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## **Rays From The Rose Cross Magazine**

### **What Is Spiritual Work?**

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At the gate the poor were waiting,  
Looking through the iron grating,  
With that terror in the eye  
That is only seen in those  
Who amid their wants and woes  
Hear the sound of doors that close,  
And of feet that pass them by;  
Grown familiar with disfavor,  
Grown familiar with the savor  
Of the bread by which men die!  
But today, they knew not why,  
Like the gate of Paradise  
Seemed the convent gate to rise,  
Like a sacrament divine  
Seemed to them the bread and wine.  
In his heart the Monk was praying,  
Thinking of the homeless poor,  
What they suffer and endure;  
What we see not, what we see;  
And the inward voice was saying:  
'Whatsoever thing thou doest

To the least of mine and lowest,  
That thou doest unto me!

'Unto me!' but had the Vision  
Come to him in beggar's clothing,  
Come to mendicant imploring,  
Would he then have knelt adoring,  
Or have listened with derision,  
And have turned away with loathing?  
Thus his conscience put the question,  
Full of troublesome suggestion,  
As at length, with hurried pace,  
Towards his cell he turned his face,  
And beheld the convent bright  
With a supernatural light,  
Like a luminous cloud expanding  
Over floor and wall and ceiling.

But he paused with awe-struck feeling  
At the threshold of his door,  
For the Vision still was standing  
As he left it there before,  
When the convent bell appalling  
From its belfry calling, calling,  
Summoned him to feed the poor.  
Through the long hour intervening  
It had waited his return,  
And he felt his bosom burn,  
Comprehending all the meaning,  
When the Blessed Vision said,  
'Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled!'

Ages and ages ago—so long in fact that it was almost as far away as yesterday—darkness enveloped the Earth and men were groping for the light. Some there were who had found it and who undertook to show men the reflection thereof, and they were eagerly sought. Among them there was one who had been to the city of light for a little while and had absorbed some of its brilliancy. Straightway men and women from all over the land of darkness sought him. They journeyed thousands of miles because they had heard of this light; and when he heard that a company was traveling toward his house he set to work and prepared to give them the very best he had. He planted poles all around his house and put lights upon them so that his visitors might not hurt themselves in the darkness. He and his household ministered to their wants and he taught them as best he knew.

But soon some of his visitors murmured. They had thought to find him seated upon a pedestal radiant with celestial light. In fancy they had seen themselves worshiping at his shrine; but instead of the spiritual light they had expected they had caught him in the very act of stringing electric lights to illuminate the place. He did not even wear a turban or a robe, because the order to which he belonged had as one of its fundamental rules that its members must wear the dress of the country in which they lived.

So the visitors came to the conclusion that they had been tricked and swindled and that he had no light. Then they took up stones and stoned him and his household; they would have killed him had it not been that they feared the law, which in that land required an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Then they went away again into the land of darkness and whenever they saw a soul headed towards the light they held up their hands in horror and said, "Do not go there; that is not true light, it is a jack- o-lantern and it will lead you astray. We know there is absolutely no spirituality there."

Many believed them and thus came to pass in that case, as so many times before, the saying that was written in one of their old books: "This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light."

As it was in that far-away yesterday, so also it is today. Men are running hither and thither seeking for light. Often like Sir Launfal they travel to the ends of the Earth, wasting their whole lives seeking for the thing that they called "Spirituality," but meeting disappointment after disappointment. But just as Sir Launfal, having spent his whole life in vain search away from his home, finally found the Holy Grail right at his own castle gate, so every honest seeker after spirituality will, shall, and must find it in his own heart. The only danger is that like the company of seekers mentioned, he may miss it because he does not recognize it. No one can recognize true spirituality in others until he has in a measure evolved it in his own self.

It therefore may be well to try to settle definitely "What is Spirituality?" to give a guide whereby we may find this great Christ attribute. In order to do this we must leave our preconceived ideas behind, or we shall certainly fail. The idea most commonly held is that spirituality manifests through prayer and meditation; but if we look at our Saviour's life we shall find that it was not an idle one. He was not a recluse. He did not go away and hide Himself from the world. He went among people, He ministered to their daily wants; He fed them when that was necessary; He healed them whenever He had the opportunity, and He also taught them. Thus he was in the very truest sense of the word a servant of humanity.

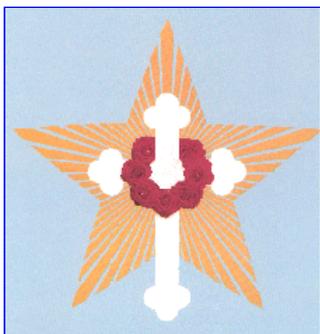
The monk in "The Beautiful Legend" saw Him thus when he was engaged in prayer, rapt in spiritual ecstasy. But just then the convent bell struck the hour of twelve and it was his duty to go

and imitate the Christ, feeding the poor who had gathered around the convent gate. Great indeed was the temptation to stay, to bathe in the heavenly vibrations; but there came the voice, "Do thy duty; that is best; leave unto thy Lord the rest." How could he have adored the Saviour whom he saw feeding the poor and healing the sick while at the same time leaving the hungry poor to stand outside the convent gate waiting for him to perform his duties? It would have been positively wicked for him to have stayed there; and so the Vision said to him upon his return: "Hast thou stayed, I must have fled."

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