: 19) and that we do not belong to ourselves because we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ; this is the reason why we must keep in good health, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6: 20.

We can all do something to maintain health and strengthen it. It is a mistake to think that because we are Christians we are protected against disease and that our habits do not matter. Habits in drinking, eating, sleeping, thinking, dressing, etc., affect your physical and spiritual health because the condition of your body affects your soul.

Your physical and spiritual strength depends on educating your appetite. Be faithful to the principles of health, you will be strong during your youth and gradually as you grow you will

avoid many ills plaguing humanity.

Sharing with gladness the burdens of home with your parents will be like a balm for your soul and give you physical health.

Some fashions that youth follow in clothing, food, beverages, recreation ... are harmful to physical and spiritual health. Do not let yourself be attracted to them because they have in them the seeds of destruction.

A conscience enlightened by the word of God, living in peace and harmony with God's laws, is the best prevention against disease and the best medicine to regain health. Be careful not to violate your conscience: "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Isaiah 48: 18.

Your state of mind influences the state of your body more than you can imagine. That is why there are millions of people today who are sick, because in our society depression, melancholy, discontent, anger, anxiety, fear, etc., are the fashion trends among the world.

If there is no communion with heaven, health deteriorates very quickly. Cultivate a godly life, keep your conscience pure of sin, imitate Jesus and gladness will be your companion: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones." Proverbs 17: 22.

# HOLINESS

(Character)

It is necessary to say no to degradation, vulgarity, and say yes to what can make you perfect and sanctify you.

Learning to retain anger has much more value than building a cathedral. If you can dominate your bad mood you have taken a big step on the path of holiness.

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4: 18. Gradually you will learn more and more things about the Lord. Your duty is to practice these skills in your daily life.

Those who reach the summit of a mountain do not do it without terrible efforts. They struggle against the elements of nature without surrendering to difficulties. In their attempt many die, but they die while climbing, they say, not crawling on the ground of the valley like most men.

Oh! Could you have this spirit in your life of faith! Do not linger in sin, climb higher each day to the height of holiness. Do not think of the cost but about the satisfaction of doing something special in this life and the final reward, just as the climber.

In your climb toward the summit of holiness you are not alone. The Spirit of the Lord is with you and urges you. Every step towards the goal is one less in the direction of heaven.

Thousands of people are able to achieve great deeds, conquer empires, build monuments and impressive buildings, regaining land from the sea, write great works, but they are not able to conquer their heart, subdue their bad mood, control their anger, soften their conduct, dominate their evil thoughts. Focus on forming a character similar to Christ, everything else is secondary.

The Lord can give you the desire to serve and love Him. Transformation of character is a divine work. But the Lord will do nothing without your consent. He cannot force you to obey Him. Tell Him to take your heart and may He shape it according to His will. Have no doubts, this is the best.

Life is short and you must learn to enjoy it. I am not talking about what might satisfy your senses for a moment, but the perfection of character, the only thing you will take with you into the grave.

Work, work arduously in the garden of your soul. Work the soil, extirpate the weeds. Water and take care of the flowers of virtue, so that one day you will not have to complain of having failed in your life, and you will enjoy holiness.

The Lord does not select you to do His work because you are perfect, but despite your imperfections, in order to capacitate you for the work He called you to do. Let yourself be shaped by His divine hand: "Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel." Jeremiah 18: 6.

Do not be led by people who say that youth must enjoy amusements and have fun without having to think about what can be done and what not. Do not believe that there is no need to complicate one's life and there is no need to be so narrow minded and so shut up to new experiences; thousands of young people have done just that and today they testify about their bitter life wishing they have lived a different past.

Searching the holiness of the Lord will never debase you, never disappoint you, your life will never be bitter, on the contrary the search for holiness will make you happy and help you thrive in this world, many people can testify about it who have experienced it.

When a young person seeks the holiness of God, his life will become pleasant, satisfying, happy, full of hope ... nothing will frighten you, nothing will surprise you if you live in full communion with God, for from Him emanates peace and light that will give you serenity and guide you on the path of life.

# HOPE

Only if you look into the night with spiritual eyes will you discern that a new day is breaking, with its intense and blinding light, fertile fields, singing brooks... and even if night goes on, if you look afar, if you can wait because you believe, you can be sure that after the storm tranquility will set in. Everything will happen in its own time.

Life without hope is a useless life, without projects, without trace or effect; it is void and dead inside, even if on the outside it seems exuberant. You need hope to be glad and face the hardships of life. Job said: "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." Job 14: 14.

Paths never end, they continue; one can see the vastness of the sea, the lofty mountains, walk through valleys, listen to rivers, all this means that as long as there is life there is hope.

When bad moments come up, remember the good days when you enjoyed the Lord's blessings. Dark clouds will often pass over your head. But... they will pass and the sun will shine again. Believe it! This will help you.

The 'falls' of life rob you of your smile; but hope's mission is to restore your joy.

What is the name of this mystery that beclouds you in terror and anguish? Is it not called despair?

You are carrying negative memories in your backpack: that terrible day, that frustration, that hardship... they are so heavy on your life's shoulders! Take a deep breath of hope's fresh air, you will regain your lost strength and you will walk again with sure steps toward the new earth.

If you are to turn your back to evil and if you have decided to do what is just with the help of Jesus, these words are for you: "And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning. And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety." Job 11: 17, 18.

Knowing how to hope is more important than to lose hope. With hope you have more opportunities to receive what you desire. If you lose hope you lose everything.

Accustom yourself to see only the good side of life so to accumulate much hope; take the firm decision to do good works and to offer Jesus' love to those around you. There is no better method to remain healthy and attract happiness.

Those who put their hope in their bank account, in their acquaintances, in their friends, or in any other thing that is not the Lord, do they not build on unstable ground such as sand? David knew this quite well so he exclaimed: "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him." Psalm 62: 5.

Hope is that soft and quiet wind caressing our face, which waves the wheat fields and purifies the atmosphere surrounding us; without hope there is no life. Build your nest high up where the wind of hope is the purest.

In the struggles of life that you have to face, put your hope in the Lord as David did: "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust." Psalm 91: 2.

Hope helps you face the impact caused by the death of your loved ones and renders you capable to face yours: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job 19: 25, 26.

Hope helps you to understand and to believe that when the tree is cut down a new shoot can come to life and grow; after the dark clouds, the sun appears again; after the storm calm is restored.

# HUMBLENESS

(Simplicity)

A wise man once said that he only knew that he knew nothing. And he was right. What is our understanding compared to God's knowledge! Be careful, do not conclude that you know many things! This will protect you and keep you humble.

Would you like to see a man falling in the abyss of pride? Let his pride engulf all his being, let him be intolerant towards others; let him abandon prayer and the study of the word of God, let him search for personal glory and let him feel superior to others. More he will remove himself from humility more will he promote his self justice and deeper will he fall. Do you want to be one of that kind?

If you have to choose a virtue to develop it in your life, chose humbleness. The humble poor is rich; the proud rich is poor. The humble ignorant is wise, the proud wise is ignorant. "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Matthew 23: 12.

Christ is the most humble being in the universe and however He is God. Where can you find such deeper mystery than this? Is this not the example of humbleness to follow?

Would you like to see a defeated man? Let him drink from the fountain of pride, let him eat from the fruit of egoism, let him breathe vices and fall asleep on the grass of indolence. Be humble and temperate with the help of the Lord; He will help you keep your balance in your life of faith.

Neglect in dress, sloppiness, lack of personal hygiene, poverty... are not in any way exponents of humility. A rich man or woman can be humble, while a poor man or woman may be proud.

Humility is a grace and comes from the heart; it can be cultivated and developed. Moses became the humblest and meekest of beings, meaning that before he was not so. Do you not desire that precious fruit of the Spirit?

If you see a man caressing pride, know that his ruin is near. On the contrary if you see humility in someone, this will attract honor and success in his life.

In Jesus you have the perfect example of humility: being God He became man; being rich He became poor; being king of the universe He became a servant; being the Creator He became a creature; being pure He became sin for all of us. Will you not love Him for all this?

Do you want to wear always your very best clothes? Then, wear the humility garment. It is made by God in heaven; no stores on earth sell it; order it directly from the Lord. "Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5: 5.

People who without knowledge about something speak about it show that they lack one of the most important virtues: knowing when to keep silent, for "Even a fool, when he holdeth

his peace, is counted wise.” Proverbs 17: 28. On the other hand, they are declaring in a loud voice that they have no knowledge of what is humbleness.



# JESUS

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” John 8: 12. This is how Jesus spoke to His disciples. Jesus’ words have a sense that most people do not see. They are full of wisdom and at the same time so simple in their form. Man’s awkwardness can be converted into wisdom if he believes and obeys the word that transforms him and guides him on the path of truth. Do not forget, Christ is the light of your life.

Christ teaches you to follow Him, for He is the true way. He teaches you to obey His commandments for He is the only truth. He invites you to go to Him for He possesses eternal life. Think about it; what does Jesus mean to you?

You are not a failure or a rare human being or someone too special to live in this world... shout it out loud to yourself! Can it be that you want others to accept you without ever contradicting you and treat you as if you were a god? Jesus who is the author of the universe and was not understood by most people was even rejected and crucified. In spite of this He did not feel that He had failed or felt frustrated in His life; He went through with His mission without being bothered by opposed opinions. Think about it!

If you observe around you, you will see that each man and woman have left a trace in their lives. Some traces are to be rejected but others can inspire us. Jesus has left a trace in the history of mankind, but in a particularly way, He has left His trace in human hearts. His example has inspired millions of people and still does in our days. So go through life leaving a trace so that others can follow it as a reference for good.

Jesus is full of love He wants to give. It does not matter who you are, or who you have been, if you go to Him as you are He will not push you away: “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” John 6: 37. To know Jesus, to love Him, to follow Him will give you inner peace, keeping you serene in the midst of turmoil; it will help you overcome whatever struggle of the soul, whatever temptation.

Jesus is the source of life, of health, of faith and hope. With Him you have nothing to fear. He removes every doubt, gets rid of your worries, comforts, straightens up, encourages, forgives. What are you waiting to go to Him? “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11: 28.

Some young people are so wounded by sin to the depth of their soul; they do not know what to do. Jesus is the solution! He has paid the price of redemption for each youth with His precious blood. Probably few young people understand Jesus’ love but maybe from now on some youth will abandon himself in Jesus’ arms and experience this special love.

What would Jesus not do to conquer you! He left His royal crown, the adoration of the angels; He incarnated Himself, the author of life became a little child in love for each human being. He lived as a man to come close to you, He suffered the inexpressible, they wounded His forehead, His hands, His whole body; they humiliated Him to the utmost and in the end they crucified Him as a vile criminal and still He was God made man. What would Jesus not do to conquer your love!

The Lord Jesus did not live as God in human flesh; but it was God made man, living as a man without losing His divinity; but without using His divinity to help His humanity. When you think of Him, see Him as one similar to you; He overcame sin as you can overcome: holding fast on God's hand.

The Lord Jesus is your friend. He desires that you understand how much He loves you. His love for you is greater than your inclination and desire to sin.

# JOY

(Gladness)

A good man once said: "Those who think that in the world evil abounds more than good, see life through a windowpane hazy with their pessimism". Decide to be an optimist, to be always happy.

Do not let sadness take possession of you. Fight against it, for sadness empties the heart, grows old. Joy will give it life.

Your health will be far better if you decide to be a happy person, not only in moments of prosperity but also when the sea of your life is in turmoil. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones." Proverbs 17: 22.

It is hard to hide joy and hate. Ask the Lord to help you have only joy in your heart, then your face will shine with happiness so contagious that it will transform those around you. Happiness lifts up the soul and prolongs life. The only thing hate will do is to destroy you and others.

Your heart must jump with joy, with sympathy, with sincerity, with love. Such a heart lives long years.

Make it your objective to be optimistic and happy. Look at the good side of life, to the good side of things. This is part of the true gospel.

As in nature there are fixed laws, there are laws in the spiritual life. If you sow corn, you will gather corn. If you stand on the Lord's side you will gather the gladness of faith: "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Psalm 97: 11.

There are still reasons to smile and be happy. You are alive, you still can see the light of a new day... you breathe, you move, you jump as a young calf and you have faith. Can there be anything better in life? How important it is then to thank the Lord for all this!

Your sadness is the tear of your heart. The handkerchief that will wipe it is the deep love of Jesus. Do not resist Him. Be glad in His promises: "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice." Philippians 4: 4.

Sing to life, if you want life to smile at you. When you sing, the gloom of your mountain will go away and the beautiful landscape of your existence will be seen with more clearness.

It is not easy to smile in the midst of pain. A tear has never harmed anybody; the problem arises when we decide to lengthen our sadness through time, then joy disappears and the good things that could have come out of that bad experience transform it in chains robbing you of your freedom. Oblige your spirit to be happy.

Look at sadness as a wayfarer passing in front of your door. Greet him and let him go until you do not see him anymore. Your sadness will leave you, be patient with yourself and do not let it plunge you in hopelessness. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Psalm 30: 5.

Feelings and emotions will invade you constantly but do not let them fill your spirit with clouds. Decide what kind of feelings and emotions you want to have, pray God and ask Him to help you dominate your sadness. You can have the same experience as David had: "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness." Psalm 30: 11.

So many wonderful things lose their charm when you are sad. Sadness places you in a fictitious world, and creates a crust of worries and frustration around your heart. Pull out your sadness, the Lord desires you to be happy: "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God." Joel 2: 23.

Your spirit will be influenced by your external attitude. If you have a good mental disposition this will influence your attitude positively.

Beware of feelings and emotions! If today you feel sad and low in spirit, take the decision with the help of the Lord to let go of those feelings, to oblige your spirit to be happy; otherwise this sadness will make you pass for a sad and depressed person. In your hands lies the faculty to tinge your spirit the color you want.

## LIBERALITY

(Devotion, generosity)

What is difficult to obtain, is harder to offer. It is hard to separate from what we most dearly possess, to give it to someone for whom it has not cost nothing, but it is the most wonderful and sublime act that exists.

The spirit of generosity causes love, sympathy and sensibility for the needs of souls. If you are generous, you will never lose what you offer, for you receive it back with dividends. In Christian accounting the more you give, the more you have.

You can test nearly everybody with money. For most people money is a source of conflicts. That is why you have to learn to give money just the right importance that it merits; no more, no less.

When you center your interest around money in detriments of other things: family, church, faith, etc., money will cease to be a commodity and becomes a mean of destruction: "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." 1 Timothy 6: 10.

It is normal that you need money to live, we all need it. But money will become a source of blessing if you dedicate part of it to relieve suffering and needy humanity.

The gospel's cause needs your efforts, your economical resources, and your time. Only in the measure you respond affirmatively to the Lord's call will you feel fulfilled as a person.

If you want to grow in faith, you have to cultivate liberality for it is only while encouraging and strengthening others that you strengthen and encourage yourself: "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Proverbs 11: 25.

As in the natural realm there are immutable laws, so there are laws in the spiritual realm that are also immutable and one of these is charity. If you give, this same river of beneficence that came out of your heart will return to you.

Your liberality is important to advance God's cause in all areas. The widow's mite did not have great value, however it was an offering of great value in heaven, for she gave everything she had, even if it was little.

Remember you are responsible of the resources you possess; more intimate your communion with the Lord will be, sharper will your conscience realize how much is spent every day for vanity, pride, appetite and worldly entertainments.

Please, do the following exercise: when you are spending money for superfluous things, visualize in your mind all those men, women, and children living in deep misery, in poverty and who did not have the chance like you to be born in a place when abundance exists. Share what you have and do not squander it.

The church prospers in the measure that her members decide to be generous and to sustain Jesus' cause with their resources: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I

will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. Malachi 3: 10. Would you not like to receive these rich blessings?

Many young people do not have their own money, they depend on their parents because they are still studying and have not started to work yet. But whatever your situation, you can still put something aside to collaborate in the saving of souls.

God will not ask you more than you can give, that is why you must give Him what He asks: "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee." Deuteronomy 16: 17.

If you think about it, it is certain that you have received many good things from the Lord. Will you not thank God for them? "Freely ye have received, freely give." Matthew 10: 8.

When the wise men from the east learnt about Jesus' birth, they loaded their animals with gifts and travelled long distances to render homage to the Savior of the world. When they found Him, they set their offerings at His feet with love and gratitude. Do you not think that we, who love Jesus, should not do the same?

# LIFE

As a committed Christian you must advertise and build hope that celebrates life.

Life is beautiful. We are robbing it of its beauty with our hatred, our bitterness, our quarrels and our often destructive falsehoods just like weapons of war. Look! Even if man invented filigree work, it will never match the beauty of a simple flower. Flowers do us no harm; they only offer us their fragrance and their beauty.

Life is beautiful if you know how to live it. To live, it is not just to breathe, to do things, to eat and sleep. To live is to discover the essence of things and learn to see beyond what is apparent. To live is to fulfil the purpose of why you came to this earth and to live for it. Anything else would be wrong living.

Life waits for you to live it intensely. Every moment that passes without having breathed it, is a petal less on the flower of life. Enjoy every minute of your life to leave behind a pleasant influence of your time on earth.

Whenever a new life is born, the miracle of life begins again, thus claiming the existence of the Creator.

Life is a gift from God; it does not belong to you. As God has given you life He may take it back. There is an abysmal difference in the fact that a man takes the life of another man or his own and the fact that God reclaims someone's life. Remember that you do not belong to yourself.

When we take someone's life we take God's place, we act as if life were ours; it is usurping what belongs to our Creator and it is a great sin. Therefore respect life.

Life is like a walk on the world stage. Learn to take a stroll on it and enjoy your experience.

To watch, pray and work will help you face Satan's attacks successfully. To know how to live life on earth is essential to live one day the heavenly life. Be vigilant, pray unceasingly and work, work mainly in your training and to be able to support yourself financially and to lead souls to Christ.

# LOVE

(Sympathy, esteem)

He who has experienced God's love cannot do anything else but spread this love abroad. As a spring offers its water to the thirsty pilgrim, offer your love to the weary pilgrims of life, for: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20: 35.

Love has also its maturation process. It cannot mature in one day, it needs time. Protect it, give it life, water it, prune it, take care of it...and so little by little it will take form and will reach perfection.

There are situations in which a caress, a hand shake, a tap on the shoulder, an embrace, a glance of compassion or other form of affection will comfort more than all the words in the world. If you are able to transmit Christ's love you can win many battles and many hearts.

Blessed are those who smile for they give courage to the brokenhearted. Blessed are those who forgive, for they will be forgiven when they offend. Blessed are those who love for they will be loved. Blessed are those who help for they will be helped when in need. Blessed those who believe for they will receive God's promised inheritance. Be that kind of people.

Everything that is born needs protection. When the flower appears, the gardener waters it. When the child is born, the mother embraces it with all her care so it can grow in health and happiness. In same manner when true love is born, it needs protection like a tender plant, pruning its branches, pulling out the weeds surrounding it, watering it...whatever needs to be done so it can receive sunlight and living water.

What power had just one glance! It can be for good or evil. Go about doing good and not evil.

A word can hurt as much as it can comfort. The hand can strike as it can caress. A glance can inspire pain but also joy. A kiss can be given out of obligation as in love. Is it not easier to build up joy than to destroy it? Is it not better to love than to hate? Is it not better to straighten your ways than to persist in error?

Many people go through live in rhythm with their state of mind. One could say they are puppets in the hands of circumstances. Do not let circumstances take hold of the helm; let the principles that originate from the Bible guide your ship through the crossing of the sea of your existence.

Hate is the most potent drug that exists. It is cancer gnawing from the inside and destroying all good intentions, the bud of love, and the peace of the soul. When one accommodates with it, it contaminates the whole being. It brings dimness over intellect, and renders the spirit incapable of discerning between right and wrong. If you have decided to hate then you will destroy yourself, on the contrary if you love you will renew yourself.

Strife among brothers dishonors God and His church. Take care not to be at the origin of such matters neither favors them. It is better to be part of the solution than part of the



problem. There is great blessing for peacemakers; enroll in Christ's team and reveal His character to the world.

You cannot go to any shop to buy love. "Give me one pound of love", or "I need three ounces of love." No. Love cannot be bought by a simple desire neither by human effort. Whatever you would do to acquire it without God would be useless. It is divine work in your heart. The only thing you can do is to humbly ask God for this love: "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Romans 5: 5.

The ocean vastness is composed by numberless and insignificant drops of water. Attractive shores are made up of innumerable sand particles. Clouds are formed by accumulated droplets. Light is the result of the union of photons energy particles. True love is vast as the ocean, but composed by daily little acts.

The length of the path to reach love is equal to the length to reach hate. Take the path to love for the path of hate destroys your happiness.

Remember, love unites when it is expressed; forgiveness restores if repentance is sincere; friendship edifies when it is mutual and healthy.

Christians connected to the vine give fruit and one of these fruits is love. Your work consists to do your part to remain united with the vine, to produce the delicious fruit of love: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." John 15: 5.

A person can show his faith by his acts. Words are easy to speak, but they are not a life's example. What we do to our brothers and sisters in faith show what kind of relationship we have with God. You must truly love your brothers and sisters in faith: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." 1 John 4: 11.

If God's love is in you, share it with others, do not keep it for yourself. It will grow strong and reach the height of the American sequoias.

Love contains a great dose of engagement; love that manifests itself once in a while is not love. Renew your love each day; confirm it, manifest it... do not let your love go foul! For true love "never faileth" 1 Corinthians 13: 8.

# MIND

(Thought, reflection, meditation)

You must find time to meditate and reflect. The mind has been created to think and reason from cause to effect and the more you exercise it the more advantage you will gain.

Every thought is a seed that germinates when you act. The quality of your harvest depends on what you have decided to hold in your mind.

Without thought there is no reflection, without reflection there are no correct decisions; without the right decisions attitudes are not positively affected.

Our mind has been designed by God to think, reflect, meditate. There are no limits to what you can achieve if you put your mind to the Lord's disposition.

The spirit should be guarded so that nothing may enter that would damage it. Protect your spirit from sin. Do not watch, read and hear anything that may affect the delicate moral sensibilities.

We know that salvation is a gift from God, but to overcome sin is your struggle and this fight begins in your mind. With your spirit you have to decide whom to serve: God or the enemy.

The mind, like the body can be impaired by the food you eat both physically and spiritually. Improper diet affects the functions of brain cells; the neurotransmitters can also be affected; thoughts are affected; the faculty of thinking is dazed. Diet has a lot to do with the kind of thoughts the brain produces. What you see, hear or read influence your thoughts too. Decide to place barriers in the eating and living to keep your mind in perfect condition.

Whatever you decide to watch and hear is what will set the tone of your thoughts. Therefore, the Lord pronounces a blessing on those who decide to control the avenues of his soul: "He that ...shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high...bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." (Isaiah 33:15-16).

God is willing to give their power so that you overcome bad thoughts, but you must avoid doing, saying or thinking anything that interferes with the sensibilities of your mind and clouds your powers of perception.

A weak and vacillating character can be changed by the power of God. It can become strong and stable by the action of the Spirit, but always, always you will have to take the decision in your mind to let God do it and do your part so this work will be made easier and not hindered.

Your moral and spiritual powers can be strengthened through the advantages and opportunities that God puts within your reach. Your mission is to put all your attention to discern and take advantage of them. Great men and women did this. An idea came into their mind, they nourished it, they developed it and carried it out.

Every failure and success is forged beforehand in the mind. The choices you make have a lot to do with what you thought before: "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth

speaketh." Matthew 12:34.

If any practice promotes your physical health, be sure that it will help the development of your mental faculties and will positively affect your character.

The life of any human being is dyed with the color of the thoughts that are cherished.

# NATURE

(Creation)

How beautiful is nature! Observe its colours, its vegetation, the animal kingdom, its lofty mountains, its meadows ... Is it not true that one experiences something really beautiful? Of course, for it is the Lord's workmanship! The Lord has done great things. We are the beneficiaries of these things and we must respect them and be glad in the contemplation of all that has been created.

Free! The bird is free! But in the city, people are prisoners of deafening noises, bad smells, restlessness and indifference. Take time to be in the countryside and enjoy creation. You will recharge the batteries of your life.

Does your soul rejoice in the contemplation of beauty? This is normal because you were created to participate in the concert of nature; you are a piece of it, created from the earth, where you will return one day.

When you observe nature you can see in it the Lord's creative power. The lofty peaks, the beauty of the flowers, the towering waterfalls ... Everything is a message from God's love for you. Receive it!

Nature must be, as well as the Bible, your textbook, because: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." Psalm 19: 1.

The most beautiful speeches, the most sublime teachings were given in the middle of nature and through it. Jesus drew on many examples from nature to illustrate his message of love: The sheep, the vine, the fig tree, the field, the seed, birds, lilies, the wind ... Wisdom of God! Fill yourself up with it!

Jesus loved nature because it was the work of His hands. If you love Jesus you will also love the work of His hands and you will respect it.

The best ecologists are those who respect the environment in which they live and enhance it by their presence.

Nature invites you to meditation and directs your attention to its Creator. The deserts of cements that are the big cities overshadow in most cases the message that the countryside offers.

The Lord created the earth and everything in it to make human beings happy. The earth is our home and that is why we should take care of it: "For thus saith the Lord, the Creator of the heavens, God himself that formed the earth, who made it and who established it, who has created it not in vain, who formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord, and there is no other." Isaiah 45: 18.

God loves beauty and He lets it be seen in the works He has created. No artist has ever managed to copy even in the palest reflexion the beauty of the creation of our Lord. It has no comparison and its contemplation leaves us astonished. The Lord would like to contemplate this same beauty in your character.

The extraordinary nature surrounding us speaks to us of the Lord's love and He tells us that one day everything will be restored to a greater beauty. Can you imagine it? "But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Corinthians 2: 9.

In a plant that fades you find the lesson about death. Everything in this life is ephemeral. But when spring arrives and everything is budding, you discover the lesson about the resurrection.

A stream that flows peacefully tells you of the life of the believer who puts his hope in Jesus. A lightning illuminating the span of the sky shouts in a loud voice that God is Almighty. The rain speaks of the grace that Christ shares with all those who trust Him. The sun that rises every day to shine on the good and the wicked speaks of the merciful character of the Creator. Do you hear that voice in your soul?

If the Lord takes care of the birds and the smallest plant that grows in your garden, often without realizing it, how will He not take care of you, who are His beloved child for whom He gave his life on Calvary?

Every flower, every lofty tree, every bird, every star ... are preachers of the Lord. Listen to their sermons, dear youth!

A tree rooted in the soil and giving its fruit is a great teaching of the life of an authentic Christian, who on one hand clings to faith driving its roots into the word of God and on the other hand produces fruit to the glory of God and the good of humanity.

Never exalt nature above its Creator. This is the work of the enemy. It is as absurd as to exalt a beautiful painting more than its author, its true creator.

# OPPORTUNITIES

(Circumstances)

Each day you will see new opportunities to learn and grow approaching you. As a young person you are forming yourself in every way and the attitude you will take to address these opportunities will depend on your physical and moral structure.

You may find yourself in the most terrible circumstances, but if you trust in the Lord, you will be above the adversities of life and you will be able to manage the reins of your life without allowing that circumstances lead you.

There is a big difference between someone who is guided by circumstances and one that is guided by his principles. Circumstances lead you where they want when they want and how they want. Principles guide you where you want when you want and how you want.

"Jesus said to them: "...yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." John 12: 35. These words speak to us of the brevity of life. Every day is an opportunity that the Lord offers you to walk in the light of truth, while there is time. Now is the time.

Jesus is willing to give you His blessings, and you have no idea how abundant they are. He is only waiting that you give Him the opportunity. Will you not allow Him to? You must come to appreciate the light that emanates from His throne of grace.

The circumstances and opportunities of each one of us are not the same. The Lord gives to everyone the opportunities we need to know and love Him. We cannot expect that the Lord manifests Himself in the same manner to all of us. Make the most of the opportunities that pass in front of your door because maybe tomorrow they will not pass anymore. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Romans 14: 12.

It may happen that when we can we do not want. But be careful, because time may come when you will want but will not be able to. Leave nothing for tomorrow which cannot find a solution today.

Success in life is due in large part when we take the opportunities that cross our path. There are people who let them go and others who benefit from them. In which category are you?

As your muscles develop by exercise, so your life of faith can grow through the opportunities that the Lord gives you each day. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." 1 Corinthians 16: 13.

# PATIENCE

Do not despair if the fruits have not yet ripen yet. It takes time for a fruit to grow and get a color ... Every day they must bathe in the sunlight, the water must descend into the depths of the earth to search for the roots of the tree. There must be a perfect temperature and above all, hands, noble hands that work, that protect, that cleanse the land of weeds, that dig canals for water to flow, that prune ... have you not understood that a fruit cannot reach maturity in one day?

Learn this Chinese proverb: "Patience! With time grass is converted into milk."

Learning to wait is one of the most important virtues. We can wait a while then get tired ... it is useless. We can wait a little bit ... it is useless. We can wait impatiently. It does not help either. You will have to wait for the right time with a good attitude.

Some have said that the hope for tomorrow rots in the long wait, because it is very difficult to love when love does not arrive. But remember that you must always hope without despair, trusting that in due course the Lord will give you what you need.

The icy coldness of others may freeze the pure water of your well. But with time, when the Lord will dispose the ice will melt and all will come in the open, to claim the truth for which you fight and live. "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed." Matthew 10: 26.

Patience is one of the golden coins that are kept in the cabinet of human virtues. Whoever possesses it is rich. It can extinguish many fires, win many friends, and eat the fruit of the earth. Do you possess this fruit of the Spirit?

Impatience causes pain, it does not uplift you nor ennoble you; it never corrects you, nor satisfies all parties concerned. Frowning, bad mood, hostility, violence and anger are the fruit of this tree.

Do not be impatient with those who prosper while violating the laws of God. Many times those who win are those who lose and those who lose are those who win. Jesus said that we must die to live: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John 12: 24.

A patient Christian gives a good testimony to the gospel of Jesus Christ and by his attitude shows the character of those who belong to the people of God at the end of time. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Apocalypse 14: 12.

# PERSEVERANCE

(Constancy, tenacity, firmness)

A good walker knows that only by persisting in his course will he one day arrive to his final destiny. Are you doing the same thing in your life of faith?

Success has perseverance as a mother, its father is called courage. Defeat was caused by a father named discouragement and a mother called cowardice. Now you know what you must do to be successful.

In your journey to infinity take one step then another, then another and another ... progress without stopping, searching to find the source of eternal water.

Do not weary in well doing. Persevere in the path of rectitude. There is a trophy for those who continue and this is the best way to do good on this earth. "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing." 2 Thessalonians 3: 13.

A glorious destiny is not synonymous with a flawless ride. Elijah became discouraged and wanted to die at some point in his life. But he continued his struggle and persevered in what he knew was right. In spite of his mistake he recovered and God took him up to heaven. What a wonderful privilege! You see? Despite this difficult moment for Elijah this did not influence on his final destiny. We all have bad times. It is persevering each day doing well that will lead you to holiness.

It is not enough that one day you put yourself on the right side, that you do good deeds from time to time and sometimes you pray or you read the Bible. All this must be done daily and persistently over time.

Those who have done good for many years but at the final moment of life drop everything, this will have served them nothing. Do not be one of them; persevere in doing good until the end of your days: "but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." Matthew 10: 22.

The world is full of impatient people, inconstant, fickle and changeable. But this class of people will never reach the top of the mountains, they remain in the plain. Would you not like to reach heaven's heights? It is only a matter of persevering in faith.

If it was easy to persevere everybody would. The fruit that produces perseverance have such a high value that is precisely why it is so difficult. But in Jesus you do not have to worry, He will help you persevere in your determination to do what is right.

A drop of water is insignificant, but if it persists it can slowly end up leaving a mark on the stone. You may think your small daily actions are useless, but if they are full of love and are constant, you can make an impression on society, on consciences and hearts. Important men and women in history have done the same.

Persevere in what is right, do what the Word of God teaches you, that will help you be strong in the Lord. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Revelation 3: 10.



## PRAYER

Be sailors on the sea of life. Get acquainted with your boat, which is your body, your mind. Each day of your life is still an experience. Perhaps soon you will find yourself immersed in serious problems, but this also happens at sea. It can rain, winds are contrary, dangers, but the good sailor does not give up in the face of danger, He uses his intelligence and courage to win the battle with the sea. This is how so many have discovered new continents. Daily communion with the Lord strengthens you to fight in the major battles of life and so one day you will arrive to the safe haven of heaven.

If you pray a lot you will grow a lot. If you pray a little you will suffer spiritual dwarfishness. Follow Paul's advice: "Pray without ceasing." <sup>1</sup>Thessalonians 5: 17.

The Lord's answer to your prayers will not always agree with what you expected. You can fall into the mistake of giving the solution to the Lord and go on living, hoping for that answer. Leave room for divine will. Jesus is your example in this. In the garden of Gethsemane He begged the Father to spare Him the bitter cup, but He added: "if it is not possible," "Thy will be done!" Matthew 26: 42.

All men's prayers find a place in God's bosom. Regardless of who offered them or at what time they are made or in which language they are formulated. The Lord receives all petitions and answers every sincere cry.

Each day brings you a new dawn. May the first occupation of the day be your communion with God, welcoming the opportunity He offers you to live and to be able to put all your plans in His hands, your work, your concerns and your projects.

There are people who spend their lives complaining. They complain about their hardships, their disappointments, their studies, their work, their parents, their brothers and sisters, their spouses, their economic situation or any other thing. They have not learned that there is power in prayer and silence. Do not put your burden on others; it would be an injustice, because others have their own crosses to bear.

Christ invites you to cast on Him your concerns, your needs, your frustrations, and your pain through prayer. Why should you not try? You lose nothing and you have everything to gain, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." <sup>1</sup>Peter 5: 7.

When you pray you open your heart to God; He does not need to know what you think, what you want, what you need, what situation you are going through... because He knows everything about you; but prayer helps you to be in communion with your Creator, who likes to open the flood-gates of His blessings when you present Him your needs.

The Lord has promised that whatever you ask Him He will give you, if you look for Him you will find Him and if you knock He will open. What do you lose by trying? Is not this a great offer? Do not belittle it! "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Luke 11: 9, 10.

# PURITY

Mud stains clothes but not the soul. Do not let your soul be contaminated by the mud of sin. Keep it pure for God and men.

Vices produce transitory pleasures and always leave deep wounds in the soul and body. Do not get discouraged if you see other young people enjoying their pleasures, they are enjoying themselves only apparently, but they are mortgaging their souls, their health and happiness. Continue building your purity!

The biggest challenge you have to face is that of being pure and honest. Vulgarity, lust and corruption are on the easy path of many. But their end is degradation and death.

When those who rule the nation have not learned to rule themselves, the results of their mandate can be foreseen. Do not let passions dominate you. Learn how to dominate them and you will have learned the most important lesson of your life.

Pure gold like some vessels of the sanctuary of the Hebrews were made as a symbol of the pure life of Jesus, His perfect grace, His complete divinity. To be one day in the heavenly sanctuary, you must cultivate purity in your life; the Word of God teaches: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart." Psalm 24: 3, 4.

The fact that you are young does not mean you can give rein to your impulses. Young people as adult have the same obligation to be pure. The Lord is your strength; He will not abandon you in your struggle. "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." 1 Timothy 4: 12.

The parameters that the world uses to measure an individual are not the same used by the Lord. But you do not need to be measured by the world, your measure comes from the Lord and He says: Higher! Higher in faith! Purer! Holier every day! Your goal is to obtain a character like Christ's. And you're not alone in the struggle, the Lord promised His help.

The path to purity ascends, never descends. Your faith in Jesus will help you grow in holiness. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John 3: 3.

When you practice degrading habits your purity dies and without purity your mind is weak, your life is poor, your faith limps, you do not have any strength and you cannot be an instrument of salvation for others souls because you are lost. Make the decision to break any habit that enslaves you. The Lord will help you, but remember! The decision is yours.

# RESPECT

People must love each other very much, tenderly, with respect, but keep their individuality. Remember that you are not allowed to dominate over the other.

Nobody has the right to kill someone. God is the only one who gives us life and He claims it. Do not let alcohol, tobacco, drugs, bad habits or ideas take your life or that of your neighbour.

The Lord gives the breath of life and supports our existence up to a certain time, according to His wise designs. Now, if you take the right to decide about the life of another, that is a crime, like Cain did with his brother Abel; we attribute ourselves a prerogative that belongs only to God. And it does not matter if the crime is committed in time of war or in a state prison or attacking someone to steal him, or for revenge, or pleasure, whatever the manner of killing, it is always transgressing God's commandment that says: "Thou shalt not kill."

Do not reject anyone for the colour of his skin, because ultimately you, just like him, have been created by the same God. Skin colour does not make us either better or worse. What matters is the heart and the blood of everybody, which is life, which is the same colour. Do not extinguish the other's tears with the water of reproach, because instead of suffocating them you will only revive them.

How nice that you still have your parents! Protect them, love them and they will be grateful. Respect them. One day you will not have them any more with you, enjoy the moment and show them all your love; the law reciprocation will work out that your children will do the same for you. In addition, it is the only commandment with a promise: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Exodus 20: 12.

Remember the law of reciprocation. If you are disrespectful to someone, he will not respect you. If you respect, you will be respected.

Respect of others' individuality is a sacred duty, especially in matters of conscience: "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts 4: 19, 20.

When you are with people who do not share your faith, do not censor them with violence, do not ridicule them, do not despise them, respect them and treat them with kindness. This will be another argument for the truth you are trying to convey.

Many times it could happen that the truth you share may be obscured by a lack of consideration and deference to the listener on one hand, on the other it could be magnified if accompanied with respect even toward the bitterest enemies.

Respect must be shown to everybody and in a special manner toward government authorities, parents, pastors and those who have heavy responsibilities. This does not only honours them, but it dignifies you in a special way.

Demonstration of appreciation and respect for others is like a boomerang: it will return to you.

If you want to honour God, respect Him by respecting His children, for the good you do to others you do to God: "And the King shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matthew 25: 40.

## SALVATION

(Redemption, Eternity, glorification, resurrection, death)

To enjoy eternity is free. But you have something to do to get there: You must accept the gift.

Your soul is thirsty for the infinite. This is something natural, because you were created to enjoy in eternal fragrances. Enjoy this blessing.

Will the struggle between good and evil end one day? Yes! Have no doubt about it, Jesus has promised. This is not a belief of any kind, although most people do not believe it; it will arrive at the time foreseen by God, believe it or not. Then eternity will begin for those who love God. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Revelation 21: 4.

A Bulgarian proverb says that repetition is the mother of wisdom. Oh! Read again and again the history of redemption to become intelligent about things eternal.

Maybe you have lost someone special in your life. This is not an easy experience to cope with. But faith in the promises of Jesus will help you see beyond the lifeless body, towards that glorious future when the Lord will revive those who believed in Him and who will inhabit a land where there will be more suffering.

How would you consider people to whom someone gave a great treasure and they would refuse it? Not very smart, is not it? However, is that not what most people do when they deny the eternal extraordinary treasure?

The vision of eternity did that men like Joseph, Daniel, David, Paul and others, did great things for Christ and men. The gospel of Jesus does not dishonour anyone, but scepticism, unbelief, lack of Christian principles plunge thousands of people in the mire of degradation.

There is a big difference between being called a Christian and living as such. There are nominal Christians and Christians living Christ. Some accept the gospel for all the benefits they can reap in this world, but as soon as they must bear their cross they become discouraged and deny their faith. They consider the various trials in which they are submitted as barriers to heaven; do not let discouragement rob you of the ultimate eternal reward.

The kingdoms of this world will end and the saints will receive the kingdom of God for eternity: "But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." Daniel 7: 18. Is it not worth fighting for this ideal? To be holy is possible with God's help.

The Lord would not put before you an eternity that would interest you but impossible to reach. Eternity is an attainable reality for you and all those who desire it.

Jesus is the way to eternity, accept Him, love Him, obey Him, trust Him and do not worry, He will put into your hands the eternity that is His. "This is that bread which came down

from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever." John 6: 58.

After that man had the opportunity to contemplate the earth from a space shuttle, his vision of small or large, finite or infinite completely changed. Today we have powerful telescopes, space shuttles that went far beyond the moon and have only confirmed that we live in an infinite space. What is so extraordinary then that Christian teach that God, who created this infinite space, is eternal and is willing to give this eternity to those who love Him?

Those who cling to sin will perish with it, but those who abandon sin will live forever with Jesus. Abandon sin, dear youth, do not delay to take your decision, you have everything to gain.

It is precisely the gift of eternal life which should stimulate you to show gratitude to the Lord by your good works. Before a gift of such magnitude, give your life to Jesus, believe in Him, love Him, obey Him and proclaim His truth. Not to win or deserve or conquer heaven, but in gratitude for the immeasurable love that He showed toward you, for salvation has been won for you.

Sin separates you from God; grace brings you closer to Him and gives you the right to be called his 'child'. Choose wisely and put your trust in Jesus.

In Jesus there is redemption in abundance, Psalm 130 says so. "Abundance" is more than the mere presence of something. A little water is not the same as water in abundance. The difference can be noted between a glass of water and the ocean. The Psalm tells you that the plan of redemption spared nothing to redeem man. You may be redeemed by the blood of Christ. It's your decision.

The work of God is to raise man from the depths of sin and bring him to the summit of holiness. The work of man is to let God do it. Will you not let Him do it?

When your soul yearns for salvation as one who is drowning sighs for lack of air, this is the inevitable sign that the Spirit of God is drawing you to Him: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God!" Psalm 42: 1.

The fruit of justification by faith is to lay the glory of man in the dust. In the work of redemption there is no particle of human glory: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2: 8.

Why do you live with the desire to climb the highest summit of the earth when you can by faith, reach for the stars of the universe?

## SERVICE

(Sharing, missionary work)

Sing to life, dream, love and help others. That's the only thing that will give you satisfaction. It is the work of Jesus!

Put in the service of Jesus your hands, your eyes, your feet, your voice, and singing, everything you are. Tell Him you want to be clay in the Potter's hand so that you can become a vessel of honour.

If the love of God is born in you, project it on others, do not keep it for yourself. Thus you will grow and become as tall and as strong as the American sequoias.

Only people who forget themselves and dedicate themselves to others might be called "blessed." The rest of the people are unhappy. It is your duty to know and make the law of service yours.

Sharing makes rich. To keep for oneself makes poor. When you share, you have more.

A handshake and a smile can win worlds. A stern look and rash words can make you lose everything.

The work of comforting the afflicted is divine. In consoling you do the work of Jesus. If you shut yourself in, you will eventually also be afflicted.

Sow the seeds of truth and love in the heart of those you meet. This is the best contribution you can make to humanity. One day you will find trees of righteousness and love that will give you shade.

Jesus, when He was on the cross, cried "I thirst." He knew that everything had been done, and that was His last hour. He was thirsty ... no helping hand offered Him fresh water to quench the horrors of His thirst. Only a sponge with vinegar was fixed to a spear and raised to His lips. After refusing it, He exclaimed: "It is finished" and bowing His head He gave His life to His Father. Would you have wanted to give water to Jesus at that time? You can do it today in the person of his children.

The blessings you receive are not for you to monopolize, but to be shared with others.

Put yourself to work every day to do something for others. You are wondering what you can do? Smile to your neighbours. Greet those you meet in the street. Offer your seat on the bus to elderly persons. Do something at home to relieve your mother, your father, your wife, husband or brothers and sisters. Be kind to your fellow workers. Give thanks for every little favour. Do not criticize. You cannot feel depressed with that attitude!

Many are sad because they are not loved. It is a waste of time. Grieve rather that you do not love others. Focus your attention on what you have to do for others and not so much about what others should do for you.

The law of service is the law of life. The law of selfishness is the law of death. Giving enriches you, denying impoverishes you. That is why a rich man may be poor and a poor

may be rich.

There is no need for you to go to China to preach the gospel; the people to whom you have to preach are close to you, maybe your next door neighbour.

Jesus gave a commission to all His disciples: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16: 15, 16. What answer will you give to the Lord?

In commercial criterion, if you give you become bankrupted, but by the spiritual criterion, if you give you get rich, " I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20: 35.



## TESTIMONY

(Example, preaching, missionary work)

There are men and women that the world will never forget ... they will never disappear from the minds of those who stayed behind, because they left an irreplaceable void. Their works have been a sweet perfume of love full of dedication and selflessness. Would it not be great that you became such a person? Why not?

If you want the world to change, start by first changing yourself. Only what one lives may have the power to persuade.

If you sow be sure that one day you will reap; what is not so sure it's the quality of your crop, obviously it will depend on the seed you have sown. Throw good seed in your field of life.

We're all sowers ... you with your joy, he with his hope, another with his sadness, another with hatred, another one with envy, and you?

A life of devotion and dedication is the most convincing evidence of the depth and truth of the gospel. Remember that your words have the weight and strength your attitude gives them, because actions speak louder than words.

What you are reveals what you have in your heart. "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Matthew 7: 16.

When you forgive sincerely, when you forgive the faults of others, without keeping a grudge; when you give a hand where it is needed; when you console the afflicted; when you are respectful and kind; when you are not angry in times of provocation, you are showing the face of Jesus.

There are different types of stars. You can be a shooting star that shines for a few seconds and then goes out or you can be a star that shines forever. It is your choice. If you live and preach the gospel you will shine forever: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel 12: 3.

The good example you give to others perhaps will not always give a good response in all; but what is certain is that a bad example rarely inspires and exalts anyone. Be a good reference and do not think what people may think or say about you. Jesus devoted Himself to spread goodness; in some hearts the seeds gave fruit and in other hearts the seeds did not find good ground.

## THE POWER OF GOD

The leper entreated Him to cure him, and Jesus healed him with a few words. How great! Which scientist, even well learned, would have with a few words healed leprosy? None, except God.

The good intention that many people have in their hearts is not enough. There is something missing: the ability to develop and express the virtues of the soul. This work cannot be accomplished in your own strength; you need the help of the Holy Spirit.

A musical instrument can be superb, but if nobody plays it, it does not give a sound. It is the same with your life: it may be wonderful but if the Lord does not touch the strings of your heart, your life does not make the harmonious sound of true happiness.

Remember that you cannot undertake alone any work, whether material or spiritual. You need God's help. The miracle of your capacity will arise when the divine power is combined with human shortcoming. That is why you should never think that you have managed to do this or that, it was God's gift to you.

The temptations to which you are submitted are not fortuitous. They come from the lower world of darkness and have the purpose to degrade you and erase in you the image of God. But never...! ... Oh ... never! ... will a temptation overcome you if you do not agree to it. Jesus is your helper: "But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16: 33.

Have you done everything in your power about what is bothering you and you have not found a solution? Time has come then to leave your problem in the hands of God: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." 1 Peter 5: 7. If you had done it from the beginning it is very likely that the solution would have been found.

The palm of your hand can contain a drop of water and play with it. The world can contain an ocean. The world is like a grain of sand in the vastness of the universe and God takes it in the palm of His hand. In the same way you can control the drop in your hand, God controls this world and the vast universe in the palm of His hand and He sees you, as the most beloved object of His creation. Is that not a wonderful thought?

When the terrible burden of temptation pins you to the wall, it is not easy to stay on the side of right principles. Jesus teaches you that if you trust Him and seek His help, you can overcome as He overcame: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jeremiah 33: 3.

## TIME

Time does not stop, even if it sees you pale and shivering with cold, time does not stop, it continues its unwavering course. Whether you are sad or happy, healthy or ill, time does not stop. It is a tireless traveller. Live then, intensely, every hour, every minute, live thanking the Lord.

Sometimes you want to grasp time in your hands, and subdue it as yours. But it slips through your fingers like a piece of soap. Live today! Live the moment! That should be your goal. Tomorrow belongs to the Lord.

You cannot save time as you save money to have it when you need it. The time that is not used today is lost forever. Propose yourself to use your time in such a way to make most of it and that it does not leave wounds in your soul. Live, but live for the Lord.

If you throw the anchor of your life in time past, many of your memories will keep on living, but it would be better to weigh anchor and move forward without allowing the past to interrupt you entering the port of the Promised Land.

Look to the time already spent in order to draw useful lessons for your life. One of these is that you will not repeat things that were unpleasant and negative. Live in such a way that in the future you will not have a past that will again cause you remorse.

You build your own story; the biography of your life is in your hands. It's true that you cannot stop time, but you can decide what kind of thoughts and actions you will fill it with.

Today and now are yours, yesterday has gone like a train in the distance when losing sight of it on the horizon, never to return. Decide today not to grieve the Spirit of God: "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Hebrews 3: 7, 8.

Do not waste your time in vain things, things transitory, this does not give you any satisfaction, but on the contrary, it leaves you empty. Take the decision to dedicate your time to build your character for eternity.

If you take time to meditate on the brevity of life, you realize that we humans have an urgent need to use our time wisely. We have but one life and the Lord grants it to us so that we make the best of it. Search for the necessary grace to live life well.

Organize your time so you can do all the things you have planned. Give time for everything and be determined in their realization.

## TRIALS

(Sadness, anxiety, fear, difficulties)

It is nice to have flowers that may be offered because it is a sign of love toward the person who receives them. And if they were picked undergoing pain because of their thorns, they are even more beautiful in the eyes of the person receiving them and the gesture is even more genuine and sincere.

You will always find obstacles in your life. Your job is to trust in the Lord and ask Him to help you excel them. If you ask important men they will tell you the same thing. If you ask Jesus, the most important man of all, He will tell you: "Ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. You have tribulation in the world, but take heart I have overcome the world." John 16: 33.

Solitude is sometimes desired and sometimes hated. Solitude can be the renewal of the spirit or a direct line to death. The loneliness of the homeless living under bridges, the solitude of the rich immersed among people and money. The loneliness of the world, your own solitude. Think about Jesus whenever you are alone. He too was alone in the most difficult moments of His life. But He did not despair; He trusted in his Father and overcame.

The tree needs to be pruned to grow better and renew its vigour. In the same way, God will prune you if you let Him. Tests will come in your life, difficulties, complicated situations, etc. That will require your absolute devotion, your dedication and your entire submission to the Lord. Supporting all, your character will be renovated and transformed into the image of God.

The life train goes on. Until when? Only God knows. The only thing you need to do is stay inside and not get off at the stations of difficulties.

If you proposed yourself to overcome in life, you must be prepared not to give up. Trials occur to all mankind, without respect to race, creed, culture and time. They are inherent to our nature. But facing them in the right way, they are the means established by heaven to rise up man's fallen nature: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1: 2-4.

Life adversities should not necessarily make you sink. For important men, these were their catapults to the top of success.

Even negative things can leave you some nice lessons. Simply extract the few drops of honey from the bitterness hidden from a superficial look. Paul taught: "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Romans 8: 28.

The path of righteousness and goodness always passes through Calvary; without the cross there is no spiritual discernment or fruitful live. "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9: 23.

It may be that sometimes in your life you find yourself in a situation where you do not know why you're here and if it is really worth it to continue struggling. You feel as if the roof of your house fell on your head and you feel alone and misunderstood. Discouragement will often walk in front of your door and greet you kindly. But never, oh never, never invite it to come inside.

When you fall under the weight of trials it is not because God did not help you but because you have not sought help in Jesus. He is willing to grant you the power to overcome sin and you can achieve it, others did: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." James 4: 7, 8.

I beg you, do not worry. The trial through which you are going may be very complicated and difficult for you but not for the Lord; for Him there is nothing impossible. Listen to His invitation: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee." Jeremiah 33: 3.

# TRUST

Why do you sometimes live dragging three heavy bags: one with problems of the past, one with problems of the present, and the third with problem you imagine will happen tomorrow? Live the present day intensely, leaving yesterday in the gracious hands of the Lord, and tomorrow in God's providence, He know always what is best for you and He will provide it. Entrust the present day to Jesus who promised that He will not forsake not abandon you, for you are worth far more than all the birds flying in the sky.

Doubts in Christian life infect the soul as leprosy destroys the skin. What to do with doubts? Simply leave them in the hands of the Lord. He will clarify what you need to know when He thinks it will be the convenient time and you will not have hurt yourself. Put all your trust in the Lord.

Nobody is infallible; you need Jesus' grace for the big events of life as for everyday's little things. If you turn your gaze away from Christ, you will go head on into the pit of despair; there, in a corner like a child who is afraid of darkness, you will lament ahead of time over your defeat.

To whine over things to come is to be scared of imaginary ghosts. To whine over the past, is to ruin today's precious time, which in reality is the only time you have to live and redeem in the best possible manner what you did wrong, and also build the future you desire.

"Renew or die", say the entrepreneurs, referring to their business policies. You must also start a renewal in your life to find again the strength of your first love. If the Christian does not renew himself day after day, he will surely ruin his spiritual enterprise. "Be born again." John 3: 3.

Each one of us has to decide in whom or in what we are going to trust. Your choice today will determine your entire future. Put your trust in the Lord; material things are instable as the weather, people change too; your capacities are limited: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Ephesians 6: 10.

The exercise to learn to trust the Lord and depend on Him daily will help you to fortify your faith, it will preserve your hope, strengthen you vision of eternal things and develop your will.

Oh! Do not be of those who forsake the Lord when things are rough or of those who forget the Lord when their financial situation is getting better. Be as the needle to the pole, always pointing north. Only an invariable trust in God will help you grow and give you a life full of happiness.

# TRUTH

(Error, lie)

The truth, what truth? Your's? Mine? There is only one truth: Jesus Christ. Your duty is to know it.

Pious lies do not cease to be lies, but they are dressed in a coat of hypocrisy. Tell the truth always, even if sometimes it hurts, even if you often lose, in the end you will win.

In order to know the truth you do not need to investigate error. The more you search the truth, the better you will discern lies.

Many people believe that a small lie is less serious than a big lie. In the world it is like this; but not for the Lord. Lying is lying, regardless of its importance. Decide to be always truthful.

A clear conscience produces peace, tranquillity, calmness, security, courage, firmness of character, while a defiled conscience provokes opposite effects. To establish the truth and be consistent with it is the most effective way to keep your conscience at peace.

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. Apart from Him there is no path, nor truth nor life. When He said it was the truth, it refers to everything He taught and which is recorded in His word and is the only means by which we can reach the Father: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14: 6.

One can deny the truth, intent to impair it, hide it, but in the end it always comes to the surface, like a cork; we can do whatever we want, it will always emerges.

A half truth is a perfect lie; it has in it the germ of truth and error. The element of truth induces people to accept the part of error.

If you want the truth of the gospel to make impression upon the mind of your listener, present it with humble simplicity, without vainglory, without pride, without aggressiveness, with love, without discredit and guided by the Spirit of God.

Great lies have caused great desolation and death in our world. But it is truth that has preserved this world from utter destruction. Insofar as you honor the truth, you collaborate to preserve this world and all that is good in it.

A lie repeated over and over again may be accepted as truth; that does not mean it is one. The devil's lie that Adam and Eve would not die if they ate the forbidden fruit was never converted into truth; human beings continue in sin and humanity is still harvesting the results of death.

Lie has a very short path; truth is a way that leads to heaven. Oh! May every young person decide to walk in the path of truth!

To be deprived of freedom is very painful but it is even worse to live a prisoner of your own mind. In prison you can be free mentally, while the prisoner of his own mind cannot enjoy the physical freedom of existence. Truth breaks your mental chains, "And ye shall know

the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8: 32.



# UNITY

"Unity is strength." Do everything you can to be one who provides peace, uniting people and being united with them, struggling to preserve this unity. Divisions dishonour Christ and afflict the lives of people and of the church.

There is no greater disaster for Christians than the lack of brotherhood; there is drought and loneliness in the wildernesses, even if they gather in beautifully designed churches full of people. The blessing comes when brothers and sisters live together in harmony. (Psalm 133: 1). You will not regret it if you do everything you can to foster harmony between brothers and sisters. Instead you will feel very happy.

How beautiful it is to understand others and to be understood by them! Look for understanding with the others based on the word of God; this is the key to peace and harmony between people.

You must not live ignoring your brother because you're both children of the same Father. If you hate him, you hate the Lord, if you like, you love the Lord. What you do to your brother you do unto the Lord.

The wind of discord has always blown throughout history; it has brought bitter complaints, tears, difficulties, disappointments, hatred, war, death, eternal enmity, displeasures, and resentments. Throw far away from you this bag full of rubbish! "Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it." Psalm 34: 14.

The world watches Christians and when they see that they have strife, feuds, hatreds and resentments, so they are glad and satisfied. Do not give place to the devil, dear youth, by wearing the garb of discord. Strive to demonstrate brotherly love: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." 1 John 4: 11.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost because the disciples of Jesus were perfectly united. The same unity should be manifested in the church today if we want to receive the latter rain. Then start working toward this unity.

Christian unity of same faith is a compelling argument for the gospel. Hatred, confrontation and controversy are one argument the enemies of the cause use to denigrate the people of God.

You hear from time to time that the people of God are composed of human beings who make mistakes, and this is true. But do not place yourself on this quicksand. With the help of the Lord, be a faithful Christian and strive for good social relations as it is here that Christians often fail.

# VANITY

It is not good to be conceited. Vanity burns human virtues and turns them into slag.

Do not take as reference the important people of the world; the world gives all the credit to those who are successful in science, technology, art or profession, and often we forgive them their faults overshadowed by their celebrity.

Apparently it does not matter whether famous or important people say dirty words, they live in sin, they are selfish and irresponsible, they lack solidarity and they are malicious. What is important is their work, their talent. Thus men and women are trained to disregard the most important work in life: to obtain a character like Christ's, instead of the vanity of the world.

After having lived a life of pleasure without restraint, Solomon came to a conclusion: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Ecclesiastes 1: 2. The problem is the evil he had done to himself, and the bad influence he had on others. He repented and tried to correct his actions and warn the youth of the danger to live far from God. Do you not think it is important to accept the advice of a sage?

It is not necessary to put one's hand into the fire to know it burns, others have done it and you've seen the results. Similarly you do not need to stand on the side of vanity to know that the only thing you get is a life devoid of meaning, because others have done so and this was their reward: "Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity: for vanity shall be his recompense." Job 15: 31.

That this prayer be yours: "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way!" Psalm 119: 37.

What can you brag about? Your work? Your home? Your intelligence? Your strength? Your beauty? Your money? Do not boast about anything because everything in this world is ephemeral. Cleave unto the Lord, because "The Lord reigns forever." Psalm 9: 7, and one who loves the Lord "...has an everlasting foundation." Proverbs 10: 25.

How little intelligence show those who care about life's vanities! It's like hanging a large stone around ones neck and throwing oneself into the sea. Would you hold on to the vanity of this life?

Oh, if only all the examples of these people who appear in the media, who lived ordinary lives and are reaping only sad results could help each young person tempted to follow the path of vanity! "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof ..." 1 John 2: 16, 17.

## WILL

The exercise of the will is human work; the transformation of character is of divine origin. Your work is to offer your will to the Lord so that He may lead it properly.

In the same way that God cannot force you to do good, and Satan cannot force you to sin. It's up to you. Decide well.

It is true that the Lord invites you to follow the path of good and to grow in holiness; for that He has given you the infinite gift of the Holy Spirit; but He will never force you to obey; He would never force your will, you have the last word. Enjoy being a free being.

Your faculties will be strengthened with the exercise of your will as muscles are strengthened by physical exercise.

Many people do not have their own proper will; they are merged into other minds and are not masters of their individuality. Despite all their efforts, they have no moral energy and responsibility. That may change if they submit themselves completely to Christ. He will take control of their lives and through the proper exercise of the will they can be freed from this slavery.

Dear youth, you may be free from any mental slavery through the power of Christ. His grace can give the breath of life to your dead faculties and give you the ability to do good. Paul believed so and expressed as follows: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4: 13.

Indecision, doubt, indifference, weakness attracts Satan's temptations, leading man towards the abyss. Knowing God's will is not enough, every young person must be able to dispose of his own mind, his soul and his body to execute that will.

Your progress in the Christian life can be successful if you have a good spiritual health. The exercise of willpower will help you to practice the noble virtues of Christianity. A small action will take you to another and this exercise will be converted into habits that ultimately produce an extraordinary effect on your character. It is a work that the Lord will not do for you, He left it up to you: "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Ephesians 3: 19.

The heights you can achieve in your life of faith do not depend on the Lord but yourself for the Lord will not force the will of anyone. The work of God is to help you climb the mountain of spiritual success, but not climbing it for you.

## WORDS

(Language, expression, communication, critics)

With one single word we can say many things. And if to this we add the way of saying it, tone, voice volume, etc., you can do good or on the contrary injure people. A single word may have the force of a hurricane. How much should you pay attention to what you say!

Mostly those who speak ill of others do so to lose sight of their own shortcomings. The more they talk about others the more they forget their own miseries. Do not be part of them, because you will destroy yourself while harming many people.

Garbage carried around by gossipers makes them smelly; you can smell their odour when they are approaching. The listener does nothing else than open his heart to the manure of the gossipers and becomes one of them. "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends." Proverbs 16: 28. Just speak edifying words, be like sweet perfume.

People who accuse others invariably seek a 'scapegoat' to unload their own sins on them. Prefer a thousand times to be accused wrongly than to sit on the accusers' bench. The psalmist said: "Blessed is the man... nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Psalm 1: 1.

Flattering words are sweet, but their effect is bitter. Do not be a flatterer. A sincere compliment is never too much, but passionate admiration can do great damage.

What is criticism? It is a deadly weapon in the hand of the wicked or the unconverted, which on one hand destroys the person using it and on the other injures the person against whom it is lifted. Be an enemy of criticism, get used to thinking and speaking well of others.

Those who use the strength of their hands or their weapons against those with whom they are speaking to force their opinions on them, are demonstrating not only that they are deprived of reason and justice, and the truth is far away from them as east is from the west. Use the power of your arguments to convince, not brute force.

Words are a blessing or a curse. There is a class of people who when they talk, take care to inspire, to encourage, to exalt...on the other hand there are those who hurt, offend, discourage. You have to decide what kind of language you will use, if your language is a balm or a poison.

It seems that there is nothing easier than to utter words, but more complicated is to live up to them. The duty of every Christian is to harmonize what he says with what he does.