



MEDIUMSHIP EDUCATION PHASE I

*"Unshakeable faith is only that which can
meet reason face to face in every human
epoch."*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SPIRITISM
ALLAN KARDEC

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ALLAN KARDEC. — D'après une photographie de M. Lavagna

Summary - Chapter 2

MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD

The future life. - The regality of Jesus. - A point of view. - INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS. An earthly regality.

1. Then Pilate entered into the judgement hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not of this world. If my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my Kingdom not from hence.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. (John, 18: 33, 36 & 37).

THE FUTURE LIFE

2. With these words Jesus clearly refers to a *future life*, which He presents in all circumstances as the goal which humanity must reach and which should constitute Man's greatest preoccupation here on Earth. Without a future life there would be no reason to have the majority of these moral precepts.

This doctrine can therefore be considered as the basis of Christ's teaching. Therefore it has been placed as the first item in this work. It must be the point to be most closely looked at, as it is the only one that justifies the anomalies and irregularities of earthly life and also shows itself to be in accordance with the justice of God.

3. The Jews had only very vague ideas as to the future life. According to them the observance of God's Law would bring worldly recompense. The public calamities and downfalls were a punishment for disobedience to these laws. Moses could say no more than this to those who were mostly shepherds or ignorant people who needed to be touched, before anything else, by worldly things. Later, Jesus revealed that there existed another world where God's justice follows its course. This is the world He promises to all those who obey the commandments of God and where the good find recompense. This is His kingdom, where He will be found in all His glory and to which He returned when He left Earth.

However, when adapting His teachings to the conditions of humanity at that time, Jesus did not consider it convenient to give them all the truth, for He saw they would only be dazzled by it and unable to understand. So He limited Himself, in a manner of speaking, to the presentation of a future life as a principle, as a natural law whose action no one could escape.

Therefore every Christian firmly believes in a future life. But the idea that many hold is still vague, incomplete, and because of this, quite false on various points. For the majority of people it is nothing more than a belief, void of absolute certainty, so this is why there are doubts and even incredulity.

Spiritism has come to complete this point, as well as many others touched on by the teachings of Christ, now that Man is sufficiently mature as to be able to learn the truth. With Spiritism a future life is no longer an article of faith, a mere hypothesis, but becomes a material reality as facts demonstrate, because those who have described it to us have all been eye witnesses, so that not only is doubt no longer possible, but also anyone of whatever intelligence is able to get an idea of its many varied aspects, in the same way that we can imagine what a country we have never visited is like by reading a detailed description of it. But this description of the future life is circumstantiated to such an extent, the conditions of existence for those who reside there, be they happy or unhappy, are so rational that we are bound to agree that it could not be otherwise, that it represents the true justice of God.

THE REGALITY OF JESUS

4. The title of 'King' does not always imply temporary authority. We give this title by unanimous consent to anyone who, by their own talent, rises to the highest level of whatever idea, who dominates his time or influences human progress. Does not this kind of royalty, coming from personal merit or having been consecrated by posterity, reveal in many cases a supremacy far greater than that which circles a royal crown? The first is imperishable, whereas the second is but a toy of the vicissitudes. The generations which follow the first always bless themselves, whereas sometimes those who follow the second have cause to curse. The earthly one extinguishes with life; but the sovereignty of morality continues and maintains its reign, ruling above all after death. From this aspect then, is not Jesus a mightier and more powerful King than all the sovereigns of the Earth? It was with good reason then that He said to Pilate: "I am a King, but my Kingdom is not of this world".

A POINT OF VIEW

5. The clear and precise idea which can be formed of a future life provides an unshakable faith in what is to come. This faith places enormous consequences upon the moralization of Man because it completely changes *the point of view as to how life on Earth is regarded*. For those who place themselves by means of thought in the spiritual life, which is undefined, bodily life becomes a mere temporary stay in an ungrateful country. The vicissitudes and tribulations of this life becoming nothing more than incidents, which can be supported with patience as they are known to be of short duration and will be followed by a more amenable state. Death no longer has terror attached to it; ceases to be a door opening on to nothingness and becomes a door that opens to liberation, through which the exile enters into a well-blessed mansion, and there finds peace. Knowing that the place where we find ourselves at the moment is only temporary and not definite, makes us pay

less attention to the preoccupations of life, resulting in less bitterness and a more peaceful Spirit.

Simply by doubting the existence of a future life, Man directs all his thoughts to earthly existence. Without any certainty of what is to come he gives everything to the present. A mistake, a deception, an unsatisfied ambition, an injustice to which the person has fallen victim, hurt pride or vanity, to name but a few, are just some of the torments which turn existence into an eternal agony, so in this manner causing *self-inflicted torture at every step*. From the point of view of earthly life, in whose centre we place ourselves, everything around us begins to assume vast proportions. The harm that reaches us, as well as the good that touches others, takes on a great importance in our eyes. From this it follows that the value given to earthly things is completely in reverse to that which comes from a firm belief in a future life.

6. The desire for comfort forces Man to better all things, seeing that he is impelled by the instinct of progress and conservation which are part of the Law of Nature. Therefore, he works not only through necessity but because he wants to, and because of a sense of duty, so obeying the designs of Providence which placed him on Earth for that purpose. Only a person who occupies himself more with the future can give relative importance to the present. This person is easily consoled in all his failings and misfortunes by thinking of the destiny that awaits him.

Accordingly, God does not condemn all earthly pleasures and possessions, but only condemns the abuse of these things in detriment to the soul. All those who take these words of Jesus for themselves: *My Kingdom is not of this world*, are guarding against these abuses.

7. Spiritism shows us that this life is nothing more than a link in the magnificent, harmonious assembly which is God's work. It also shows us the solidarity which joins together all the different existences of one being, of all beings of the same world, and all the beings of all the worlds. It offers the base and the reason for universal fraternity, whereas the doctrine of the creation of the soul at the birth of the body, makes each creature a stranger one to the other. This solidarity between parts of a whole explains what is inexplicable when only one of these parts is considered. This entirety would not have been possible to understand at the time of Christ, and for this reason He waited till later to make this knowledge known.

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY MANSIONS

The different states of the soul in its spiritual wanderings. - The different categories of inhabited worlds. - Earth's destiny. - The cause of earthly miseries. - INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS: Superior and inferior worlds. - World of tests and atonement. - Regenerating worlds. - The progression of the worlds.

1 - Let not your heart be troubled: Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions: If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (John, 14: 1-3)

THE DIFFERENT STATES OF THE SOUL IN ITS SPIRITUAL WANDERINGS

2 - The house of the Father is the Universe. The 'different mansions' are the worlds which circulate in infinite space and offer the Spirits who incarnate on them dwelling places which correspond to their progress.

Independently from the diversity of the different worlds, the words of Jesus also refer to the fortunate or wretched states of the soul in the spirit world. Conforming to whether the soul is more or less purified and detached from material ties, the ambient in which it finds itself will vary infinitely: in the aspects of things, in the sensation it feels and in the perceptions it has. While some cannot leave the ambient where they live, others raise themselves and travel all over space and the other worlds. While some guilty Spirits wander in darkness, there are others who have earned happiness and these rejoice in a state of shining brightness while they contemplate the sublime spectacle of the great infinity. Finally, while inferior spirits are tormented by remorse and grief, frequently isolated without consolation, separated from those who were the object of their affections and punished by the iron gauntlet of moral suffering, the just Spirit, together with those he loves, enjoys the delights of an indescribable happiness. Also in that sense there are many mansions, although they are not circumscribed or localised.

THE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF INHABITED WORLDS

3 - As a result of Spirit teaching, we know that the condition of the various worlds differ one from the other, with respect to the degree of elevation or inferiority of their inhabitants. In the inferior worlds, existence is all material, passions are sovereign and morality is almost nil. At the same time as the soul is progressing the material influences diminish, to such an extent that in the elevated worlds life is, by way of saying, all spiritual.

4 - In the intermediate worlds good is mixed with evil, one or the other predominating according to the degree of advancement of the majority of the inhabitants. Although it is not possible to make an absolute classification of the different worlds, we can at least divide them in general terms as follows: primitive worlds, destined to receive the initial incarnations of the human soul; worlds of tests and atonements, where evil predominates; regenerating worlds, where souls who still have to atone may absorb new strength; blessed worlds, where goodness outweighs evil; celestial or divine worlds, inhabited by purified Spirits, where only goodness exists. Earth belongs to the category of worlds of tests and atonements.

5 - Spirits who find themselves incarnated in any world are not bound to that same world indefinitely, nor do they go through all the phases of progress needed to achieve perfection in that one world. When they reach the maximum degree of advancement their world has to offer, they then pass on to a more elevated one, and so on successively till they reach the state of purified Spirits. It is a recompense to ascend to a world of higher elevation, just as it is a punishment to prolong their stay in a miserable world, or to be relegated to another even more unhappy than the one they were forced to leave, due to persisting badness.

EARTH'S DESTINY

CAUSES OF HUMAN MISERY

6 - Many are surprised that on Earth there is so much badness, so many crude passions, so many miseries and every kind of sickness. From this, they conclude, the human species is a very miserable one . We must consider, however, that the entirety of humanity is not all on Earth, but only a small fraction of the total. In effect the human species covers all those endowed with reason who inhabit the innumerable orbs of the Universe. The material and moral situation of terrestrial humanity is not surprising, when we take into consideration the destiny of the Earth and the nature of its inhabitants.

7 - It would be a great mistake to judge all the inhabitants of a city by those who inhabit the lowest and most sordid places. In a hospital we see none but the sick and mutilated; in a prison we find gathered together all kind of vileness, baseness and many vices. Well then, picture the Earth as a combination of a suburb, a hospital and an unhealthy place, because it is all of these put together. So then, we can begin to understand why afflictions outweigh pleasures.

Not all Humanity is to be found here on Earth. Man will leave this planet when he is cured of all his moral infirmities to go to happier worlds.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

INFERIOR AND SUPERIOR WORLDS

8 - In qualifying inferior and superior worlds there is nothing absolute. A world is relatively inferior or superior only in relation to those other worlds which may be above or below it on the scale of progression.

In taking the Earth as a comparison, we may get an idea of what an inferior world is like by supposing its inhabitants to be similar to the primitive races or members of the barbaric nations, examples of which are still to be found amongst us today.

In between the inferior and elevated levels are innumerable others. From the pure Spirits, dematerialised and brilliant with glory, it is impossible to recognise the primitive beings they once were...

9 - In worlds which have reached a superior level, the moral and material state is very different from that which exists on Earth. As everywhere, the form is always human, but it is more beautiful, more perfected and above all else, purified. The body possesses nothing of the earthly materiality and consequently is not subject to the same necessities, sicknesses or deteriorations which the predominance of matter provokes. Due to the higher refinements, the senses are able to capture perceptions which the gross matter of this world obstructs. The specific lightness of body permits rapid and easy locomotion.

Very advanced Spirits suffer only slight resistance to matter, thus allowing body development to be extremely rapid, making infancy short and almost non-existent. Life is proportionally longer than on Earth... Death in no way conveys any horror of decomposition; far from causing terror, it is considered a happy transformation... During life the soul, being no longer constricted by compact matter, expands itself and delights in a lucidity which places it in an almost constant state of emancipation and allows completely free thought transmission.

10 - In these blissful worlds... there are no masters nor slaves, none privileged by birth, only moral and intellectual superiority which establishes all conditions and which ultimately gives supremacy. Authority... is only given to those who merit it and is therefore always exercised with justice. *Man does not try to elevate himself above another but only above himself, by striving for perfection.* His objective is to ascend to the category of pure Spirit, although this desire is never a torment but rather a noble ambition which induces him to study ardently in order to become an equal. In these worlds, all the delicate and elevated sentiments of human nature find themselves exalted and purified. Through a greater or lesser degree of intelligence, Man acquires possessions of a smaller or larger quantity. However, nobody suffers from want as no one needs to make atonement. In short, evil does not exist in these worlds.

11 - Evil is still needed in your world in order to make known goodness..., sickness so as to be able to appreciate health. In those other world there is no need of these contrasts. Eternal light, eternal beauty and eternal serenity of the soul offer proportional eternal happiness, free from the perturbations caused by the anguish of material life and the contact with evil... who find no access to these realms. These are the things which cause the Human Spirit most difficult in understanding. Mankind has been sufficiently ingenious as to paint the torments of hell, but could never imagine the glories of Heaven. Because, being inferior, only pain and misery have been known and as yet the celestial brightness has never been seen. However, as progress is achieved he begins to comprehend the goodness which is before him, as he understands the evil which lies behind.

12 - Meanwhile, the happy worlds are not specifically privileged orbs, as God is not partial to any one of His children. To each one He gives the same rights as the same opportunities wherein to reach these worlds. He makes each one start at the same point... every category is accessible to all. It only depends upon the individual to conquer their place by means of work, so reaching it more quickly or remaining inactive for centuries and centuries in the quagmire of humanity. (*Summary of teachings from the Superior Spirits*)

THE PROGRESSION OF THE WORLDS

19 - Progress is a Law of Nature. All beings of creation, be they animated or not, have been submitted to this Law through the bounty of God... Even actual destruction... is only a means of reaching a more perfect state through transformation...

At the same time as living beings progress morally, so the worlds in which they live progress materially... We find that together with Man, the animals, which are his helpers, the vegetables and the habitations, are all constantly marching along parallel to one another.

... This world has been in a materially and morally inferior position to that which it finds itself in today, and it will lift itself up in both these aspects so as to reach a more elevated level. The time has now been reached for one of these periodic transformations, which will move the Earth upwards from a world of atonement to that of a regenerating planet where men will be happy because God's Laws will reign. - SAINT AUGUSTINE.

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Resurrection and reincarnation. - Reincarnation strengthens family ties, whereas a single life would destroy them. - INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS: Limits of incarnations. - The need for incarnation.

RESURRECTION AND REINCARNATION

4. Reincarnation was part of the Jewish dogmas, being taught under the name of *resurrection*. Only the Sadducees, who believed that everything ended with death, did not accept the idea of reincarnation. They believed that man could live again without knowing exactly the manner by which this could happen. They used the name *resurrection* for what Spiritism more correctly calls *reincarnation*. Resurrection presupposes a return to the same physical body, whereas science demonstrates that this is materially impossible. *Reincarnation* is the return of the soul, or Spirit, to physical life in another body which has been newly formed for it, and which has nothing to do with the previous one.

5. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it is listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto you, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen: and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall you believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? (John, 3: 1-12)

6. The idea that John had been Elias and that the prophets could relive again on Earth is to be found in many passages of the New Testament. If this was an erroneous belief, Jesus would have combated it as He did many others. But from this He gave it complete sanction and authority by making it a basic principle and necessary condition by saying: "No one may reach the Kingdom of God if he is not born again", and further insisted when He added: "Do not be surprised when I say it is necessary to be born again."

7. The words: *If man is not born again of water and Spirit*, have been interpreted in the sense of regeneration by means of the water of the Baptism.

8. To enable the real meaning of these words to be reached it is also necessary to pay attention to the significance of the word *water* which is not used here in its usual sense. The knowledge of physics was very imperfect in ancient times when it was believed that the Earth had risen out of water. Therefore water was considered to be the exclusive primitive generating substance.

According then to this belief, water represented the nature of matter, just as the Spirit represented the nature of intelligence. The words: "If man is not reborn of the waters and of the Spirit, or in water and in Spirit", thus signify-"if man is not born with his body and his soul". This is the manner in which these words were originally understood.

This interpretation is wholly justified by these other words: *What is born of the flesh is flesh and what is born of Spirit is Spirit*. Here Jesus established a clear distinction between body and Spirit. *What is born of the flesh* clearly indicates that *only* the body generates from the body and that the Spirit is independent.

9. The words: "*The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound but know not from whence it comes nor whence it goes*", are referring to the Spirit of God, who gives life to whom He wishes, or rather to the soul of man. The words "you know not where it comes from nor where it goes", signifies that we do not know who the Spirit had been previously or who it will be in the future. If the Spirit or soul was created at the same time as the body we would know where it came from because we would know its beginning. Whichever way you look at this passage, it confirms the principle of the pre-existence of the soul and subsequently the plurality of existences.

11. The principle of reincarnation expressed in the passage from Matthew, does not permit any ambiguity: *He is Elias, who was to come*. Here there is nothing figurative, nothing allegorical, only a complete affirmation.

REINCARNATION STRENGTHENS FAMILY TIES WHEREAS A SINGLE LIFE WOULD DESTROY THEM

18. Family ties are not destroyed through reincarnation as some would believe. On the contrary, they become stronger and closer. In space, Spirit entities form groups or families bound together by affection, sympathy towards each other, and by similar inclinations. Incarnate life separates them only for a while, so on returning to the spiritual world they again reunite. Frequently they will even follow each other into the incarnate form, coming here to be united in the same family or the same circle of friends and acquaintances, in order to work together for their mutual progress. When some members of the same spiritual family become incarnate and others not, they then continue their contact by means of thought. Those who are more advanced do everything they can for the less advanced, so helping them to progress.

It is understood, of course, that we refer to real affection, soul to soul, being the only love which survives after the destruction of the body. The only lasting relationships are those linked by spiritual affection, all carnal affections being extinguished together with the cause that brought them about.

19. The union and affection which can exist between relatives is an indication of former sympathies which have brought them together. God permits that in certain families these Spirits, who are uncongenial or strangers to each other, reincarnate with the dual purpose of serving as a test for some members of that family, and as a means of progress for others. In this manner, due to contact with good Spirits and the general care dispensed to them, the bad or wicked Spirits get better, little by little.

20. The fear that some people may have with regard to the indefinite increase in relationship due to reincarnation is basically selfish; proving a lack of love sufficiently ample as to be able to embrace a large number of people. In the spirit world a person will always encounter only those who had been the object of his affections, some of whom he would have been linked to here on Earth in various relationships, or perhaps even the same ones.

21. The anti-reincarnationist doctrine annuls all previous existences of the soul, no previous links would exist and all would be complete strangers one to another. With reincarnation ancestors and descendants may have known each other, lived together, loved one another and can reunite later on in order to further the links of sympathy even more.

22. All that refers to the past. So now let us look at the future. According to one of the fundamental dogmas that comes from the idea of non-reincarnation, the destiny of all souls is irrevocably determined after only one existence. *We should then be immediately and forever separated, without hope of ever being united again.* In this way fathers, mothers and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, and even friends would never be sure of seeing each other again; this then means the absolute rupture of all family ties. With reincarnation there is perpetual solidarity between incarnates and discarnates constantly consolidating the links of affection.

23. In conclusion, four alternatives present themselves to Man for his future beyond the tomb. Firstly - nothingness, according to the materialist doctrine; secondly - absorption into the universe, according to the pantheistic idea; thirdly - individuality with a fixed and definite destiny, according to the Church; fourthly - individuality with constant progress according to the Spiritist doctrine.

In the first two alternatives, family ties are interrupted at the time of death, and no hope is left for these soul of ever meeting again, in the future. With the third alternative, there is a possibility of meeting again, if each has gone to the same region, which might be either Heaven or Hell. But with the plurality of existences, which is inseparable from gradual progression, there is certainty of the continuity of relationships between those who love, and this is what constitutes the true family.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

LIMITS OF INCARNATION

24. "...Incarnation does not have clearly defined limits if we are thinking only of the envelope which constitutes the physical covering of the Spirit since the materiality of this covering diminishes in proportion as the Spirit purifies itself... According to the kind of world in which it lives, the Spirit reclothes itself with a covering appropriate to that world.

The perispirit itself undergoes successive transformations. It becomes more and more etheric, until it reaches complete depuration which is the state of all pure Spirits...

If we consider incarnation from the material view point, such as can be verified here on Earth, we can say that it is limited to inferior worlds. But it depends on each Spirit to liberate itself more or less quickly, by working towards purification. We should also consider that in the discarnate state, that is to say in the intervals between bodily existences, the situation of each Spirit depends on the nature of the world to which it is linked, by the degree of advancement it has acquired..." - Saint Louis (Paris, 1859)

THE NEED FOR INCARNATION

25. "The passing of Spirits through corporeal life is necessary in order that they may fulfil by means of a material action the purpose to which God assigned them... The activity which they are obliged to perform will help the development of their intelligence... Incarnation is a transitory state for all Spirits. It is a task imposed by God at the beginning of life, as a primary experiment in the use of the free-will. Those who discharge this task with zeal pass over the first steps of their initiation quickly, less painfully, and so are able to reap the fruits of their labour at an earlier date. Those who, on the contrary, make bad use of the liberty that God has granted to them, delay their progress and according to the degree of obstinacy demonstrated, may prolong the need for reincarnation indefinitely, in which case it becomes punishment." - Saint Louis (Paris, 1859)

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

BLESSED ARE THE AFFLICTED

The justice of afflictions. - Causes of present day afflictions. - Past causes of afflictions. - Forgetfulness of the past. - Motives for resignation. - Suicide and madness. - INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS: To suffer well or badly. - Evil and its remedy. - Happiness is not of this world. - Losing loved ones. - Premature deaths. - If he had been a good man he would have died. - Voluntary torments. - True misfortune. - Melancholy. - Voluntary trials. - The true hair shirt. - Should we end our neighbour's probation? - Would it be licit to hasten the death of someone incurably sick who is suffering? - Sacrificing one's own life. - Making one's own suffering useful to others.

1. *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew, 5: 4, 6 & 10).*

2. *Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now : for ye shall laugh (Luke, 6:20 & 21).*

But woe unto you that are rich! For ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! For ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh! For ye shall mourn and weep (Luke, 6:24 & 25).

THE JUSTICE OF AFFLICTIONS

3. The compensation promised by Jesus to the afflicted of this Earth can only be effected in a future life... Even with this certainty it is difficult to understand the convenience of suffering in order to be happy... Why do some suffer more than others?... Why is it that some never manage to achieve anything, while for others everything seems to smile?... Faith in the future can console and instil patience, but it does not explain these irregularities which appear to contradict God's justice. However, once God's existence has been admitted one cannot conceive Him as being less than infinitely perfect. He is naturally all powerful, all just and all kindness, without which He would not be God. If He is supremely good and just then He cannot act capriciously, nor yet with partiality. *The vicissitudes of life derive from a cause, and as God is just so then that cause must also be just.*

CAUSES OF PRESENT DAY AFFLICTIONS

4. The vicissitudes of life are of two kinds... Some have their cause in present-day life, while others arise outside this present life.

On going back to the origins of earthly misfortunes it must be recognised that many are natural consequences of character and the behaviour of those who suffer them.

Man himself, in a great number of cases is the cause of his own misfortunes. But instead of recognising this fact he finds it easier and less humiliating to his vanity to accuse his bad luck, providence or even his unlucky star... Only when Man works at bettering himself, both morally and intellectually, will he be able to avoid this category of suffering.

5. Human laws covers various faults and prescribe punishment... it falls principally upon those who cause damage to society and not upon those who only cause damage to themselves. God, however, does not allow any detour from the straight and narrow path to go unpunished... From this it follows that in small things, as in great matters, Man is always punished according to the manner in which he has sinned. The suffering which follows is always a warning that wrong has been done. This offers him experience and makes him feel the difference between right and wrong, good and bad, so that in the future these sources of bitterness may be avoided, but without which there would be no motive for betterment.

Nevertheless, sometimes experience arrives rather late, when life has already been wasted and become disordered... However as the sun rising on a new day allows the worker the possibility of repaying any lost time, so it is with Man that after a period of time in the tomb a new life shines forth which will enable advantage to be taken of past experience, and good resolutions for the future to be put into practice.

PAST CAUSES OF AFFLICTIONS

6. Although there are misfortunes in this life caused by Man himself, there are also others which seem to be completely strange to him and which touch him like fate... Why then are there these unhappy beings, when beside them, under the same roof, in the same family are others who have been blessed in every way?

Nevertheless by virtue of the axiom according to which *every effect has a cause*, these miseries are effects which have to have a cause, and if we admit that God is just, then that cause must also be just. Therefore as an effect is always preceded by a cause, and if that cause is not to be found in the present life, then it follows it must come from before this life, that is to say from a preceding life. God, being unable to punish goodness that has been done or badness that has not been done, it follows that if we are being punished then wrong must have been committed. If that wrong is not of the present life then it must come from a past existence.

Man is not always punished or completely punished in the present life, but he cannot escape the consequences of his faults indefinitely... Misfortunes which appear at first sight to be undeserved have their reason to be.

7. Sufferings due to causes prior to the present existence, as well as those which originate from present causes, are frequently the consequences of errors which have been committed. That is to say through the action of a rigorously distributive justice, we come to suffer what we have made others suffer.

It is only through the plurality of existences and the destiny of the planet as a world of atonement, which it now is, that we can explain the abnormalities in the distribution of happiness or unhappiness amongst good and bad alike... If we elevate ourselves, by means of thought, in such a way as to see a succession of existences, we will perceive that to each one is given what is deserved, after taking into consideration that which was gained in the spiritual world. Only then does it become apparent that God's justice is uninterrupted.

8. Tribulations may be imposed on Spirits who are ignorant or who have become hardened, in order to induce them to make a choice with knowledge of what they are doing. Repentant Spirits who wish to repay the evil they have committed and who desire to behave better, are free to make their own choice... Therefore tribulations are at the same time atonements for the past, for which we receive the deserved retribution, and also tests relating to the future, which we are preparing.

9. It is not to be thought, however, that all suffering in this world denotes the existence of a determined shortcoming... Nevertheless, it is possible that a Spirit, having reached a certain degree of elevation and being desirous of further progress, may request a mission or a task to perform by means of which he or she will be more or less compensated, depending on whether or not they are victorious, and according to the difficulty of the requested test.

...Beyond doubt the suffering which does not provoke complaint can also be considered as atonement. But this indicates it was voluntarily sought rather than imposed. This constitutes a test of our strength of resolution, which in itself is a sign of progress.

10. Spirits can not aspire to complete happiness till they have become pure. Any kind of stain prohibits entrance into the blissful worlds... The imperfections of Spirits are slowly overcome by means of various corporeal lives. The tribulations of life, when well supported, help them towards progress. They erase faults and find purification by means of atonement... Therefore, those who suffer greatly must realise that they have most to atone for, and should rejoice in the proximity of the cure.

FORGETFULNESS OF THE PAST

11. It is useless to object that forgetfulness constitutes a barrier against utilisation of experience acquired in past lives. If God considered it convenient that a veil be cast over the past it is because it is to our advantage that this be so. In fact, remembrance would be a great inconvenience... In any case it would certainly cause inevitable perturbation in social relationships.

...So in order that we may improve ourselves God has bestowed upon us precisely what we need, that which is sufficient and nothing more, this being none other than the voice of conscience and our instinctive tendencies.

Moreover, this forgetfulness only occurs during bodily existence. On returning to the spiritual world the remembrance of the past is regained. So it is only temporary, a slight interruption.

But it is not only after so-called death that the Spirit may recover remembrance of the past. It can be said that it is never lost, even whilst incarnate, as experience demonstrates that during sleep, being a period when a certain amount of liberty is enjoyed, the Spirit is conscious of its past acts. It knows why it is suffering and that it suffers justly. Memory is only extinguished during the course of exterior existence, in the life of relationships.

MOTIVES OF RESIGNATION

12. With the words: *Blessed are the afflicted for they shall be consoled*, Jesus indicates the compensation which awaits those who suffer and the resignation which leads Man to bless suffering as a prelude of the cure.

These words can also be understood in this manner: that one should be content to suffer, seeing that the pain of this world is the payment for past debts which have been incurred. Patiently supported here on Earth, these pains will save centuries of future suffering.

...Those who suffer are happy because they are paying their debts and also because after payment they will be free. However, if on acquitting himself on the one side, Man becomes indebted on the other, he will never find liberation. Therefore, each new fault only increases the debt, there being not one, whatsoever, which does not entail a compelling and inevitable punishment. If not today, then tomorrow; if not in this life, then in another... So if we complain about our afflictions, if we do not accept them with resignation, or if we accuse God of being unjust, we contract new debts which should have been gathered from these sufferings.

13. Man can soften or increase the bitterness of his trials according to the manner in which he regards earthly life... Those who see that life is but a point in eternity, comprehend the shortness of its duration, and recognise that this painful moment will soon pass... On the other hand, for all those who see only bodily life before them, the duration seems interminable and the pain oppresses with all its weight.

The result of looking at life in a spiritual way is a diminishing in importance of all worldly things... From these attitudes come calmness and resignation, so useful to bodily health as well as to the soul; whereas from jealousy, envy, and ambition Man voluntarily condemns himself to tortures and increases the misery and anguish during his short existence.

SUICIDE AND MADNESS

17. Spiritism presents to us the actual suicides, who inform us of the unhappy situation in which they find themselves, so proving that no one violates God's laws with impunity. God prohibits Man to cut short his own life... The Spiritist however, has various reasons against the idea of suicide: the certainty of a future life in which he knows that his happiness will be in proportion to his misfortunes and the degree of resignation shown while on Earth; the certainty that if he abbreviates his life he will in fact reap the exact opposite of the desired result. By liberating himself from a trial in this manner, he will consequently encounter another and far worse one in its place, longer and more terrible.

The Spiritist knows that... suicide is an obstacle which will prevent him joining those he loves and hopes to meet on the other side. From whence the consequences of suicide, which only brings deceptions, are against his own interest.

Summary - Chapter 6

CHRIST THE CONSOLER

The gentle yoke. - The promised consoler. - INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS:
The advent of the Spirit of Truth.

THE GENTLE YOKE

1 - Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke unto you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew, 11: 28-30)

2 - All sufferings such as miseries, deceptions, physical pain and loss of loved ones will find consolation from faith in the future and from confidence in God's justice, all of which Christ came to teach Man. On the other hand, for those who expect nothing after this life or who simply doubt, afflictions will seem heavier to them as they do not have any hope of mitigating their bitterness.

The assistance and happiness promised to the afflicted depends on one condition, which is to be found in the Law He taught. His yoke is the observance of this Law, but the yoke is light and the Law gentle because it only imposes love and charity as its obligations.

THE PROMISED CONSOLER

3 - If ye love me keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. Even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye shall know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John, 14: 15-17 & 26)

4 - Jesus promised another consoler: the Spirit of Truth. This is the consoler sent by the Father to teach mankind all things and to call to mind all that Christ had said.

Spiritism has come at the predicted time to fulfill Christ's promise. Presided over by the Spirit of Truth, it calls Man to observe the law and reveals all manner of things so making understandable what Jesus had said only in parable form. It has come to bring supreme consolation to the disinherited of this Earth and to all who suffer by showing them the just cause of their suffering and the useful purpose of all pain. Spiritism shows the cause of suffering to be in past existences and in the destiny of this planet, on which Man makes atonement for his past. It explains the object behind suffering by showing it as a salutary process which produces a cure and also as a means of purification, both of which guarantee future happiness.

In this manner Spiritism realises what Jesus said of the promised Consoler, by bringing knowledge of those things which allow Man to know where he came from, where he is going and why he is on Earth; so attracting mankind towards the true principles of God's law and offering consolation through faith and hope.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS.

THE ADVENT OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

5 - I have come, as I came on another occasion to those misguided sons and daughters of Israel, to bring the truth and to dissipate the darkness. Harken unto me! As my words in the past have done, so must Spiritism remind the incredulous that above them reigns the immutable truth which is the existence of the good God, the great God, who causes the plants to germinate and the waves to rise up. As a reaper, I have gathered in sheaves the scattered goodness in the breasts of humanity and said: "Come unto me, all you who suffer."

But Man with ungratefulness has moved away from the straight and wide path which leads to the Kingdom of my Father and has followed the bleak pathways of impiety. My Father does not wish to annihilate the human race; He wants the living and the dead, that is to say those who are dead according to the flesh because death does not exist, to assist each other mutually and listen no more to the voice of the prophets and apostles, but listen instead to those who no longer live upon Earth and who proclaim: "Pray and believe! Death is the resurrection and life is an ordeal you seek, during which the virtues you have cultivated will grow and develop, even as the cedar tree."

Those of you who are weak and know the obscurity of your own minds, do not deviate from the beacon which divine clemency has put into your hands so as to enlighten your pathway and reconduct you, who are lost children, once again to the bosom of the Father.

I am too much overcome with compassion for your miseries and by your immense weakness not to extend a helping hand to all those unhappily misguided who, while looking up to Heaven, fall into the pit of error. Believe, love and meditate on these things which are revealed unto you. Do not mix the chaff with the good seed, nor the Utopias with the truth.

Spiritists! Love one another, that is the first precept; educate yourselves is the second. Within Christianity you will find all the truths. The errors in which Man has become enrooted are all of human origin. Here from beyond the grave, where you thought there was nothing, voices clamour: "Brothers and sisters! Nothing perishes! Jesus Christ is the victor over all evil, you can be the victors over impiety." - THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH (Paris, 1860)

6 - I have come to instruct and console the poor disinherited. I have come to tell them to raise up their resignation to the level of their trials, and to weep, since pain was

consecrated in the Garden of Olives. But wait with patience, for the consoling angels will also come to them and dry their tears.

Workers, plan your path! Recommence the following day the wearisome labour of the previous day. The work done by your hands furnishes the body with earthly bread; however, your souls are not forgotten. I, the divine Gardener, cultivate them in the silence of your thoughts. When the time comes for repose and the thread of life slips through your fingers and your eyes are closed to the light, you will feel the surging within and the germination of My precious seed. Nothing is lost in the Kingdom of our Father. Your sweat and miseries form the treasure that will make you reach in the superior spheres, where light substitutes the darkness and where the most naked of you will perhaps become the most resplendent.

In truth I say unto you that those who bear their burdens and help their brothers and sisters are beloved by Me. Instruct yourselves in the precious doctrine which dissipates the error of revolt and shows the sublime object of human trials. As the wind sweeps the dust, so the breeze of the Spirits dissipates your resentment against the riches of the world, which are frequently very pitiable, since they are subject to more dangerous trials than yours. I am with you and My apostle will instruct you. So, you who are kept captive by life, drink from the living spring of love and be prepared to one day launch yourselves, free and happy, upon the bosom of He Who created you weak so that you might become perfect; Who desires that you model your own pliable clay in order to be the author of your own immortality. - THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH (Paris, 1861)

7 - I am the great Physician of souls and I have come to bring you the remedy that will cure. The weak, the suffering and the sick are My favourite children and I am come to save them. Come then unto me, you who suffer and find yourselves oppressed and you will be alleviated and consoled. Do not search for strength and consolation elsewhere as the world is impotent to offer them. God directs a supreme appeal to your hearts by means of Spiritism. Listen to Him. Eradicate impiety, lies, error and incredulity from your aching souls. They are like monsters who suck the purest of your blood and open wounds which are almost always mortal. Thus in the future when you have become humble and submissive to the Creator, you will keep His divine law. Love, pray, be gentle to the Spirits of the Lord and call unto them from the bottom of your hearts. Then He will send His beloved son to instruct you and to say these goodly words: "I am come because you called me". - THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH (Bordeaux, 1861)

8 - God consoles the humble and gives strength to the afflicted when they ask. His might covers the Earth and in every place, with each tear shed, He places a consoling remedy. Abnegation and resignation are a continuous prayer and contain profound teaching. Human wisdom resides in these two words. Would that all suffering Spirits could understand this truth, instead of clamouring against their pain and moral suffering which it behoves them to partake. So, take these words for your motto: *devotion and abnegation* - and you will be strong as they resume all the obligations which charity and humility impose. The sentiment of fulfilled duty will give repose and resignation to your Spirit. Then your heart will beat more steadily, your soul become more tranquil and your body be protected against despondency. This is why the body feels that much weaker according to how profoundly the Spirit is stricken. - THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH (Havre, 1863)

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara
Korngold)

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

What should be understood by the words 'poor in spirit'. - He who exalts himself shall be debased. - Mysteries that are hidden from the learned and prudent. - INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS: Pride & Humility. - Mission of the intelligent person on Earth.

WHAT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD BY THE WORDS 'POOR IN SPIRIT'

1. *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven (Mathew, 5: 3).*
2. ...By 'the poor in spirit' Jesus did not mean those devoid of intelligence, but the humble, in as much as He said that the Kingdom of Heaven would be for them and not for the prideful.

Men of knowledge and imagination, so called by public conviction, generally hold such high opinions of themselves and their superiority that they consider everything divine as being undeserving of their consideration... This tendency to believe they are superior to everything else very frequently leads them to deny anything which might be above them, even Divinity itself, for fear it might belittle them.... Taking the intelligence they possess as a measure for universal intelligence, and judging themselves able to understand everything, they are unable to believe in the viability of that which they do not know.

If they do not admit the existence of the invisible world and of a superhuman power, it is not because it is beyond their capability, but because their pride makes them revolt against the idea of something above which they are unable to place themselves and which would bring them down from the pedestal upon which they like to contemplate... They attribute to themselves such imagination and learning that they cannot believe in things which, according to their way of thinking, are only good for simple people, taking for *poor in spirit* all who take such matters seriously.

However, say what they like, they will inevitably be drawn into this invisible world they scoff at, together with everyone else. It is there that their eyes will be opened, so making them to realise their errors.

By saying that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to the poor in spirit, Jesus teaches that no one will be admitted without *simplicity of heart and humility of spirit*; that the ignorant person who possesses these qualities will be preferred to the wise person who believes more in himself than in God... For Man then, there is far greater value for his future happiness by being *poor in spirit*, as the world would understand it, and rich in moral qualities.

HE WHO EXALTS HIMSELF SHALL BE DEBASED

3. *At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. And who shall receive one such little child, in my name, receiveth me (Mathew 18: 1-5).*

4. *Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping Him, and desiring a certain thing of Him. And He said unto her, What wilt thou? She said unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy Kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with? They say unto Him, We are able. And He said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink from my cup and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with, but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand, is not mine to give, but it shall be given unto them for whom it is prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard it they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto Him and said, Ye know that the Prince of the Gentiles exercises dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life as ransom for many (Mathew 20: 20-28).*

5. *And it came to pass as He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath day that they watched Him. And He put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when He marked how they choose out the chief rooms: saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest rooms; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend go up higher; then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be debased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted (Luke 14: 1 & 7-11).*

6. These maxims stem from the principle of humility that Jesus was constantly presenting as an essential condition for the happiness promised to the chosen of the Lord... He took a child as a symbol of simplicity of the heart when He said: "The greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven shall be he who is humble and who is as a *little child*."

We find the same fundamental idea in the following maxim: *He who desires to be the greatest amongst you, let him be your servant*, and also in this: *He that humbles himself shall be exalted and he who exalts himself shall be debased*.

Spiritism confirms its theory through examples when it shows us that those who are great in the spiritual world are those who were small on Earth, and that frequently those who were great and powerful on Earth find themselves extremely small in the spiritual world.

Spiritism also shows another side of this principle within the process of successive reincarnations, when those who in one life have raised themselves to high positions, are then born into lowly conditions in a succeeding existence, if they have allowed themselves to be dominated by pride and ambition... Therefore, you should seek the most humble and modest positions, seeing that God will then give you a more elevated place in Heaven if you deserve it.

MYSTERIES ARE HIDDEN FROM THE LEARNED AND PRUDENT

7. *At that time Jesus answered and said: I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed the unto babes (Mathew, 11: 25).*

8. ...Jesus gives thanks to God for having revealed these things to the *simple and humble*, who are the poor in spirit, and for having hidden them from the *learned and prudent*... the former are those who are submissive, who humble themselves before God and do not consider themselves superior. The latter are those who are arrogant, full of pride for their worldly knowledge, judging themselves prudent because they deny God or who, when they are not refusing to accept Him, treat Him as an equal... This is why God has left them to discover the secrets of the Earth and revealed the secrets of Heaven only to the humble, who prostrate themselves before Him.

9. The same thing has happened today with the great truths revealed by Spiritism. Many of those who are incredulous are surprised by the fact that the Spirits take so little trouble to convince them. The reason for this being that it is preferable to look after those who seek with good faith and humility, rather than offer enlightenment to those who suppose they already possess it; who perhaps imagine that God should be very thankful for having managed to attract their attention by proving His existence to them.

God does not wish their eyes to be opened by force, seeing that they desire to keep them shut. Their time will come. But first it is necessary that they feel the anguish of darkness and so *recognise it is the Divinity and not mere chance which hurts their pride.* In order to overcome this incredulity, God uses the most convenient means according to each individual... God imposes the conditions and does not accept those who wish to impose conditions on Him. He listens kindly to those who direct themselves to Him with humility and not to those who judges themselves greater than He.

10. God first of all punishes their pride. He will never abandon any of His children since sooner or later their eyes will be opened, but He wishes this to happen of their own free-will. Then defeated by the torments of incredulity, they will throw themselves of their own accord into His arms, begging to be forgiven just as the prodigal son did.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

PRIDE AND HUMILITY

11. Humility is a virtue much forgotten amongst you. Of the many examples given very few have been followed. However, is it possible to be charitable to your neighbour without being humble? Of course not, because this sentiment reduces mankind to the same level by telling them they are brothers and sisters who should help one another mutually, which leads them to a state of goodness.

Pride is the terrible adversary of humility. If Christ promised the Kingdom of Heaven to the poor it was because the great ones of this Earth imagined their titles and riches to be recompenses, conferred upon them due to merit, and so considered themselves to be of an essence much purer than that of the poor... Is not the physical covering of the poor person just the same as that of the rich person?

Oh, you who are rich... Remember you will not be spared from death, for no one is...If you bury yourself in your pride, oh, how much you will have to lament! Then you will be deserving of great compassion.

...All men are equal on the divine scale of justice; only virtue marks the distinction in the eyes of God. All Spirits come from the same essence and all bodies are formed from the same matter. Your titles and names modify nothing. They remain in the tomb and in no way contribute to the possibility of enjoying the fortunes of the chosen. Their titles of nobleness are based solely on acts of charity and humility.

...Happiness still is not of this world. God will grant the Kingdom of Heaven to the poor and oppressed who have confidence in Him.

All you who suffer injustice from your fellow men, be indulgent with the faults of your brothers and sisters, pondering that you are not exempt from guilt. This is charity and also humility... Support courageously the humiliations put upon you by man; be humble and recognise that only God is great and powerful.

When Moses climbed mount Sinai to receive God's commandments, the people of Israel left to themselves abandoned the true God. Men and women gave whatever gold they possessed in order that an idol could be made for them to worship. Civilised Man still imitates them. Christ bequeathed His doctrine to you, giving examples of all the virtues, but you have abandoned these examples and precepts... Nevertheless, the god you have fabricated is still the golden calf which each adapts to his own tastes and ideas.

My friends... do good with humility. Let each one, little by little, begin to demolish the altars erected by everyone to their pride. In a word, if you are a true Christian you will possess the kingdom of Truth... However, if you remain insensible to the voices of the Spirits who have been sent to purify and renew your civilized society, which although

rich in science, is so poor in noble sentiments, then sadly there will be nothing left for you but tears and groans of unhappiness. - LACORDAIRE (Constantine, 1863).

12. Mankind; why do you complain about the calamities which you yourselves have heaped upon your heads?

Trouble has become generalised. Who is to blame if not you who have unceasingly tried to crush each other? It is impossible to be happy without mutual benevolence; but how can benevolence coexist alongside pride? Pride! This is the root of all your troubles. Apply yourselves therefore to destroy it, if you do not wish continually to perpetuate these fatal consequences. There is only one way which offers itself for this purpose, but it is infallible: take Christ's law as your invariable rule of conduct, that very same law which has been spurned or falsified in its interpretation.

...But pride shows itself ever indulgent to all who flatter it... Why must each one wish to place himself above their brother? Society today suffers the consequences of this fact.

...This state of affairs is always a sign of moral decay and decline. When pride reaches extremes it is an indication of an imminent fall, for God never fails to punish the arrogant.

...Open your eyes to the light! Here are the souls of those who no longer live upon the Earth, who have come to call you to the fulfillment of your true obligations. They will tell you... There, the greatest is the one who has been the humblest amongst the most humble of your world; he who has most loved his fellow beings will himself be the best loved in Heaven. If the powerful on Earth abuse their authority, they will find themselves reduced to a position of obedience to their own servants and lastly, humility and charity, who are as two brothers going hand in hand, are the most efficient means of obtaining grace before He who is Eternal. - ADOLF, Bishop of Argel (Marmande, 1862).

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

Simplicity and pureness of heart. - Sinning by means of thought. Adultery. - True pureness. Unwashed hands. - Offences. If your hand is the cause of an offence, cut it off. - INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS: Let little children come unto me. - Blessed are those whose eyes are closed.

SIMPLICITY AND PURENESS OF HEART

1 - *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God* (Matthew, 5: 8).

2 - *And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for such is the Kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them* (Mark, 10: 13 - 16).

3 - Pureness of heart is inseparable from simplicity and humility. It excludes all ideas of selfishness and pride. This was why Jesus took infancy as the symbol of purity and humility.

4 - Although the spirit of a child has lived before, it does not show itself as it really is right from birth. Everything in God's work is full of wisdom. A child needs special care which only a mother's tenderness can bestow, tenderness which stems from the frailty and ingenuousness of the child. For a mother, her child is always an angel and this is the way it must be in order to captivate concern. She would not be able to offer the same solicitude if, in place of ingenuousness, she saw virility and adult ideas in the infantile features, nor if she came to know the past of that incarnate spirit.

SINNING BY MEANS OF THOUGHT. ADULTERY

5 - *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time , Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart* (Matthew, 5: 27 & 28).

6 - Under no circumstances should the word *adultery* be accepted in the exclusive sense to which it is commonly applied, but rather it should be understood in more general terms. Jesus used it many times in a extensive sense to designate evil, sin and every type of bad thought.

True pureness is not only in behaviour but also in thought, since the person who has a pure heart does not even think evil.

7 - This principle naturally leads to the following question: *Do we suffer consequences for a bad thought even if it is not followed by the actual action?*

As the soul advances along its path to evolution and spiritualization, it will slowly become enlightened, and so little by little divest itself of its imperfections according to the greater or lesser goodwill it demonstrates within its freewill.

All evil thoughts result from the imperfections of the soul. But according to the strength of the desire to purify itself, the evil thought becomes a means of advancement when it is energetically repelled. In this way it will not give in to the temptation to satisfy an evil desire, and having resisted, the soul feels itself to be stronger and content with the victory.

On the contrary, the person who has made no good resolutions will look for every opportunity to practice evil, and if this is not achieved it will not be for the wanting, but for the lack of opportunity. This person then will be just as guilty as if he or she had actually committed evil.

To summarize, a certain degree of progress has already been achieved by the person who does not conceive the idea of committing evil; for the person who feels the urge but constantly repels it, progress is in the process of realization; for the person who thinks in terms of evil, taking pleasure in these thoughts, then the evil still exists in all its strength. But being just, God takes into account all these gradations when it comes to individual responsibilities for acts and thoughts

TRUE PURENESS. UNWASHED HANDS

8 - Then came to Jesus Scribes and Pharisees, which were in Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandments of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, honour thy father and mother: and, he that curseth father and mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, it is a gift, by whatsoever though mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.

And He called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Then came his disciples, and said unto Him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But He answered and said, every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch (Matthew, 15: 1 - 14).

9 - And as He spake, a certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with him: and He went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that He had not first

washed before dinner, and the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not He that made that which is without make that which is within also? (Luke, 11: 37 - 40).

10 - The Jews had scorned God's true commandments in order to cling to the practice of regulations which had been established by man. As it was much easier to practice exterior cult than to effect moral reform, *to wash hands instead of cleansing the heart*, Man became deluded, believing himself exonerated before God by conforming to these practices. Thus, seeing that the people were taught that God demanded nothing more of them, they remained the same as they had always been.

The verification of this can be found in the moral doctrine of Christ, which has ended up in second place and as a result many Christians, just like the ancient Jews, consider that salvation is better guaranteed by means of external practice rather than by moral practice.

The object of religion is to conduct humanity towards God. Therefore every religion which does not make Man better than at the present time, will never reach its objective. Everything which Man judges will support him in committing evil, is either false or had its principles falsified. Belief in the efficiency of exterior manifestation is null and void if it does not oppose the acts of murder, adultery, robbery, the causing of slander or damage in whatsoever form to whomsoever it may be.

The mere appearance of pureness is not enough, because above all else it is necessary to have a pure heart.

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK AND THE PEACEMAKERS

Insults and violence. - INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS: Affability and mildness.
- Patience. - Obedience and resignation. - Anger.

INSULTS AND VIOLENCE

1 - *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth (Matthew, 5:5).*

2 - *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God (Matthew, 5:9).*

3 - *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgement: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire (Matthew, 5: 21 & 22).*

4 - By these maxims Jesus makes meekness, moderation, docility, affability and patience the Law. Consequently condemning violence, anger and all discourteous expressions towards others.

Every offensive word expresses a sentiment that is contrary to the laws of love and charity, which preside over all human relationships, and between them maintain cordiality and union. By sustaining hate and animosity we are undermining reciprocated benevolence and fraternity.

5 - Jesus said: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth", which means that while awaiting heavenly riches, mankind has need of the Earth on which to live. Jesus is only recommending that we do not give more importance to worldly goods than to the others. By these words He wishes to say that till now worldly goods have been monopolized by those who are violent, to the detriment of the meek and pacific, who frequently lack even the necessities of life while others have superfluity. Jesus promises justice will be *done on Earth as it is in Heaven* because the meek will be called God's children. When humanity submits itself to the law of love and charity, then selfishness will cease to exist; the weak and peaceful will no longer be exploited or crushed by the strong and violent. This will be the condition of the Earth when this planet becomes a happy world because it has rid itself of all evil, according to the law of progress and the promise made by Jesus.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS.

AFFABILITY AND MILDNESS

6 - "Benevolence towards one's fellow-creatures, which is the result of loving your neighbour, manifests itself in the form of affability and mildness. However, it is not always a good thing to trust in appearance. Education and worldliness can give Man a thin veneer of these qualities... The world is full of such people with a smile on their lips but poison in their hearts; *who are mild as long as nothing irritates them, but who bite at the least provocation...*

Still in the category of those showing benign countenance, there are those domestic tyrants who make their families and subordinates suffer the weight of their pride and despotism. As if they are trying to get even for any constraints possibly imposed upon them while away from home...

Those whose affability and mildness are not mere pretence are never belied, for they are always the same whether in society or privacy. Besides, they know that although it is possible to deceive Man, no one can deceive God." - Lazarus (Paris, 1861).

PATIENCE

7 - "Pain is a blessing sent by God to all his elected; so when you suffer do not allow yourself to become afflicted; rather bless the Omnipotent Who, through the pain of this world, has chosen you to receive glory in Heaven.

Be patient, because this is also a charity; everyone should practise the law of charity as taught by Christ, Who is God's Envoy. Charity given to the poor in the form of alms is the easiest of all. However, there is another kind of charity which is much more laborious and so consequently offers higher merit. That is *to forgive all those placed in your pathway by God to act as instruments for your suffering and to test your patience...*

If on the one hand we observe with care the duties imposed upon us, and on the other recognise the consolations and compensations received, then we must admit that the blessings are far more numerous than the pains. When our eyes are raised up to Heaven our burdens appear to be less heavy than when our brow is bowed down to the earth.

Courage, my friends! Christ is your model. He suffered far more than any of you and had nothing to offer penitence for, whereas we must atone for our past and thereby fortify ourselves for the future..." - A Friendly Spirit (Havre, 1862).

OBEDIENCE AND RESIGNATION

8 - "The doctrine of Jesus constantly teaches obedience and resignation, two virtues which are the companions of mildness and activity... *Obedience is the consent of reason; resignation is the consent of the heart.* Both are active forces since they carry the burden

which has fallen upon them due to foolish revolt... Jesus was the very incarnation of these virtues, which were despised by material antiquity...

The virtue of this generation is intellectuality, the vice is moral indifference... Obey the great law of progress which is the promise of your generation... All prideful resistance will have to be overcome sooner or later..." - Lazarus (Paris, 1863).

ANGER

9 - "Pride induces you to judge yourselves to be more than you are and to repel any comparison which might discredit you. You consider yourselves to be so much higher than your fellow men or women, be it in spirit, in social position or even in personal advantage, that the least parallel irritates and annoys you. What happens then? You give way to anger...

Even impatience originating from contrarieties, and often childish ones at that, comes from the importance which each individual gives to their own personality, before which it has been given to understand that everyone should bow down.

In their frenzy, wrathful people hurl themselves at everything, from their own savage nature to lifeless objects, breaking them because they do not obey...

If we reflect that anger in no way helps, in fact it modifies our health even to putting our life at risk, then we would recognise that we are nothing more than our own victims. But above all, there is yet another consideration which should restrain us, that of the unhappiness this kind of behaviour brings to all those around us...

Anger does not exclude certain qualities of the heart, but it stops us from doing any good and may cause us to practise great evil. This then should be sufficient to induce mankind to make the necessary effort in order to dominate this trait. Moreover, for those who are Spiritists, there is an instigation to do this for yet another motive - that of anger being against charity and Christian humility." - A Protecting Spirit (Bordeaux, 1863).

10 - "Because of the false idea that it is not possible for a person to reform their own nature, they judge themselves exempt from even trying to correct their defects. This applies especially to those defects in which the person willingly takes pleasure, or those which would take a great deal of perseverance to eradicate. This is why, for example, an individual who is prone to anger almost always finds excuses for this temperament. Instead of confessing themselves guilty, they accuse their organism and in this manner accuse God for their faults. This is yet one more of the consequences of pride to be found in the midst of our imperfections...

It is not the body which gives the anger to those who do not already possess it, in the same manner neither does it cause other vices. All virtues and vices are inherent in the Spirit... Then let us convince ourselves that Man only remains bound by vices because he so desires! Those who really wish to liberate themselves can always achieve this end. If it were not so, then the law of progress would not be able to exist." - Hahnemann (Paris, 1863).

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

Forgive others so that God may forgive you. - Reconciliation with your adversaries. - The sacrifice most agreeable to God. - The mote and the beam in the eye. - Do not judge others if you do not wish to be judged in return. He that is without sin, let him be the first to cast a stone. - INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS: The pardoning of offences. - Indulgence. - Is it permitted to reprehend, observe imperfections or to comment on the evil in others?

FORGIVE OTHERS SO THAT GOD MAY FORGIVE YOU

1 - *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy* (Matthew, 5:7).

2 - *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses* (Matthew, 6: 14 & 15).

3 - *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but until seventy times seven* (Matthew, 18: 15, 21 & 22).

4 - Mercy is a complement to mildness, because the person who is not merciful cannot be mild and pacific. Being able to forget offences is the mark of an elevated soul, which does not perturb itself with the blows it may be dealt.

Woe to those who say they will never forgive! If these people are not already condemned by mankind, then God will surely condemn them.

However, there are two very different ways of forgiving: the first is noble and great, truly generous without any hidden thoughts, which delicately avoids hurting the self-esteem and susceptibility of the adversary. The second, on the other hand, is when someone who has been offended, or thinks they have been offended, imposes humiliating conditions on the supposed adversary, making felt the weight of the pardon, which can only cause further irritation instead of calming; where, upon offering a hand to the offended, this is not done with benevolence, but rather with ostentation, so that the person may say to others - look how generous I am! In these circumstances a sincere reconciliation is quite impossible for either one. No, here there is no generosity, only a form of satisfying pride.

RECONCILIATION WITH YOUR ADVERSARIES

5 - *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him: lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing* (Matthew, 5: 25 & 26).

6 - In the act of pardon, as in general practice of good, there is not only a moral effect but also a material effect. As is already known, death does not liberate us from our enemies; vengeful Spirits in the after life frequently pursue with great hate all those for whom they bear rancour.

The evil Spirit waits for the other whom he does not like to return to a physical body, where he or she is partially captive, in order to more easily torment, hurt interests or harm affections. The cause of the majority of cases of obsession lies within this fact. The person who is either obsessed or possessed is almost always a victim of vengeance. The motive will be found in their past lives, in which the one who is suffering gave cause for this result. Consequently, from the point of view of future tranquillity, it is important that each person makes amends for all grievances which may have been caused to neighbours as soon as possible.

Before death reaches us, it is necessary that we pardon all our enemies, thereby eradicating all motives for dissension, as well as all causes for ulterior animosity.

God will not consent to anyone who has pardoned being made to suffer from vengeance.

THE SACRIFICE MOST AGREEABLE TO GOD

7 - *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberst that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift* (Matthew, 5: 23 & 24).

8 - Jesus teaches that what is most agreeable to God is the sacrifice of our resentments and that before Man asks for pardon he should first have pardoned others and made good any damage caused to his fellow beings. Thus, *upon entering the temple of God, Man should leave all feelings of hate and animosity outside, including evil thoughts against his fellow men.*

Only in this manner will the angels take his prayers and place them at the Feet of the eternal Father.

THE MOTE AND THE BEAM IN THE EYE

9 - *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast*

out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye (Matthew, 7: 3-5).

10 - One of the follies of humanity consists in seeing wrong-doing and evil in others before seeing it in ourselves. Beyond all doubt pride is what induces us to disguise all our faults, both moral and physical, even from ourselves. Such folly is essentially against charity seeing that true charity is always modest, unadorned and indulgent. Proudful charity is a contradiction, as these two sentiments neutralize one another. Pride being the father of many vices, is also the negation of many virtues. It is found to be the motive and the base for almost all human actions. Therefore, it was because pride is the principle obstacle to progress, that Jesus tried so hard to combat it.

**DO NOT JUDGE OTHERS IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO BE JUDGED IN
RETURN. HE THAT IS WITHOUT SIN, LET HIM BE THE FIRST TO
CAST A STONE**

11 - *Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again* (Matthew, 7: 1 & 2).

12 - *And the scribes and the Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the Law commanded us that such should be stoned; but what sayest Thou? This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His fingers wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not. So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it being convicted by their own consciences, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lift up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more* (John, 8: 3 - 11).

13 - With the sentence: "He that is without sin amongst you, let him cast the first stone", Jesus makes indulgence the first duty towards others because there is no one who does not need it for themselves. He also teaches that we must never judge others with more severity than we would wish to be judged, nor condemn in others that which we condone ourselves.

Reproach may be launched against a person for two reasons: to suppress evil or to discredit the person whose acts are criticized. In this last intention there is absolutely no excuse, because here exists only malice and slander. The first may be laudable and even becomes a duty in certain cases as good may come of it, and without it the evil in society would never be restrained.

It is not possible that Jesus could have prohibited the overthrowing of evil, seeing that He gives examples of having done just that Himself, in no uncertain terms. What He wished to say was that the right to censure is to be found in the moral authority of he who

censures. *There is no legitimate authority in the eyes of God but that which is based on the example of goodness it offers.* Likewise, this is what is emphasized by the words of Jesus.

INDULGENCE

18 - "Dear friends, be severe with yourselves, but ever indulgent with the weaknesses of others... All have evil tendencies to overcome, defects to correct and bad habits to modify. Everyone has a burden, more or less heavy, which must be got rid of in order to be able to ascend to the summit of the mountain called Progress...

Every man or woman sufficiently full of pride as to judge themselves superior in matters of virtue and merit to their incarnate brothers and sisters, is both foolish and guilty and will therefore suffer castigation by God on their day of judgment. The true character of charity is always modesty and humility, which consists in not seeing the superficial defects of others, but rather in striving to cause their goodness and virtues to predominate. Although the human heart is an abyss of corruption, there too is always the embryo of good sentiments, which are in fact the living sparks of the spiritual essence, hidden away in its innermost folds." - Dufetre, Bishop of Nevers (Bordeaux).

19 - *As no one is perfect, does it follow that no one has the right to reprehend their neighbour?*

"This is certainly not the right conclusion to arrive at, seeing that each one of you must work for the progress of everyone, and above all, especially for those who have been placed in your care. But for this very reason it should be done in moderation in order to obtain a useful end and not, as is so often the cause, for the mere pleasure of reviling. In this event the reprehension would be wickedness, whereas in the previous instant it is a duty demanded by charity, which must be accomplished with all possible care..." - Saint Louis (Paris, 1860).

20 - *Is it reprehensible to make note of the imperfections of others when this cannot result in any benefit for them, seeing that it will not be disclosed to them?*

"Everything depends on the intention. Fore sure it is not forbidden to see evil where it exists... The mistake would be in making the observation result in the detriment of your neighbour, so discrediting him before general opinion without need. It would be equally reprehensible to do this simply in order to give vent to a sentiment of spite and the satisfaction of catching others at fault. However, the complete opposite occurs when, on extending a veil over an evil so that the public do not see it, the person who noted the defect in his neighbour does this for his own personal gain. That is to say, in order that he or she may discipline himself to avoid what has been reprovved in another..." - Saint Louis (Paris, 1860).

21 - *Are there cases when it is right to disclose the evil in others?*

"If a person's imperfections only cause prejudice to themselves then there can be nothing useful in disclosing these facts. If however it might cause harm to others, then it is preferable to attend to the interests of the majority. According to the circumstances, it may become a duty to expose hypocrisy and lies because it is better that one person fall

rather than many become his or her victims. In this case it is necessary to weigh the total sum of the advantages and disadvantages." - Saint Louis (Paris, 1860).
(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF

The greatest commandment. Do unto others as we would have them do unto us. The parable of the creditors and the debtors. - Give unto Caesar that which belongs to Caesar. - INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS: The law of love. - Selfishness. - Faith and charity. - Charity towards criminals. - Should we risk our life for a criminal?

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

1- *But when the Pharisees had heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying, Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets (Matthew, 22: 34-40).*

2 - *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so them: for this is the Law and the prophets (Matthew, 7: 12). And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise (Luke, 6:31).*

3 - *Therefore is the kingdom of Heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But for as much as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him a hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet and besought him saying, Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shoudest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to unto him. So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses (Matthew, 18: 23-35).*

4 - "To love your neighbour as yourself: to do unto others as you would have them do unto you", express the most complete form of charity because it summarizes all of man's obligations towards his fellow men. What right have we to demand that they behave in any better manner, that they be more benevolent or more devoted to us than we are to them? The practice of this maxims leads to the destruction of selfishness. When they

have been adopted as a rule of conduct and as the base of all institutions, then Man will understand true fraternity, and so make it possible for peace and justice to reign this planet.

GIVE UNTO CAESAR THAT WHICH BELONGS TO CAESAR

5 - Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent unto Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give the tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they say unto Him, Caesar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. When they heard these words, they marveled, and left him, and went their way (Matthew, 22: 15-22; Mark, 12: 13-17).

6 - The question that was asked of Jesus was motivated by the fact that the Jews, who abominated the tribute imposed on them by the Romans, had made the payment of this tribute a religious question. There had been a trap set by this question because those who had put it expected the reply to go against either the Roman authority or the dissident Jews. But Jesus, 'who understood their malice', got round this difficulty and gave them a lesson in justice by saying that to each one should be given what was due to them.

7 - However, we should not understand the words: "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar", in a restrictive or absolute manner. As in everything that Jesus taught, this is a general principle. This principle is the consequence of the other one in which we should do to others as we would have them do to us. It condemns every kind of moral or material damage which might be caused to another, as well as disregard of their interests. It prescribes respect for the rights of each person, as each one desires that they be respected. It extends as well to the fulfillment of our obligations towards our family, society and authority, just as much as for individuals in general.

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Return goodness for evil. - Discarnate enemies. - Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. - INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS: Vengeance. - Hate. - Duelling.

RETURN GOODNESS FOR EVIL

1 - *Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that we may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if we love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? (Matthew, 5: 43-47).*

For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew, 5: 12).

2 - *For ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? For sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? For sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful (Luke, 6: 32-36).*

3 - If the principle of charity is to love one's neighbours, then to love one's enemies is the most sublime application of this same principle, seeing that the possession of this virtue represents one of the greatest victories which can be achieved against selfishness and pride.

However, there is usually a misunderstanding in relation to the meaning of the word 'love' in this situation. When He spoke, Jesus did not mean that each one of us should have the same tenderness for an enemy as would be felt for a brother, sister or friend. Tenderness presupposes confidence; well, no one can deposit confidence in another person knowing that they bear malice. In short, no one can feel the same pleasure when they are with an enemy as would be felt when in the company of a friend.

An evil thought produces a vibratory current which causes an unpleasant impression. A good thought encompasses us with a very agreeable emanation. This is the reason for the different sensation which are experienced on the approximation of a friend or an

enemy. So then, to love one's enemy cannot signify that there should be no difference between the affection for an enemy and that for a friend.

Therefore, to love one's enemies does not mean showing affection which would not be within our nature. To love one's enemy means we should not hate, nor bear rancour against them, nor desire vengeance. It means to forgive all the evil they have caused *without hidden thoughts and without conditions*. It means to not put obstacles in the way of a reconciliation and to wish them well, instead of bad things. It is to feel joy, instead of regret, at the good things that may come their way; to help them whenever possible and to abstain *by words or acts* from everything which might prejudice them. Finally, it means to always return goodness for evil *without any intention to humiliate*.

4 - To those who are incredulous, loving an enemy is contra sense. For those to whom the present life is everything, an enemy is someone noxious, who perturbs their rest and from whom, as is thought, only death can bring liberation. This is a reason for desiring vengeance and even if they do not reap vengeance, they will certainly retain rancour and evil desires against the other person.

For the believer and above all for the Spiritist, the way of looking at this situation is very different because their vision extends over the past and into the future. The Spiritist knows that due to the peculiar destiny of this planet, meeting with evil and perverse people is to be expected. The wickedness to be face is all part of the ordeals to be supported. From this elevated point of view, the vicissitudes are easier to bear, less bitter. *If they do not complain to themselves of their trial, neither should they complain to those who serve as instruments*. If, instead of bemoaning, Spiritists were to thank God for being put to the test, they *should also thank the hand that offers them the opportunity to demonstrate their patience and resignation*. This idea will naturally dispose them towards forgiveness. They also know that apart from this, the more generous they are the more they become elevated in their own eyes, so putting themselves beyond the reach of their enemies' darts.

WHOSOEVER SHALL SMITE THEE ON THY RIGHT CHEEK TURN TO HIM THE OTHER ALSO

7 - *Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away (Matthew, 5: 38-42).*

The prejudices of the world with respect to what is commonly called 'a point of honour' produces the kind of sombre susceptibility which is born of pride and the glorification of ones own personality, which in turn leads mankind to return an injury or offence with another. This was why the law of Moses prescribed an 'eye for an eye' and a 'tooth for a tooth', in accordance with the epoch in which Moses lived. When Christ came, He said: 'Return goodness for evil', and added: 'Do not resist the evil that they wish to do to you, if *someone shall smite thee on thy cheek, present him the other also*'. To the proud this

teaching seem cowardly because they do not understand that it takes more courage to support an insult than it does to take vengeance.

Should we take this precept at its face value? No, no more than the other, which tell us to pluck out our eye when it is the cause of offence. By enunciating that maxim, Jesus did not mean that self-defence is forbidden, but rather that He *condemned vengeance*. Telling us to offer the other cheek when one has been injured, is merely another way of saying we must not repay evil with evil. Mankind should humbly accept everything that serves as a means of weakening his pride. There is greater glory in receiving an offence, than in being the offender; of patiently suffering injustice, than practising it. It is also the condemnation of all duelling, which in actual fact is nothing more than the manifestation of pride.

Only faith in the future life and justice of God, who never allows evil to go unpunished, can give a person the necessary strength to patiently support the blows dealt to either their interests or their self-respect.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS.

VENGEANCE

9 - Vengeance is one of the last relics of the barbaric customs, which tend to disappear from the human race. It is, like the duel, one of the last vestiges of the savage habits under which humanity was struggling at the outset of the Christian era... Accordingly, my friends, this sentiment should never vibrate in the heart of anyone who proclaims himself to be a Spiritist. You know full well that to avenge oneself is so much against Christ's precept: 'Forgive your enemies', that the person who refuses to forgive not only is not a Spiritist, but certainly is not even a Christian. Vengeance is an even more ruinous inspiration when its companions are assiduous in falseness and baseness. Indeed, they who deliver themselves to this fatal and blind passion, almost never seek vengeance openly. When they are the stronger, they fall savagely upon those they call the enemy, seeing that the mere presence of these persons inflames their spite, anger and hate. However, in most cases they assume a hypocritical attitude, concealing the evil sentiments which animate them deep in their hearts...

Every Spirit who still today lays claim to a right to seek vengeance for themselves, is no longer worthy to take part in the phalanx who hold as their motto: *Without charity there is no salvation!*... - Jules Oliver (Paris, 1862).

HATE

10 - Love one another and you will be happy. Above all else, take to heart the need to love all those who inspire indifference, hate and scorn. Christ, who should be considered as the model, gave an example of this kind of devotion... It is a painful sacrifice to love those who insult and torment us, but it is exactly this sacrifice which makes you superior to them... If the law of love demands that each one love all their brothers and sisters without distinction, it does not mean that the heart will be protected as if by a breastplate against evil conduct. On the contrary, it is the most anguishing of trials... But God is ever present, and punishes in this life or the next all who violate the law of love. My dear

children, do not forget that love draws us near to God and hate drives away from Him. -
Fenelon (Bordeaux, 1861).

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

DO NOT LET YOUR LEFT HAND KNOW WHAT YOUR RIGHT HAND IS DOING

Do good without ostentation. - Hidden misfortune. - The widow's mite. - To invite the poor and the lame. To give without thought of recompense. - INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS: Material charity and moral charity. - Beneficence. - Compassion. - Orphans. - Beneficence recompensed by ingratitude. - Exclusive benevolence.

DO GOOD WITHOUT OSTENTATION

1 - Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in Heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly (Matthew, 6: 1-4).

2 - When He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand and touched him, saying, I will: Be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for the testimony unto them (Matthew, 8: 1-4).

3 - There is great merit in doing good without ostentation. But it is of even greater merit to hide the hand that gives. This is the indisputable mark of great moral superiority. In a word, to place oneself above humanity so as to be able to renounce the satisfaction that comes from the recognition of one's fellow creatures, and await the approval of God. Those who prefer the approval of mankind prove they put more faith in them than in God, and value the present life more than the future one.

Those who seek their glorification on Earth through the good they do, have already paid themselves; God owes them nothing more; the only thing left is punishment for their pride.

But if there is true modesty, then there is also false modesty, a mere imitation of modesty. There are certain people who hide the hand that gives, but take great care to leave a small piece showing while they look about them to see if anyone has seen they trying to hide it. These too have already received their recompense on Earth. They are seen and they are satisfied by this fact. That is all they will have.

So then, what recompense will there be for the person who causes their benefits to weigh heavily on the shoulders of the receiver; who demands at all costs recognition for the recompense; who makes their position felt by extolling the cost of the sacrifice they have made? Oh! Here there is not even earthly recompense, seeing that this person finds themselves deprived of the pleasing satisfaction of hearing their name blessed. This is the first punishment for their pride. For the good that was practised there will be no reward because it was deplored, and all benefit that is deplored is counterfeit and so has no value.

When beneficence is practised without ostentation it is doubly meritorious. Apart from material charity there is also moral charity, seeing that this protects the susceptibility of the beneficiary, so enabling them to receive a benefit without feeling resentment from a loss of self-respect. True charity is delicate and inventive in disguising a benefit, avoiding even a simple appearance which might cause hurt. Therefore the giver of true charity will find tender affectionate words which will place the receiver at ease, especially in the presence of the benefactor, whereas prideful charity will crush the receiver. Real generosity acquires total sublimity when the benefactor, inverting the parts, finds a way of placing themselves in the position of being the one who is indebted when facing the person whom they are helping. This is what is meant by the words: Let not your left hand know what your right hand does.

HIDDEN MISFORTUNES

4 - When great calamities occur charity is filled with emotion and generous impulses are seen on all sides in the repairing of these disasters. But apart from these general disasters, there are millions of private catastrophes which go unnoticed. These discreet and hidden misfortunes are the ones which true generosity knows how to discover without even waiting to be asked for help.

Who is that woman with the distinct air, simply dressed, although well cared for, who is accompanied by an equally modestly dressed young girl? They enter a sordid looking house. Where is she going? Up to the garret where a mother lies surrounded by her many children. She has brought everything they need, tempered with gentle and consoling words. The father is in hospital and while he is there the mother is unable to provide the necessities of life with her work. By the grace of this good woman these poor children will no longer feel cold nor hungry. If any member of this family falls sick, this good woman will not refuse the material care which they may need. From their house she will go on to the hospital to take the father some comforts and also to put his mind at rest as to his family. At the corner of the road a carriage awaits, and inside is a store of everything destined for her various protégés, for one after the other they all receive visits. She never asks what their religion is nor what their opinions are, because she considers them to be her brothers and sisters and the children of God, as are all men and women. To all those unhappy ones she has given a name which indicating nothing. But she is the personification of a consoling angel. Each night a host of blessings rise up to the heavens in her name from Catholics, Jews and Protestants alike..

Why such modest clothing? So as not to insult their misery with her luxury. Why does she take her daughter? So that she too may learn how to practise beneficence. The mother says to her: "What can you give, my daughter, when you have nothing of your own? So when I visit the sick you will help me treat them. To offer care to someone is to give something of yourself. Do you not think that is sufficient to start with? Well then, nothing could be simpler; you can begin by learning how to make useful articles and clothes for the children. In this manner you will be giving of yourself."

In her own home she is a woman of the world because her position demands it of her. Those about her know nothing of what she is doing, as she does not wish for any approval other than that from God and her own conscience.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

MATERIAL CHARITY AND MORAL CHARITY

9 - "Love one another and do unto others what we wish they would do unto us." All that is religion and moral is contained in these two precepts. If they were observed in this world then everyone would be happy and there would be no more hate or resentment. I go even further: there would be no more poverty because all the poor people would be fed from the superfluity of the rich...

Those among you who are rich, think on this a while! Help to the best of your abilities all those who are less fortunate. Give, in order that one day God may recompense the good you have done... Oh! If you could but know the joy felt when, on reaching the world beyond, I found those whom I had been given to serve!...

Therefore, love your neighbours; love them as you would love yourself, because you know that by repelling even one wretched person it is always possible that perhaps you are sending away a brother, father or friends from other times...

Moral charity comprises the giving of support to all our fellow creatures... Believe me, there is great merit in keeping quiet while another, perhaps less intelligent, is speaking. This is but one kind of moral charity. To play deaf when mocking words escape the lips of one accustomed to deride, or to ignore the disdainful smiles of those who are receiving you, when they quite wrongly supposed themselves to be far above you, constitutes merit. However, in actual fact it will quite often be found that in the spiritual world, the *only real life*, these same persons are far below us. The merit to be gained in these situations is not due to humility, but to charity, in as much as to ignore bad behaviour is a moral charity.

Nevertheless, this kind of charity must not be allowed to interfere with the other kind already mentioned. Therefore, be specially careful never to despise your fellow beings...

I remind you that Jesus said we are all brothers and sisters. Always think of this before repelling a beggar or even someone with a contagious disease, like leprosy. - Sister Rosalie (Paris, 1860).

10 - ...Friends there are thousands of ways of practising charity. You may do this by means of thought, words and actions. With thought by praying for the unfortunate who have been abandoned, for those who die without even finding conditions to enable them to see the light... Through words, by giving good advice to your daily companions... “To those who are old and who say to you: “It is useless, now I am at the end of my journey. I will die as I have lived,” you must say to them: “God shows equal justice to all: remember the workers of the last hour.” To the children who are already corrupted by the companions who surround them, who go through life ready to succumb to evil temptations, you must say: “God is looking at you, my children,” and never get tired of repeating these gentle words to them. One day they will germinate in these childlike minds, and instead of being vagabonds they will then become men and women. This too is charity.

Others amongst you may say: “Pooh! we are so numerous here on Earth that God cannot possibly see each one of us.” Listen carefully, my friends. When you are on the top of a mountain do you not see the millions of grains of sand which cover it? Well then, that is how God sees you. He allows you your free-will... Except for one thing, in His infinite mercy, God has put a vigilant spark in the bottom of your hearts which is called your *conscience*. Listen to it because it will give good advice...

My friends, to you I offer this maxim of Christ as your watchword: “Love one another.” Observe this precept, let everyone unite under this flag, and you will have happiness and consolation. - A Protecting Spirit (Lyon, 1860).

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

HONOUR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER

Filial devotion. - Who is my mother and who are my brothers? - Corporeal relationship and spiritual relationship. - Instruction from the Spirits: Children's ingratitude and family ties.

1 - *He said unto Him, Which commandments? Jesus said: Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt commit no adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Matthew, 19: 18 & 19; Mark, 10: 19 & Luke, 18: 20).*

2 - *Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee (Decalogue, Exodus, 20: 12).*

FILIAL DEVOTION

3 - The commandment: 'Honour your father and your mother' is an inference from the general laws of charity and love towards one's fellow beings, seeing that those who do not love their mother and father cannot then love their fellow creatures. But with regard to parents, here the word *honour* contains an extra obligation, which is filial devotion. God wishes to show us that respect, esteem, obedience, caring, submission and deference should be joined to love. This duty naturally extends itself to those who take the place of a mother or father. God will rigorously punish all violations of this commandment.

Above all, it is necessary to demonstrate true filial devotion to destitute parents. Children do not owe their parents only the strictest necessities; they also owe them, according to their possibilities, all those little extras like thoughtfulness and loving care which are nothing more than interest on what they themselves received, the payment of a sacred debt. This then is the only filial devotion which pleases God.

Alas for those who forget what they owe to those who sustained them in their hour of weakness, who, with the giving of a physical life, also gave them moral life, and many times imposed upon themselves great privations in order to guarantee the well-being of their children! Woe unto all those who are ungrateful, for they shall be punished with ingratitude and abandonment; they will be hurt in their dearest affections, *sometimes even in the present life*, but certainly in a future one, wherein they will suffer themselves what they have made others suffer!

It is true that some parents neglect their duty and are not all they should be to their children. If the law of charity demands that evil be paid with goodness, that we love even our enemies, how much greater must be our obligations when related to our parents! Therefore children, in matters relating to their parents, should take as a rule of conduct all those principles of Jesus concerning our fellow beings. They must be aware that all

reprehensible behaviour towards strangers is even more reprehensible when related to parents. Here the offence of lack of charity is joined to that of ingratitude.

4 - God said: 'Honour your father and your mother so that you may live a long time in the land that the Lord your God shall give you.' In order to be able to understand clearly, we must go back to the situation and the ideas existing amongst the Hebrews at that time. They still knew nothing of a future life as they were unable to see anything beyond the physical. They had then to be impressed more by what they saw than by what they could not see. At that time they were still in the desert; the land to be given by God was the Promised Land, the object of their aspirations.

Now by the time of the advent of Jesus, they had more advanced ideas. Jesus himself began to teach about spiritual life by saying: "My kingdom is not of this world; it is there and not here that you will receive recompense for all the good works you have practised." With these words the Promised Land ceases to be material and transforms itself into a spiritual Homeland.

CORPOREAL RELATIONSHIP AND SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP

8 - Blood ties do not necessarily create bonds between Spirits. The body comes from the body. But the Spirit does not proceed from the Spirit, since the Spirit already existed before the formation of the body. The parents do not create the Spirit of the child; they do nothing more than supply the material wrapping, although it is their duty to help the intellectual and moral development of their child, in order to further its progress.

Those incarnated in the same family, specially as close relations, are as often as not congenial Spirits linked by past relationships, which express themselves during their earthly lives by their reciprocated affections. But it can also happen that these people are complete strangers to each other. The real family ties are not those of blood then, but those of mutual sympathy and the communion of ideas which hold Spirits together, *before, during and after* their incarnations.

So, there are two kinds of families: *Families through spiritual ties and families through bodily ties*. In the first case ties are durable and strengthen with purification, perpetuating in the spiritual worlds by means of the various migrations of the soul. In the second case, the ties are as fragile as the physical body itself, extinguishing with them and in many instances dissolving morally even in the actual existence. This is what Jesus was trying to make comprehensible when He said to His disciples: "Here is my mother and my brothers by spiritual ties, because all those who do the bidding of My Father, who is in Heaven, are my brothers, my sisters and my mother."

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

CHILDREN INGRATITUDE AND FAMILY TIES

9 - Ingratitude is one of the most direct results of selfishness and always causes revolt in honest hearts. But the ingratitude of children towards their parents shows an even more hateful trait of character...

When a Spirit leaves the earth plane it takes with it all the passions and all the virtues inherent in its nature, going on to improve itself in the spirit world or to remain stationary until it desires to receive enlightenment. Accordingly many Spirits return to the spiritual world full of hate and violence, as well as full of insatiable desires of vengeance. Nevertheless, there are always some amongst them who are more advanced and so able to perceive a faint glimmer of truth. These Spirits understand that in order to reach God there is only one password: *Charity*...

Then by unprecedented efforts, these Spirits manage to observe those they hated while upon Earth. However, on seeing them again animosity is once more aroused in their hearts, causing revolt at the idea of forgiving them... But above all they are revolted at the thought of loving those who had destroyed their worldly goods, their honour or perhaps even their family... They hesitate and waver, agitated by contrasting sentiments...

Finally, after years of meditation and prayer, the Spirit takes the opportunity of a physical body that is, as yet, in project in the family of the one who is detested, and then asks the Spirits designated to transmit orders, for permission to fulfill here on Earth the destiny of that body which is about to be formed... The incessant contact with those it hates constitutes a terrible test... In this manner, and according to whether or not the good resolutions predominate, the Spirit will be either a friend or an enemy to those it was called to live amongst...

Oh! Spiritists! You must understand the great part that humanity has to play! You must understand that when a body is produced the soul which incarnates in it has come from space in order to progress. The care and education given by you to this child will help in its improvement and future well-being. If through any fault of yours it has remained backward, then as punishment you will have to watch it amongst the suffering Spirits, when it depended upon you to help it towards happiness...

So then, do not reject the child who repels its parents, nor the one who is ungrateful... An imperfect intuition of the past is revealed by these attitudes, and from this we can deduce that one or the other harbours great hate or has been mortally offended; that one or the other has come to pardon or to atone. Mothers, embrace the child who causes vexation and say to yourself: One of us is guilty! Make yourselves worthy of the Divine enjoyment which God has conjugated into maternity by teaching your children that they are on Earth in order to perfect themselves, to love and to bless others...

Nevertheless, your task is not as difficult as it may seem... Either an ignorant or wise person may discharge this duty, and Spiritism will help you to do just that by giving you the possibility of knowing the causes of the imperfections in the human soul.

Having been brought from past existences, these good or evil instincts will manifest themselves from early childhood... All badness originates from selfishness and pride. So be on the lookout for the least sign which will reveal the existence of such vices, and then take care to combat them... If you allow selfishness and pride to develop, do not be surprised if later on you are paid back by ingratitude. When parents have done everything possible for the moral advancement of their children, even if they have not been successful, then they have nothing with which to reproach themselves and their consciences may remain tranquil. For the natural anguish resulting from the unproductiveness of their efforts, God reserves a great, an immense, consolation in the *certainty* that it is only a brief delay...

God never gives anyone a trial superior to the strength of the person who has asked for it. He only permits those tests which can be fulfilled. Therefore, if this does not happen, it is not for lack of possibilities, but for lack of willpower. Now listen well to what I am about to tell you - *the harshest trials are almost always the indication of the end to suffering and to a certain perfecting of the Spirit, as long as they are accepted with all thought focused on God...* Instead of complaining, thank God for the opportunity to triumph which He has given you, that He may bestow the prize of victory upon you...

Of all the trials that exist, the hardest to bear are those which affect the heart... But in these circumstances what can more effectively renew moral courage than the knowledge of the causes of the evil? Even if there are protracted lacerations, it is certain that there are no eternal despairs, because it is not possible for God to wish that any one of His creatures suffer indefinitely... But in order to be able to do this, it is necessary that mankind does not confine its vision exclusively to this planet nor to only a single existence. Humanity must lift itself up so that it becomes possible to see the infinity of both the past and the future. When this happens, then God's everlasting justice becomes apparent and so you will be able to wait patiently, because all that had previously appeared to be absolute monstrosity on this Earth will have become explainable...

Families are formed by groupings of Spirits who are induced to gather together because of their affinities of tastes, moral progress and affections. During their terrestrial migrations, these same Spirits seek each other out in order to group themselves as they do in space, so giving origin to united and homogeneous families. If during their peregrinations it so happens they are temporarily separated, then they will meet again later on... But as they are not allowed to work exclusively for their own benefit, God permits that less advanced Spirits incarnate amongst them in order that these may receive good advice and examples which will help them. Sometimes these Spirits cause perturbation in the midst of the others, which constitutes a trial and a task to be fulfilled. Therefore, receive these perturbed Spirits as your brothers and sisters; help them, and afterwards, when once again they are in the spiritual world, the family will be able to congratulate itself for having saved an outcast, who in their turn may save others. - Saint Augustin (Paris, 1862).

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

WITHOUT CHARITY THERE IS NO SALVATION

What the spirit needs in order to be saved. - The parable of the good Samaritan. - The greatest of the commandments. - The need for charity, according to Saint Paul. - Without the church there is no salvation. - Instructions from the Spirits: Without charity there is no salvation.

WHAT THE SPIRIT NEEDS IN ORDER TO BE SAVED. THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

1 - When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on the right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me. I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer Him saying, lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and feed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me.

Then shall He say also unto them on the left hands, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungered and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison and ye visited me not.

Then shall they also answer Him saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or a thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or in prison and did not minister unto thee? Then shall He answer them saying, Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye did it to one of these, ye did it to me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal (Matthew, 25: 31-46).

2 - And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? he said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and

with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as thyself. And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment and wounded him and departed, leaving him half dead, and by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him passed by on the other side, and likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine and set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence and gave them to the host and said unto him, take care of him and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.

Which now of these thinkest thou was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise (Luke, 10: 25-37)

3 - All the moral teaching of Christ resumes itself in the need for charity and humility, that is to say, in the two virtues which are contrary to selfishness and pride. In all of His teaching Jesus indicates these two virtues as being the ones which lead to eternal happiness. Charity and humility are the two things which Jesus never ceased to recommend and for which He stands as an example. He also never ceased to combat pride and selfishness. Nor did He limit Himself to the mere recommending of charity, but put in very clear and explicit terms as being the only condition for future happiness.

With respect to the description given by Jesus of the Final Judgment, we must separate, as in many other cases, that which is only form of allegory. The people to whom Jesus spoke, being still unable to understand totally spiritual questions, made it necessary for Him to offer them material images which would both shock and impress. But alongside the accessory or figurative parts of this explanation, there is one dominant feature: that of the happiness reserved for the just and the unhappiness awaiting those who are evil.

What then are the considerations of sentence according to that supreme judgment? On what has the indictment been based? Does the judge perhaps ask if the person under interrogation has fulfilled this or that formality, if they have more or less observed this or that external practice? No, he will ask but one question: if charity has been practised; and then make the pronouncement: "Go to the right all who have helped their brothers and sisters. Go to the left all those who have been unyielding." Jesus places the Samaritan, considered by some to be a heretic, who practised love towards his fellow creature above any orthodoxy which lacks charity. Since He put charity in first place, it is because it implicitly embraces all the other virtues such as humility, kindness, benevolence, indulgence, justice, etc., and also because it is the absolute negation of pride and selfishness.

THE GREATEST OF THE COMMANDMENT

4 - *But when the Pharisees had heard that He had put the Saducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying, Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. The second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matthew, 22: 34-40).*

5 - Charity and humility, such is the only path to salvation. Selfishness and pride are the paths to ruin. This principle is found to be formulated on the following precise terms: “Love your God with all your soul and your neighbour as yourself; *all the law and the prophets are contained in these two commandments.*” And so there would be no mistake in the understanding of the meaning of the love for God and for our neighbour, He then added: “And there is the second commandment, which is similar to the first.” This means that it is not possible to truly love God without loving your neighbour, nor to love your neighbour without loving God. Therefore, as it is not possible to love God without practising charity towards one’s neighbour. All of mankind’s obligations are resumed in the maxim: *without charity there is no salvation.*

THE NEED OF CHARITY ACCORDING TO SAINT PAUL

6 - *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all the mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to the burned, and have no charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity (Saint Paul, I Corinthians, 13: 1-7 & 13).*

7 - Paul places charity above even faith. This is because charity is within the reach of everybody, from the ignorant to the wise person, from rich to poor people; is also quite independent of any particular beliefs.

He does even more: he defines true charity by showing it as being not only beneficence, but also a collective of all the qualities of the heart, in terms of goodness and benevolence towards all of your fellow beings.

WITHOUT THE CHURCH THERE IS NO SALVATION. WITHOUT TRUTH THERE IS NO SALVATION

8 - The maxim - *without charity there is no salvation* - stands upon a universal principle and opens the door to supreme happiness for all of God's children, whereas the dogma - *without the church there is no salvation* - rests on a special faith, in particular dogmas, which are exclusive and absolute. Far from uniting God's children, it separates them. Instead of inciting them to love their brothers and sisters, it feeds upon and sanctions the irritations between various sectarians of the different cults. The maxim - *without charity there is no salvation* - consecrates the principle of equality before God and freedom of conscience. By taking this as a norm, all men and women become brothers and sisters, whatever their way of worshipping the Creator, holding up their hands and praying for each other. But with the dogma - *without the church there is no salvation* - they excommunicate and persecute each other reciprocally. Therefore it is a dogma which is essentially against the teaching of Christ and the evangelic laws.

Without truth there is no salvation is equal to *without the church there is no salvation*, being equally exclusive, since there is no one sect existing which does not claim to hold the privilege of truth. The absolute truth is the patrimony of only the most elevate category of Spirits. Earthly humanity cannot allege the possession of it because it is not given to mankind to know everything. It is only permissible to aspire to relative truth which is proportionate to the level of progress. Spiritism in accordance with the Gospel, admits the possibility of salvation for every person, independently of any beliefs, granted that God's laws are observed. It does not say that *without Spiritism there is no salvation*, just as it does not intend to teach all the truth as yet. Neither does it say *without truth there is no salvation* because this maxim, instead of uniting would only separate and also perpetuate antagonisms.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS WITHOUT CHARITY THERE IS NO SALVATION

10 - My children, within the sentence: *Without charity there is no salvation*, is enclosed the destiny of mankind, both on Earth and in Heaven. On Earth, because beneath the shadow of this banner all may live in peace, and in Heaven, because those who have practised it will find grace in God's eyes... Nothing can indicate with more exactitude nor summarize so well mankind's obligations, as this divine maxim... Humanity will never go astray if it takes this as its guide... Submit all your activities to be administered by charity and your conscience will respond. Not only will it cause you to avoid practising evil, but it will also make you practise goodness... Therefore in order to do good there is always the need for the action of willpower, whereas in order to not practise evil it is sufficient to be inert or unconcerned...

My friends, give thanks to God for having permitted you to enjoy the enlightenment of Spiritism... It helps you to understand the teachings of Christ, so making you into better Christians. Therefore make every effort so that your fellow beings, on observing you, are induced to recognise that the true Spiritist and the true Christian are one and the same,

given that all those who practise charity are the disciples of Jesus, without putting any embargo on whatever sect they may belong to. - Paul, the Apostle (Paris, 1860).
(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SERVE BOTH GOD AND MAMMON

The salvation of the rich. - Preserve yourself from avarice. - Jesus in the house of Zacchaeus. - The parable of the bad rich man. - The parable of the talents. - The providential utility of riches. Trials of riches and misery. - The inequality of riches. - Instructions from the Spirits: True property. - The application of riches. - Detachment from earthly possessions. - Transference of riches.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

6 -For the Kingdom of Heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them and so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: Behold I have gained besides them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of the Lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: Behold, I have gained two talents besides them. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of the Lord. Then he which have received the one talent came and said, Lord I knew that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed: and I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth: Lo, there thou has that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knowest that I reap where I sowed and not gathered where I have not strewed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that shall be given and he shall have abundance: but for him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew, 25: 24-30).

THE PROVIDENTIAL UTILITY OF RICHES. TRIALS OF RICHES AND MISERY

7 - If riches were meant to constitute a total obstacle to salvation for all who possess them, then God, who conceded them would have placed an instrument of ruination in their hands. But this idea is quite repugnant to all reason. However, it is beyond doubt that from the destruction it causes, the temptations it provokes and the fascination it holds, we may deduce that riches constitute a very dangerous trial, even more dangerous than that of misery. It is the greatest provoker of pride, selfishness and sensuality. It is the strongest tie which holds Man to Earth and distracts him from thoughts of Heaven. Nevertheless, from the fact that riches make the journey difficult, it does not follow that it becomes impossible or that it cannot become a means of salvation for those who know how to utilize it.

When Jesus said to the young man, who inquired how he could obtain eternal life, that he should dispose of all worldly goods and follow Him, it did not mean that Jesus was establishing an absolute principle, that everyone should get rid of everything they possess, nor that this is the only price to be paid for salvation. It was meant to show that attachment to worldly goods was an obstacle to salvation.

What Jesus proposed to him was a decisive test destined to uncover the depths of his thoughts. Beyond doubt he could be a perfectly honest man in the eyes of the world. But still he did not possess true charity, because his virtues did not go as far as abnegation.

In the strict acceptance of these words, the consequence would be the abolition of riches due to their being detrimental to future happiness. This would be an absurd consequence which would only convey mankind back to primitive existence which, for that very reason, would be in complete contradiction to the law of progress, which is one of God's laws.

If riches be the cause of much evil, if they aggravate so many evil passions, if they really provoke so many crimes, it is not the riches themselves that we should blame but mankind who misuses them, as he does all of God's gifts. It is through ill usage that humanity constantly turns what could be most useful into something pernicious. If only wrongdoing and mischief could be produced by riches, then God would not have placed them upon Earth. It is up to Man to make them produce good, and even if they are not a direct element of moral progress, then beyond doubt they are a powerful element in intellectual progress.

Indeed, Man has the mission of working for the material betterment of this planet. For this work, which has required centuries to complete, it was essential to extract materials from the entrails of the Earth, which made Man look to science for the means of executing these tasks with more speed and safety. But in order to do this he needed resources; this necessity caused him to create riches, just as it caused the creation of science. All these activities imposed the need to amplify and develop intelligence, which

man has used primarily for the satisfaction of material necessities. Nevertheless, it is this same intelligence which will later help humanity to understand all the great moral truths.

THE INEQUALITY OF RICHES

8 - The inequality of riches is one of the problems which humanity will go on trying resolve without success as long as only the present life is considered. Why are we not all equally rich? For the simple reason that *we are not equally intelligent, active and industrious enough to acquire, nor sober and careful enough to keep it*. Besides, it is mathematically a demonstrable fact that riches, if equally divided would give a minimum and insufficient portion to each one. So that, supposing this division were actually made, in a short time this equilibrium would be undone by the diversity of characters and aptitudes. That supposing it to be possible and lasting, if each one had sufficient to live upon, then the result would be an annihilation of all great works which contributes towards progress and the well-being of humanity. Therefore, if God has concentrated riches in certain areas, it is in order that from there it can be expanded in sufficient quantities according to needs.

Having accepted this fact, we then ask why God has conceded riches to people who are incapable of making them bear fruit for the good of all. Here we have yet another proof of the wisdom and goodness of God. Man should not be fatally conducted towards either good or evil, as then we would be nothing more than passive and irresponsible instruments, as are animals. Wealth is a means of action towards progress, God does not wish it to remain unproductive over long periods of time, so He *unceasingly displaces it*. Each one possess it sooner or later, so that they may drill themselves in utilizing it and demonstrate what uses they have learnt to put it to. In this manner, those who do not have it today, have already had it or will have it at some future time. There are rich and poor because God, being just, prescribes work to each one in turn. For those who suffer it, poverty is a test of patience and resignation; for others, riches are a test in charity and abnegation.

It is certain that if man had but one life nothing could justify such a division of worldly goods. However, if we keep in sight not only the present life, but also the assemblage of existences, we would see that everything is justly balanced.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

TRUE PROPERTY

9 - The only true property that Man can own is that which may be taken with him on leaving this world... Humanity has no ownership of riches, only their temporary usage. What then constitutes true property? Nothing which is for the use of the body, but moral qualities. This is what man brings and takes with him, which no one can take away and which will be far more use in the next world than in the present one. It is up to him to be richer on departure than he was on arrival in this world, seeing that his future position will depend solely on what qualities have been gained in the present life...

The traveller who arrives at a hostel is only given a good room if he is able to pay for it... The same applies to Man on his arrival in the world of the spirits, for it will depend entirely on what he owns as to where he will go. Nor will payment be made in terms of gold. Neither worldly goods nor titles will be valued, only the total sum of virtues acquired. Well now, looked at from this aspect, it is possible that the simple worker be far richer than the prince... - Pascal (Geneva, 1860).

10 - Earthly goods belong to God, Who distributes them in accordance with His wishes. Man is nothing more than the usufructuary, a relatively honest and intelligent administrator of these goods or properties. They belong so little to him that frequently God annuls all such provisions and these riches escape from even those who considered themselves to hold the best entitlement.

You would say perhaps that this is understandable when related to inherited property, but not to, that acquired by work. Undoubtedly if there were such a thing as legitimate riches, then it would apply to the latter, when honestly gained... But from the fact that a person may owe the acquiring of riches to themselves, does it follow that, upon dying, any advantage may be gained from this circumstance?... Can someone use and abuse what he owns during his lifetime without needing to give an account of these acts? No, because in permitting the acquisition of this property it is to be supposed that God had in mind to recompense the person, during the actual existence for their effort, courage and perseverance. If however, the property be used exclusively for the satisfaction of pride and the senses, or if they become the cause of a failure, then it would have been better not to have received them seeing that what is gained on the one hand is lost on the other, so annulling all merit for the work. In this case, upon leaving the Earth, God will say that the recompense has already been received. - M. a Protecting Spirit (Brussels, 1861).

THE APPLICATION OF RICHES

11 - It is not possible to serve both God and Mammon. Those of you who are dominated by the love of gold, do not forget this reminder... So then, if you feel your soul to be dominated by the lust of the flesh, make haste to rid yourself of this yoke that tyrannizes you, in as much as God, who is just and strict, will say unto you: 'What did you do with the property I entrusted to you, unfaithful steward?...'

What then is the best way to employ riches? If you look for the answer in the words 'love one another' you will find the solution, for here lies the secret of the best way of employing riches.

Those who love their neighbor already have a line of action delineated for them in these words, because the application which most pleases God is charity. Not that cold and selfish charity, but rather that charity full of love which seeks out misfortune, and help raise it up without causing humiliation. You who are rich, give what you have in excess! But do even more, give something of what is necessary to you because what you consider to be necessary is, in reality, also superfluous, but give wisely. Do not reject those who weep because you may be afraid of being duped, but get to the bottom of the matter. In

the first place seek to alleviate; secondly seek information and then see if the possibility of work, counseling, or even offering affection would be not more efficient than the mere giving of alms.

Diffuse all around you with joy and in plenty, your love for God, for work and for your neighbour. Place your riches on a secure base which is that of good works, and you will be guaranteed great profit. The riches of intelligence should serve you just as do those of wealth: therefore disperse around you the benefits of education and scatter the treasure of your love over your brothers and sisters that they may bear fruits. - Cheverus (Bordeaux, 1861).

12 - When I consider the brevity of life, I am painfully impressed by the incessant preoccupation placed on material well-being; whereas so little time or significance is given to moral improvement, though nevertheless, this is what is really important to eternity... What grief, sorrow and torments you cause yourselves! What sleepless nights, just to increase what is often a more than sufficient wealth!... Do you really believe that the care and effort expended will be taken into consideration when, on the one hand, you are motivated by selfishness, cupidity and pride, while on the other hand you neglect your future and the duties which fraternal solidarity imposes on all who reap the advantages that society has to offer? You have thought only of your physical bodies! Your own well-being and pleasures have been the exclusive object of your selfish solicitude. For the sake of the body that perishes you have despised the Spirit that will live forever. Can this possibly be the objective for which God granted you life? - A Protecting Spirit (Krakow, 1861).

13 - Seeing that Man is both administrator and trustee for the property which is placed in his hands by God, it will therefore be indispensable to render a strict account of the uses it has been put to by virtue of man's free-will. Bad usage consists of it being used exclusively for personal satisfaction; good usage, on the contrary, is whenever this results in benefit to others. Each person's merit is in the degree of sacrifice they impose upon themselves. Beneficence is just one way of employing riches... Nevertheless, an equally imperious obligation, which is also very noteworthy, is that of preventing misery... Riches which are concentrated in one hand should be like a spring of running water which spreads fertility and well-being wherever it goes. Oh wealthy men and women! Employ your riches according to the wishes of God, Who would be the first to quench your thirst at this blessed spring! Even in this present life you could reap unequaled happiness for the soul, instead of the material pleasures of selfishness, which only produce a sensation of emptiness in the heart... So then, to all who are able to give, be it much or little, I would say this; give money only when it is necessary, and then as often as possible convert it into wages so that the person who receives it is not ashamed. - Fenelon (Argel, 1860).

DETACHMENT FROM EARTHLY POSSESSIONS

14 - My brothers, sisters and friends, I come to offer you my contribution with the object of helping you to advance fearlessly along the path way to improvement into which you are entering...

Attachment to earthly possessions constitutes one of the strongest obstacles to both moral and spiritual advancement. Through this attachment all faculties for loving are destroyed as these are only devoted to material things... I understand the satisfaction which is

experienced, and quite justifiably so, when by means of honourable and assiduous work a fortune has been gained. But from this same satisfaction, which is very natural and has God's approval, to the attachment which absorbs all other sentiments and paralyzes the impulses felt by the heart, there is a large gap...

Whether the fortune has come to you from your family, or whether you have earned by working, there is something you should never forget, which is that everything proceeds from God and everything refers us to Him. Nothing belongs to you on this Earth, not even your own physical body... You are merely trustees and not the owners, so do not delude yourselves. God has only lent these things to the condition that at least the surplus should go to those who lack what is necessary.

Ardent and demented greed are aroused in your hearts by the possessions which God has entrusted to you... Have you forgotten that by means of riches, you assume a sacred mission of charity here on Earth, to be intelligent distributors? Hence, when what was entrusted to you is used only for your own benefit, does it not follow that you are unfaithful trustees?...

It is useless to try to delude yourselves while on Earth by covering up, under the name of virtue, what is usually nothing more than selfishness. It is useless to call that which is only greed and cupidity by the name of economy and foresight, or to call that which is only prodigality for your own advantage, by the name of generosity. For example, a father abstains from practising charity, economizes and accumulates wealth so that, as he puts it, he may leave his children the greatest possible amount of property in order to avoid their ever knowing misery... Is that reason enough to forget his brothers and sisters before God? When he has a surplus, will he leave his children in misery if they have a little less? In this manner, is he not giving them a lesson in selfishness and hardening their hearts? Mothers and fathers, you are labouring under a grave error if you believe this is the way to gain affection from your children. By teaching them to be selfish with others you are only teaching them to be selfish with you too...

...since the more each one knows for themselves the hidden pains of misery, the greater tendency there should be to help others.

Unhappily, in men and women who possess riches there is always a sentiment as strong as their attachment for the riches themselves, and that is pride... According to their way of thinking God's goodness doesn't even enter into the matter of their having obtained these riches. The merit for having obtained them being their's alone... Despite their intelligence and aptitudes they still do not understand that with only one word God can cast them down upon the Earth.

The squandering of riches is not a demonstration of detachment from worldly goods, merely careless and indifference.... Extravagance is not generosity; rather it is frequently a type of selfishness... Detachment from worldly goods consists in appreciating them according to their just value, in knowing how to make use of them for the benefit of others and not exclusively in self-benefit, in not sacrificing all interest in a future life for them, and in being able to lose them without a murmur, in case it pleases God to take them away... When God causes you to suffer a blow, never ever forget that alongside the most painful trial He always places a consolation. Above all, ponder the point that there are possessions infinitely more precious than those to be found on Earth and this thought will help you towards detachment...

The Lord orders no one to dispose of what they possess, since this would condemn them to voluntary pauperism, seeing that those who did this would turn themselves into social encumbrances... In fact this is a selfishness of another kind, because it means that the individual exempts himself from the responsibility which riches have placed on all who possess them. God gives riches to those He considers apt to administer them for the benefit of others... To reject riches when God has bestowed them, is to renounce the benefits of the goodness it can do, when administered with good judgment. By knowing how to do without them when you do not have them, knowing how to employ them usefully when you receive them, and by knowing how to sacrifice them when necessary, you are proceeding according to God's wishes...

My friends, here you have what I wished to teach about detachment from worldly possessions. I would summarize what I have written by saying: Know how to be content with only a little. If you are poor, do not envy the rich, because riches are not necessarily happiness. If you are rich, then do not forget that these riches at your disposal are only entrusted to you, and that you will have to justify the use to which you put them, just as you would have to give an account of an investment for which you are responsible. Do not be an unfaithful trustee, utilizing it only for the satisfaction of your own pride and sensuality. Do not think you have the right to dispose of a loan as if it were a gift, exclusively for your own benefit. If you do not know how to make restitution then you do not have the right of request, and remember that the person who gives to the poor is settling a debt contracted with God. - Lacordaire (Constantina, 1863).

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

BE PERFECT

Characteristics of Perfection. - The good person. - The good Spiritist. - The parable of the sower. - Instructions from the Spirits: Duty. - Virtue. - Those who are superior and those who are inferior. - The worldly person. - Look after both body and spirit.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PERFECTION

1 - *But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect(Matthew, 5: 44 & 46-48).*

2 - Since God possess infinite perfection in all things, the proposition: “Be perfect as your Celestial Father is perfect,” if taken literally would presuppose the possibility of attaining absolute perfection. If it were given to Man to be as perfect as his Creator, then he would become his equal, which is inadmissible. But the people to whom Jesus spoke did not understand this nuance, which caused Him to limit Himself to the presentation of a model and tell them that they must strive to reach it.

Those words then must be understood in the sense of relative perfection, that which humanity is capable of achieving and which most nearly approaches the Divinity. Jesus shows that the essence of perfection is charity in its most ample form, because it implies the practice of all the other virtues.

In fact, by observing the results of all the vices and even of simple defects, it can be recognized that there is not one which does not more or less disfigure the sentiment of charity, because all of them have their beginnings in selfishness and pride, which are the negation of it. Love for one’s fellow creatures, when extended to love for one’s enemies, cannot be allied to any defect which is against charity. Therefore for this reason it is always an indication of greater or less moral superiority. From this follows that the degree of perfection is in direct relation to the extent of this love.

THE GOOD PERSON

3 - The truly good person is one who complies with the law of justice, love and charity in their highest degree of purity.

They deposit their faith in God, in His goodness, in His justice and in His wisdom.

Good people have faith in the future, which is the reason to put spiritual possessions before those of a temporary nature.

They know that all vicissitudes of life, all pain and all deceptions are trials or atonements and accept them without murmuring.

Men and women who possess the sentiments of charity and love. They do good for the sake of goodness, without waiting for payment of any kind and always sacrifice their own interests in the name of justice.

These kind of people encounter satisfaction in the benefits they are able to spread. Their first impulse is always to think of others before themselves.

The good person is always good, humane and benevolent with everyone, without distinction as to *race or creed*.

They respect all sincere convictions in others and never launch reprobation against those who think otherwise.

Charity guides them in every circumstance, because they know that those who do not draw back at the thought of causing suffering or yet a contrariety. However small, lack the obligation to love one's neighbour and so do not deserve the clemency of the Lord.

They do not harbour rancour, hate or yet desire vengeance.

These kind of people are indulgent with the weaknesses of others because they know that they also need indulgence.

They do not take pleasure in looking for the defects in others, nor in calling attention to them.

Good people study their own imperfections and work unceasingly to combat them.

The good person never tries to emphasize the importance of their own spirit or talent at the expense of others.

They are not conceited about their riches, nor of any personal advantage, knowing that everything that has been given to them may be taken away.

They use, but not abuse, the possessions which have been conceded to them.

If then, by social order, a good person has been placed in a position of command over their fellow creatures, they treat them with kindness and benevolence, because before God all men are equal.

On the part of those who are subordinate, let it be understood that the duties which go with this position must be clearly appreciated and conscientiously fulfilled.

Finally, a good person is always one who respects the rights of their fellow beings, as assured by the laws of nature. In the same way that they would wish their own to be respected.

THE GOOD SPIRITIST

4 - Spiritism, when thoroughly understood and above all when deeply and sincerely felt, leads to the results already expounded. Spiritism does not institute any new morals; it only makes it easier for mankind to understand and practise Christ's morals by giving an unshakable and enlightened faith to those who are in doubt or who waver.

Many of those who believed in the fact of mediumistic manifestations do not comprehend the consequences nor the far reaching moral effects, or if they do, then they do not apply them to themselves. To what is this attributed?

This proves that the so called *physical* part of science only requires eyes to be able to observe, while the *essential* part demands a certain degree of sensitivity, which can be called *maturity in the moral sense* and which is quite independent of age or level of education, because it is peculiar to the spiritual advancement of the incarnate soul.

In some people, material ties are still too strong for them to be able to release themselves from earthly things. they believe in Spirits as a simple fact. But this modifies none or very few of their instinctive tendencies. The phenomenon touches them more than the morality, which seems to them to be hackneyed and monotonous. they ask only that the Spirits unceasingly initiate new mysteries, without asking themselves if they have become worthy of penetrating the hidden secrets of the Creator as yet. These then are the imperfect Spiritists, some of whom have remained stationary in time or have turned away from their brother's and sister's faith, due to their having drawn back before the necessity of self-reform. Nevertheless, the acceptance of the fundamental principles of the doctrine is the first step, from which it will be easier for them to take a second step in a future life.

The person who can be justifiably classified as a true and sincere Spiritist is to be found on a superior level of moral progress. The spirit of this person almost completely dominates their physical body, so giving them a clearer perception of the future. The principles of the doctrine, which leave many untouched, cause them to feel deep inner vibrations. In short *their heart is moved* and this is what makes their faith unshakable. *The true Spiritist can be recognised by their moral transformation and by the efforts they employ in order to dominate their bad instincts.*

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

DUTY

7 - Duty is a moral obligation, firstly to ourselves and then to others. Duty is a law of life encountered in the smallest details as well as in the most elevated acts...

Within the order of sentiments, duty is a very difficult one to fulfill because it finds itself in antagonism with the seductions of interest and of the heart... Man's intimate duty is left to his free-will... Duty of the heart, when faithfully observed, elevates Man... *Duty begins exactly at the point where the happiness or tranquillity of our neighbour is threatened, and therefore terminates at the limit we would not wish to be passed in relation to ourselves.*

God has created all men equal in relation to pain; whether we be small or great, ignorant or educated, we all suffer for the same motives so that each one may judge in clear consciousness the evil that can be done... *Equality in the face of pain is God's sublime providence. He desires that all of His children, being instructed through their common experiences, should not practise evil with the excuse of not knowing its effects.*

Duty is a practical summary of all moral speculation... It is both austere and mild, ready to adapt itself to the most diverse complications while maintaining inflexibility before temptations. *The man who fulfills his duty loves God more than His fellow beings and loves his fellow beings more than himself.*

Duty is the most beautiful laurel of reason... Man should love duty... because it transmits vigour to the soul, which it needs so as to develop.

Duty grows and irradiates under a constantly more elevated form in each of the superior stages of humanity. A person's moral obligations towards God never ceases... - Lazarus (Paris, 1863).

VIRTUE

8 - Virtue, at its highest level is a combination of all those essential qualities which constitute a goodly person... Unfortunately these virtues are almost always accompanied by slight moral failures which tarnish and weaken them. The person who calls attention to their virtues is not virtuous, because they lack the principle quality which is modesty, but they possess the vice in greatest opposition to modesty, which is pride. Virtue is really deserving of this name, does not like to exhibit itself. We must pay attention in order to be aware of its presence; it hides itself in the shadows and runs away from public admiration...

It is to this virtue, well understood and practised, that I call you, my children... But remove from your hearts the sentiments of pride, vanity and self-love...

In principle the, man or woman who exalts himself, who erect statues to their own virtues, by this very fact annul all the merits they might effectively have had... Virtue is a blessing which I desire for all sincere Spiritists, but with this warning: It is better have fewer virtues and to be modest than to have many and be proud. It was because of proud that the various grouping of humanity through the ages have successively lost themselves. It will be through humility that they will one day redeem themselves. - Francois-Nicolas-Madeleine (Paris, 1863).

THE WORLDLY PERSON

10 - A sentiment of pity should always animate the hearts of those who gather together under the eye of the Lord, imploring the assistance of the Good Spirits. Therefore purify your hearts... Lift up your Spirits towards those you are calling, so that they, having encountered favourable dispositions, may launch a profusion of seeds which should germinate in your hearts so as to produce the fruits of charity and justice.

LOOK AFTER BOTH BODY AND SPIRIT

11 - Does spiritual perfection depend on the mortification of the body?... I will base myself on elementary principles and begin by demonstrating the need to take care of the body, which according to the alternatives of health and sickness, has a very important influence upon the soul, because we must consider it to be a prisoner of the flesh. So that this prisoner can live, move itself, and even have an illusion of liberty, the body must be sound, of good disposition, and be vigorous. Let us than make a comparison. Let us suppose that both are in perfect condition; what should be done to maintain the balance between their aptitudes and their necessities, which are so very different?...

In this case two systems are confronting each other: that of the ascetics who to wish bring down the body, and that of the materialists who wish to diminish the soul. Two forms of violence, each one almost as foolish as the other... Where then is wisdom?... This great problem would still remain to be solved if Spiritism had not come to help the researchers and demonstrate to them the relationship which exists between the body and the soul, and to tell them that as they are both reciprocally necessary, it is indispensable that both are looked after.

So then, love your soul and also look after your body which is the instrument of the soul... Do not castigate your body due to failings which your free-will can induce you to commit... Perchance, will you be more perfect if by tormenting your body you do not become less selfish, less prideful and more charitable towards your neighbours? No, perfection is not to be found in this manner, but exclusively in the reformation to which you submit your Spirit... - Georges, a Protecting Spirit (Paris, 1863).

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

MANY ARE CALLED, BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN

The parable of the wedding feast. - The narrow door - Not all those who say: Lord! Lord! will enter in the Kingdom of Heaven. - Much will be asked of he who receives much. - Instructions from the Spirits: To those who have will be given more. - A Christian is recognised by his works.

THE NARROW DOOR

3 - Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew, 7: 13-14)

4 - Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are; then shall you begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of the teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God, and, Behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last. (Luke, 13: 23-30)

5 - Wide is the door to damnation, because evil passions are numerous and the vast majority of humanity follow this pathway. That of salvation is narrow, because Man is obliged to exert great control over himself in order to dominate his evil tendencies if he wishes to pass through, and this is something that few are resigned enough to do. It complements the maxim 'Many are called, but few are chosen.'

This then is the situation of terrestrial humanity, because as the Earth is a world of atonement, evil is the predominating factor. When the planet has been transformed the pathway to goodness will be the one most frequently followed. Therefore these words should be understood in a relative manner and not as an absolute. If this was to be the permanent state of humanity then God would have condemned the great majority of His creatures to damnation, which is an inadmissible supposition since we recognise that God is all justice and all kindness.

In this way, with only one existence, Man would always be at odds with himself and with God's justice. But with the pre-existence of the soul and the plurality of worlds, the

horizons spread out: enlightenment comes to even the most obscure points of faith: the present and the future become linked to the past and it is then that it is possible to understand the depth, truth and wisdom of those words spoken by Christ.

NOT ALL THOSE WHO SAY: LORD! LORD! WILL ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

6 - Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matthew, 7: 21-23)

7 - Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will like him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the flood came, and the winds blew, and beat upon the house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon the house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. (Matthew, 7: 24-27, and similarly in Luke, 6: 46-49)

8 - Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew, 5: 19)

9 - All who recognise the mission of Jesus say; Lord! Lord! But of what use is it to call 'Master' or 'Lord' when you do not follow His precepts? Are they Christians then, who honour him with exterior acts of devotion while at the same time making sacrifice to pride, selfishness, greed and all the passions? No, seeing that as the Pharisees, they have prayer on their lips but not in their hearts. In vain they can say to Jesus; "Lord! Do we not prophesy, that is to say, do we not teach in Your name? Do we not expel demons in Your name? Do we not eat and drink with you?" He will reply to them; "I know not who you are; go away from me, you who deny by your acts what you say with your lips... For you there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, seeing that God's Kingdom is for those who are gentle, humble and charitable. Do not expect to bend God's justice by the multiplicity of your words not the amount of your kneeling. The only pathway which is open wherein you may find grace in His sight, is by the sincere practice of the law of love and charity."

The words of Jesus are eternal because they are the truth. This is why all institutions, be they human, political, social or religious, that rely on these words will always remain steadfast as the house built upon rock. They will be retained by Man because in them he will find his happiness.

MUCH WILL BE ASKED OF HE WHO RECEIVES MUCH

10 -And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whosoever

much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. (Luke, 12: 47 & 48)

11 - *And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth. (John, 9: 39-41)*

12- These maxims apply even more especially to the Spiritist teachings. Whosoever knows Christ's precepts and does not keep them is certainly guilty. However, besides the fact that the Gospel which contains them is only found scattered in the bosom of the Christian sects, even amongst those, how many there are who do not read them! And even amongst those who do read them, How many there are who do not understand them! The result of all this is that the words of Jesus remain lost to the majority of men and women.

It is important to note that nothing is circumscribed within the teachings of the Spirits, who reproduce these maxims in various forms, developing and commenting on them in order to put them within the reach of all. Every person, be they learned or illiterate, believer or incredulous, Christian or not, is able to receive them because the Spirits communicate in all places. No one who receives them either directly or through an intermediary, can allege ignorance. Therefore those who do not take advantage of these maxims to better themselves, will be all the more guilty in proportion to the number of ways open to them to acquire knowledge of truth.

Those mediums who receive good communications but persist in evil, are even more censurable because they frequently write their own condemnation. Also, because if it were not for the fact of their being blinded by pride, they would recognise that it is to them that the Spirits address themselves.

In the sentence: "if you were blind you would not have sinned," Jesus wished to signify that the culpability is according to how enlightened a person may or may not be.

Much will be asked for Spiritists because they have received much; on the other hand, to those who have taken every advantage of their learning much will be given.

Spiritism will multiply the number of those who are CALLED; likewise through growing faith the proportion of those who are CHOSEN will also be multiplied.

A CHRISTIAN IS RECOGNISABLE BY HIS WORKS

16 - "Not all of those who say: Lord! Lord! will enter into Heaven, But only those who do the Will of my father, who is in Heaven."

Listen to these words of the Master, all those who repel the Spiritist Doctrine as the work of the evil. Open your ears because the moment to listen has arrived.

Is it sufficient to carry the uniform of the Lord in order to be His faithful servant? Is it enough to say: 'I am a Christian', for anyone to be a follower of Christ? Search for the true Christians and you will recognise them by their works. "A good tree cannot give forth bad fruits, nor a bad tree good fruits." These are the words of the Master. Disciples of Christ, understand them well! What kind of fruits should be given by the tree of Christianity, which is a mighty tree, whose leafy branches cover part of the world with shade, but does not as yet shelter all who should seek refuge around it? Those from the Tree of Life are fruits of life, hope and faith. Christianity, as it has done for many centuries, continues to preach these divine virtues. It uses all its strength to distribute its fruits, but so few pick them! The Tree is always good, but the gardeners are bad. They tried to mould it to their own ideas, to prune it to their necessities. They cut it, diminished it and mutilated it. Having become sterile it does not give forth bad fruits, because it gives forth no fruits at all. The thirsty traveller who stops under its branches looking for the fruits of hope, which are capable of restoring strength and courage, sees only bare branches foretelling a coming storm...

My dearly beloved, open then your hearts and ears. Cultivate this Tree of Life whose fruits give eternal life. Conserve it just as it was when Christ gave it to you. Do not mutilate it. It wants to cast its immense shade over the Universe, so do not cut its branches. Its tasty fruits fall abundantly so as to satiate the hungry traveller who wishes to reach the end of his journey... "Many are called, but few are chosen." This is because there are monopolizers of the Bread of Life, as there are also of material bread. Do not be one of them... Go then, and seek those who are hungry, lead them under the leafy branches of the Tree of Life and share with them the shelter it offers... My brothers and sisters, turn away from those who call to you in order to show you the thorns of the way; instead, follow those who will lead you under the shade of the Tree of Life.

The Divine Saviour, the Just par excellence, spoke, and His words will never die; "Not all who say: Lord! Lord! will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do the Will of my Father who is in Heaven." - Simon (Bordeaux, 1863)

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

WORKERS OF THE LAST HOUR

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS: The last shall be the first. - The mission of the Spiritists. - The workers of the Lord.

1 - For the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent him into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith into his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they have received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen. (Matthew, 20: 1-16. See also the Parable of the Wedding Feast, Chapter 18, item 1)

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

THE LAST SHALL BE THE FIRST

2 - The worker of the last hour has a right to his wages; nevertheless, it is important that his lateness be not due to either laziness or reluctance, but to the fact that, although willing to work, he had been patiently waiting for someone to employ him. He has a right to his wages because, being hardworking, he has waited anxiously since dawn for someone who would finally offer work...

However, if he had refused to work at any time during the day... then this person would not have received the wages of work but of laziness.

What would you say then of someone who, instead of remaining inactive, utilized those hours destined for the day's labour to practice culpable acts... Is it enough for him to say at the last hour: "Master, I used my time badly. Take me on till the end of the day so I do some work, although it will be very little of what was my share, and give me the wages of a good worker?" No! No! The Lord will say to him: "I have no work for you at present. You squandered away your time; you forgot what you had learnt; you can no longer work in my vineyard. Consequently, you must recommence your learning, and when you are better disposed come again and I will throw open my vast fields to you, where you may work at any time."

Good Spiritists, my dearly beloved, you are all workers of the last hour... All of you came when you were called, some a little earlier, some a little later, to this incarnation whose shackles you now carry. For how many centuries has the Lord called you to His vineyard without you wishing to enter it?... So put to good use the time that is left and never forget that your existence is nothing but a fleeting moment in the immensity of time which forms eternity. - Constantine, a Protecting Spirit (Bordeaux, 1863)

3 - Jesus liked the simplicity of symbols and His virile language the workers who arrived at the first hour were the prophets, Moses and all the initiates, who have marked the steps of progress which continued to be signposted throughout the ages by the apostles, the martyrs, the founders of the Church, the wise men, the philosophers and finally by the Spiritists. These who are the last to come... they will receive the same recompense or, I should say, a larger recompense. Being the last to arrive, the Spiritists take advantage of all the intellectual labours of their predecessors, because Man must inherit from Man and because human work and the subsequent results are collective... Moreover, many who relive today, or who will relive tomorrow, are terminating work begun previously... These then will receive wages according to the value of the undertaking.

A Spirit, when called upon to give an account of its earthly mandate, sees for itself the continuity of an interrupted task, which is always resumed. It sees, it feels, it intuitively grasps the thoughts of those who have preceded... And all of them, the workers of the first and last hours, with their eyes fully open to the profound justice of God, murmur no more: they simply adore... - Henri Heine (Paris, 1863)

THE MISSION OF THE SPIRITISTS

4 - Ah, praise the Lord, all those who have put their faith in His sovereign justice and who, as new apostles of the belief revealed by the superior prophetic voices, go forth to preach the new doctrine of *reincarnation* and the elevation of Spirits according to whether they have fulfilled their missions and supported their terrestrial trials well or badly.

Do not be afraid!... Oh, true adepts of Spiritism... you are God's chosen ones! Go forth and preach the Divine Word. The time has come when you should sacrifice your habits, your work, and your futile occupations to its dissemination. Go forth and preach! The elevated Spirits are with you. You will most certainly speak to those who do not wish to hear the Voice of God, because this Voice calls them unceasingly to abnegation. You will preach disinterestedness to those who are avaricious, abstinence to the dissolute, gentleness to domestic tyrants and despots! Lost words, I know, but it does not matter. It is necessary that you irrigate the land to be sown with the sweat of your labour, seeing that it will not come to fruit nor produce except under the repeated blows of the evangelical hoe and plough.

March forward, magnificent phalanx of faith! Before you do the great battalions of unbelievers will dissipate, as does the morning dew at the first rays of the sun.

Jesus said that faith is the virtue which moves mountains. However, heavier than the greatest mountain are the impurities and all the vices which are derived from them, which lie deposited in the hearts of men. So then, depart full of courage to remove this mountain of iniquities which future generations should only know as legend...

THE WORKERS OF THE LORD

5 - The time approaches when those things which have been announced for the transformation of humanity will be accomplished. All those who have worked in the field of the Lord with disinterestedness and no other motive than charity, will be blessed!... Blessed are those who have said to their fellow men: "Let us work together and unite our efforts so that when the Lord arrives He will find His work finished."... But woe to those who as a result of their dissensions have held back the time of the harvest, because the tempest will come and they will be taken away in the turbulence! They will cry out: "Mercy! Mercy!" However, the Lord will say to them: "How can you implore mercy when you had none for your fellow men and refused to offer them a helping hand, trampling on the weak instead of upholding them? How can you beseech mercy when you sought your recompense in earthly pleasures and the satisfaction of your pride? You have already received your recompense, just as you wished. There is nothing more to ask for; the celestial rewards are for those who have not looked for earthly compensations."...

...those who do not draw back from the task are the ones to whom He entrusted the most difficult positions in the great work of regeneration by means of Spiritism... - The Spirit of Truth (Paris, 1862)

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

THERE WILL BE FALSE CHRISTS AND FALSE PROPHETS

A tree is known by its fruits. - The mission of the prophets. - The prodigies of the false prophets. - Do not believe all the Spirits. - Instructions from the Spirits: The false prophets. - The character of the true prophet. - The false prophets from the spiritual world. - Jeremiah and the false prophets.

A TREE IS KNOWN BY ITS FRUITS

1 - *For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and a evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil, for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh - (Luke, 6: 43-45).*

2 - *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves, ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them - (Matthew, 7: 15-20).*

3 - *Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect - (Mtthew, 24: 4, 5, 11-13, 23 & 24. Also found in Mark, 13: 5, 6, 21 & 22).

DO NOT BELIEVE ALL THE SPIRITS

6 - *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world - (1 John, 4: 1).*

7 - Far from sanctioning the false Christs and false prophets, as some people take pleasure in saying, spiritual phenomena comes, on the contrary, to deal them a death blow. Do not ask Spiritism for prodigies or miracles, since it positively declares it does not perform them. Spiritism reveals other unknown laws which govern the relationships existing between the physical and the spiritual worlds; laws which just as much as those of science, are laws of Nature. By giving an explanation for certain types of phenomena, which until now had remained inexplicable, it destroys all that remains of the miraculous. Consequently those who feel tempted to exploit these phenomena for personal gain, by pretending to be messengers from God, will not be allowed to abuse the credulity of the general public for long, but will be quickly unmasked. Moreover, as has already been said, these phenomena alone prove nothing. Every mission is proved by its moral effects and these cannot be produced by everyone.

Spiritism also reveals another far more dangerous aspect of false Christs and false prophets, which is to be found not amongst men, but amongst the discarnate. These are the deceiving, hypocritical, prideful and falsely-wise Spirits, who on passing from Earth into their spiritual wanderings, have adopted venerated names as masks under which to hide, in order to facilitate the acceptance of the most strange and absurd ideas. There are a considerable number who in various epochs, and above all in recent times, have presented themselves as some of the old prophets, Christ, the Virgin Mary and even God himself. John warns against these Spirits by saying: "Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world". Spiritism offers us the means of trying them when it shows us the characteristics by which we may recognise the good spirits which are *always moral, never material*. Spirits are judged by the quality of their works, just as tree is judged by its fruits.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS.

THE FALSE PROPHETS

8 - Where it is said: "Christ is here," do not go. On the contrary, be on guard because the false prophets there will be numerous. Do you not see that the leaves of the fig-tree are fading? Do you not see that its multiple shoots are awaiting the time of coming into flower? Did not Jesus say unto you: know the tree by its fruit? Then if the fruit is bitter you already know that the tree is evil; however, if the fruits are sweet and healthy you can say: "Nothing that is pure can come from something bad."

My brethren, this then is how you should judge. It is the works that you should examine. If those who say they are invested with divine powers ... that is to say, if they possess the highest order of Christian and eternal virtues which are: charity, love, tolerance and

goodness which conciliates all hearts - and if, in support of their works they also present the equivalent acts, then you may say: These are true messengers of God.

Nevertheless, ... mistrust those who lay claim to a monopoly of the truth!

No, no, Christ is not amongst these, seeing that those He sends to propagate His sacred doctrine ... and above all else, ... will be essentially modest and humble. Run away from all who show even an atom of pride as you would run away from an infectious disease ... Remember, *each creature bears the stamp on their brow and even more especially in their actions, of their spiritual progress or their inferiority.*

Go therefore, my beloved children ... turn aside with great care from all that may impede your march towards the eternal objective. Travellers, it is only for a while longer that you will be in the shadows and suffer the pains of atonement if you open your heart to this sweet doctrine, which will reveal to you the eternal laws and satisfy every aspiration of your soul with regard to the unknown ... Now, my beloved, death disappears giving place to the radiant angel you know, the angel of re-encounter and reunion! ... Accordingly, continue to advance unceasingly! Let your slogan be progress, continuous progress in all things, until finally you reach the happy termination of your journey, where all who proceeded you await. - LOUIS (Bordeaux, 1861).

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

STRANGE MORAL

Hate the parents. - Abandon father, mother and children. - Leave to the dead the care of burying their dead. - I have not come to bring peace, but dissension.

ABANDON FATHER, MOTHER AND CHILDREN

4 - And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life (Matthew, 19: 29).

5 - Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee. And He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the Kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting (Luke, 18: 28-30).

6 - And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God (Luke, 9: 61 & 62).

Here, without arguing about words, we should look for the thought behind them which quite evidently was: The interests of the future life should take precedence over all other interests and human considerations. This thought is in accordance with the substance of the doctrine as taught by Jesus, whereas the idea of renouncing one's family would be a frank denial of this teaching.

Moreover, do we not have these maxims in mind when we consider the sacrifice of our interests and family affections for those of our homeland? Do we by chance, censure those who leave their parents, brothers and sisters, wives and children in order to fight for their country? Does not the law impose that the daughter leave her parents in order to follow her husband? These temporary separations do not diminish either the respect or the solicitude that children owe to their parents, nor the affection of these parents for their children. Therefore we see that even if we take these words literally, with the exception of the word *hate*, they would not be a contradiction of the commandment which prescribes that Man honours his father and mother, nor that of parental affection. These words had the finality then of showing through overstatement, how imperious is the duty of occupying oneself with the future life. Besides, they would have been less shocking for a people in an epoch in which, as a consequence of their customs, family ties were not so strong within a society which is morally more advanced. These ties, always weak in primitive peoples, fortify themselves with the development of sensitivity and a sense of morality. Nevertheless, separation is necessary for progress.

Here things are considered purely from the earthly point of view. Spiritism makes us look higher by showing us that the real ties of affection are not of the flesh but of the Spirit, and that these ties do not break with separation, nor even through the death of the physical body. In fact they become more robust in the spiritual life by means of the cleansing of the Spirit. This knowledge is a consoling truth from which great strength can be gained by all beings to help them support the vicissitudes of life (Chapter 4, item 18 and chapter 14, item 8).

I HAVE NOT COME TO BRING PEACE, BUT DISSENSION

9 - *Think not that I am come to send peace on Earth: I am come not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household (Matthew, 10: 34-36).*

10 - *I am come to send fire on the Earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on Earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, tree against two and two against tree. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law (Luke, 12: 49-53).*

11 - There is no blasphemy nor contradiction in these words, because it was Jesus Who pronounced them and they are testimony of His great wisdom. It is only that they are a little ambiguous and the form does not express the thought with exactitude. Taken literally, they have a tendency to transform His mission, which was all peaceful, into one of perturbation and discord, which is absurd, and good sense repels this, seeing that Jesus could not contradict Himself (Chapter 19, item 6).

12 - Every new idea inevitably encounters opposition and there is not one which is implanted without a fight. Well, in these cases the resistance is always in proportion to the importance of the *foreseen* results. If it is notoriously false, if it is taken as inconsequential, then no one becomes alarmed; everyone lets it go, being certain that it lacks vitality. If, however, it is true, if it is placed on a solid base, if it appears to have a future, then a secret presentiment alerts its antagonists to the fact that it constitutes a danger for them and to the order of things to whose maintenance they are pledged. Then they throw themselves against it and its adepts.

So we can measure the importance and the results of a new idea by the amount of emotion its appearance causes, by the violence of the opposition it provokes, as well as by the degree and persistence of the anger of its adversaries.

13 - Jesus came to proclaim a doctrine which would undermine the very base of the abuses upon which the Pharisees, the Scribes and the Priests all lived. Accordingly they sacrificed Him, believing that by killing the Man they would kill the idea. Nevertheless this idea survived because it was the truth. It has augmented itself because it corresponds to God's design and although born in a small and obscure hamlet in Judaea, it went and planted its standard in the very capital of the pagan world, right in the face of its fiercest enemies. Terrible battles awaited there for the Apostles; the victims were innumerable. However the idea always grew and triumphed because, being the truth, it rose above those which had preceded.

14 - It is worth nothing that Christianity sprang up when Paganism had already entered into a decline and was struggling against the light of reason. Only personal interest sustained it. Now those who are moved by interest are persistent and never give way to evidence. They become more and more irritated as the counter arguments become more decisive and demonstrate more clearly their beliefs. What they most fear is the light which will give sight to those who are blind. The errors are to their advantage, so they hold on to them and give battle.

Did not Socrates also teach a doctrine very similar to that of Christ? Why then did it not prevail amongst one of the most intelligent peoples upon the planet at that time? This was because the time was not yet ripe. Christ received His mission at the propitious moment, because of the beginning of a sense of emptiness which the common beliefs did nothing to fill.

15 - Unfortunately the adepts of the new doctrine were unable to agree as to the interpretation of the words of Jesus. Because of this, numerous sects were quick to flourish, each claiming to possess the exclusive truth. Forgetting charity, fraternity and love for one's neighbour; those sects launched curses at each other and cast themselves one upon the other, the strongest crushing the weakest. After having conquered Paganism, these Christians who had been the persecuted, became the persecutors. Fire and steel were used to implant the Cross of the Shepherd, despite its being unblemished in both worlds.

Is this the fault of the Christian Doctrine? Clearly not, as this formally condemns all violence. Therefore the responsibility does not lie with the Doctrine of Jesus, but rather with those who have falsely interpreted it and turned it into an instrument for the satisfaction of their own passions. It belongs to those who have despised these words: "My Kingdom is not of this world".

In His profound wisdom Jesus had foreseen these happenings. But these things were inevitable because they are inherent in the inferior nature of Man, which cannot be transformed suddenly. It was necessary for Christianity to go through this long and cruel test during all these centuries in order to show its strength, seeing that despite all the evil committed in its name it has remained pure and uncontaminated.

When Jesus declared: “Think not that I am come to bring peace on Earth, but a sword”, the thought behind this statement was as follows:

“Do not believe that My Doctrine will establish itself pacifically, because it will bring bloody battles wherein My name will be used as a pretext, because mankind will not have understood Me or will not have wanted to understand... I have come to launch fire upon the Earth so as to purge it of errors and prejudices... and I am in a hurry for the fire to start so the purification may be that much quicker, seeing that truth will come forth triumphantly from this conflict. War will be succeeded by peace, hate between two parties by universal brotherhood, the darkness of fanaticism by the clarity of enlightened faith. Then when the field is prepared I will send a *Comforter, The Spirit of Truth, which will re-establish all things*... Finally then, being tired of combat which has brought no result, only desolation and perturbation, even into the hearts of families, Man will recognise where his true interests lie in relation to this world and the next... Then all will put themselves under the same banner which is that of charity, and all things will re-establish themselves on Earth in accordance with truth and the principles which I have taught.”

17 - Spiritism has come at the appointed time to realise the promises made by Christ. However, this cannot be done without first destroying all abuse. Just as happened with Jesus, Spiritism is faced with pride, selfishness, ambition, greed and blind fanaticism. Therefore it too has to do battle. But the time of battles and bloody outrages is passing so that those to be suffered from now on will be of a moral nature, and even these are nearing the end.

18 - These words of Jesus should be understood as referring to the wrath which His doctrine will provoke, the momentary conflicts which it will create and to the fights it will have to endure before it is established. He was like the doctor who comes to cure, but whose medicine provokes a beneficial crisis in those who are sick.

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

DO NOT HIDE THE LIGHT UNDER A BUSHEL

The light under a bushel. Why Jesus spoke in parables. - Do not keep company with the Gentiles. - The healthy do not need a doctor. - The courage of faith. - Carry your cross. He who will save his life, shall lose it.

THE LIGHT UNDER A BUSHEL. WHY JESUS SPOKE IN PARABLES

1 - Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. (Matthew, 5: 15)

2 - No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick that they which enter in many see the light. For nothing is secret that shall be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. (Luke, 8: 16 & 17)

3 - And the disciples came and said unto Him, Why speaketh thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore, speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them. (Matthew, 13: 10-15)

4 - It appears strange to hear Jesus say that the light should not be covered up when He constantly hid the meaning of His words under the veil of allegories, which are not understood by everyone. However, He explains this when He says to His disciples: "I speak to them in parables because they are not ready to understand certain things. So it would have been useless to have told them everything at this time. Nevertheless, I have told you, because it has been given to you to understand these mysteries." In this manner, we come to comprehend the real meaning of the words: "Neither do the men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." This sentence does not mean that we should reveal all things, without due consideration as to the convenience of this revelation. All teaching should be proportional according to the intelligence of those to be taught.

The generations have their infancy, their youth and their maturity. Each thing must come at the right moment. But what prudence holds back momentarily, soon or later will be discovered because when the correct degree of development has been reached Man seeks for himself the living light as he feels obscurity weighing upon him. God having given him intelligence to understand and be guided amongst the things of the Earth and of Heaven, Man then seeks to rationalize his faith. It is at this point that he must not put the candle under the bushel, seeing that *without the light of reason faith becomes weak* (Chapter 19, item 7).

5 - If providence then in its wise precaution only reveals the truth gradually, it is obvious that these truths are disclosed in proportion as humanity shows itself sufficiently mature to receive them. However, as Man enters into possession of them he almost always hides them from the masses, with the intention of dominating the people. These are the ones who truly place the light under a bushel. This is why every religion has its mysteries whose examination is prohibited. But as these religions begin to become outdated, so science and intelligence have advanced and broken through the veil of mystery.

Absolute mysteries cannot exist and Jesus was right when He said that there was no secret that would not come to be known. Everything which is hidden will be discovered one day, and what man still does not comprehend will be revealed in succession, in more advanced worlds, when he reaches purification.

6 - It must be noted that Jesus only expressed Himself in parables in areas which were rather abstract in the doctrine. But having declared charity to one's neighbour and humility as the basic condition for salvation, everything He said in this respect is completely clear, explicit and without any ambiguities. On other matters He only disclosed His thoughts to His disciples. This was because they were more advanced, both morally and intellectually, so that Jesus could initiate them in the knowledge of more abstract truths. This is also why He said: *to those who already have, even more shall be given*. (Chapter 18, item 15)

Nevertheless, even with the apostles He was not precise on many points. It was these parts which caused so many diverse interpretations until science on the one hand and Spiritism on the other hand revealed the new laws of Nature, so making the real meaning perceptible.

7 - Today Spiritism projects its light over an immense number of obscure points. But it does not do this without due consideration. They consider gradually, one by one, the various known parts of the Doctrine, leaving the other parts to be revealed only when it will be opportune to bring them forth from obscurity. So then if the Spirits have still not told everything outright, it is not because there are mysteries within the doctrine which only the privilege few many penetrate, nor is it because they have hidden the candle under the bushel. They give time for each idea to mature and spread before presenting another and for *events to prepare the way for the acceptance of new ideas*.

9 - On many occasions Jesus show us that His vision was not confined to the Jewish people alone, but rather embraced all humanity. Moreover, if He told His apostles not to go to the pagans, it was not that He disdained conversing with them, which would not have been at all charitable; rather it was that the Jews, who already believed in one God and were waiting for a Messiah, were already prepared through the Laws of Moses and the Prophets to accept His Word. With the pagans, where even the base was lacking, there would have been everything to do and the apostles were not yet sufficiently enlightened for so difficult a task. Jesus knew that the conversion of the Gentiles would happen at a later date. Indeed, later on the apostles did go to plant a cross in the very heart of paganism.

10 - These words can also be applied to the adepts and disseminators of Spiritism. The systematically incredulous, the obstinate mockers and the profit-seeking adversaries are today what the Gentiles were to the apostles. So to follow their example, go first to make converts amongst those of goodwill, those who desire enlightenment, where a fertile seed may be found and where there are many, without wasting time with those who do not want to see or hear, where they resist all the more out of pride the greater the importance that is put upon their conversion. The time will come when they will have been persuaded by public opinion and by hearing the same information being constantly repeated all around them. Then they will think they have accepted the ideas voluntarily, by their own impulse and not under pressure from others.

At the time of Jesus, everything was localized and circumscribed. The house of Israel was but a small nation, the Gentiles being other small nations around them. Today the ideas have been universalized and spiritualized. The new light is the privilege of no one nation. The Gentiles are no longer a nation; they are only an opinion which is accepted in all places and over which truth will triumph little by little, just as Christianity triumphed over Paganism.

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

SEEK AND YOU WILL FIND

If you help yourself then Heaven will come to your aid. - Behold the fowls of the air. - Provide not gold in your purse.

IF YOU HELP YOURSELF THEN HEAVEN WILL COME TO YOUR AID

1 - *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him? (Matthew, 7: 7-11)*

2 - From a earthly point of view the maxim: *Seek and ye shall find* is the same as that other one: *Help yourself and the Heaven will come to your aid*. This is the base of the *Law of Work* and consequently the *Law of Progress*.

During mankind's infancy he only used his intelligence in seeking food, as a means of protection against the climate and defending himself from his enemies. However, God has given Man something more that He gave to animals, which is *an incessant desire to better himself*. It is this desire which impels him to seek out the best ways of improving his position in life, which duly leads him to make discoveries, to invent things and to perfect the sciences because it is science which gives him what he lacks. Through Man's research his intelligence heightens and his moral depurate. The need of the body give way to those of the Spirit. After material nourishment Man needs spiritual nourishment. This is how he passes from savagery to civilization.

But the amount of progress achieved by each person during a single lifetime is very small indeed, in most cases even imperceptible. How then could humanity progress without pre-existence and the *re-existence* of the soul? If the souls who daily leave the Earth were never to return, then humanity would be constantly renewing itself with primitive elements, having everything still to do and to learn.. On the other hand, by returning with the degree of progress realised and acquiring something more each time, the soul then gradually passes from the barbaric state to that of *materialistic civilization* and then on to one of *moral civilization*.

3 - If God had exempted Man from bodily works his limbs would have withered. If He had exempted him from intellectual work then his Spirit would have remained in a state of infancy. This is why He made work a necessity by saying: *Seek and ye shall find; work and ye shall produce*.

4 - It is by virtue of this principle that the Spirits do not help in sparing men the work of research by bringing them the discoveries and inventions prepared and ready for use. If things were like that then the laziest could enrich themselves and the most ignorant could become wise at the cost of no effort and both would have merits attributed to them for things they had not done. *No, the Spirits do not come to exempt Man from the Law of Work, but only to show him the goal to be reached and the pathway that leads there, by saying: walk and you will get there.*

5 - From the moral point of view, these words of Jesus signify that if we ask for the light which will show us the way, it will be given: if we ask for strength to resist evil, we shall receive it: if we ask for the assistance of the good Spirits, then they will come to accompany us. But we must ask with sincerity, faith, confidence and fervour. We must present ourselves with humility and not with arrogance, or else we will be abandoned to our own strength and the falls taken will be punishment for our pride.

PROVIDE NOT GOLD IN YOUR PURSE

9 - *Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.*

10 - *And in whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace be upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you: It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorra in the Day of Judgement, than for that city (Matthew, 10: 9-15).*

11 - In those days, there was nothing unusual in these words which Jesus directed to His apostles, on commanding them to announce the Glad Tidings for the first time. They were in accordance with the patriarchal customs of the Orient, when the traveller was always made welcome in the tent. Among modern peoples the development of travel has created new customs. If Jesus were to return today He could no longer tell His apostles to put themselves on the road without provisions.

Apart from their actual meaning, these words hold a very profound moral sense. In proffering them, Jesus was teaching His disciples to have confidence in the Providence. What is more, by having nothing, they could not cause covetousness amongst those who received them. This is why He told them to: "Find out who is worthy of putting you up." or rather: who is human enough to clothe a traveller who has nothing with which to pay, as these are the ones who are worthy to receive your words and will be recognisable by their charity. With regards to those who cared neither to receive them nor to listen to them, He simply told them to go away and seek others who were willing to listen. Today Spiritism says the same thing to its followers. Do not violate any consciences. Do not force anyone to leave their faith in order to adopt yours. Do not excommunicate those who do not think as you do. Welcome all who come to join you and leave in peace all

those who are repelled by your ideas. Remind yourselves of the words of Christ. In other times the heavens were taken over by violence, but today they are taken over by mildness.

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

GIVE FOR FREE WHAT HAS BEEN RECEIVED GRATUITOUSLY

The gift of healing. - Paid prayers. - The moneychangers expelled from the Temple. - Gratuitous mediumship.

THE GIFT OF HEALING

1 - *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give. (Matthew, 10: 8)*

2 - “Give for free what has been received gratuitously”, is what Jesus told His disciples. With this recommendation it is prescribed that no one be charged for something for which nothing has been paid... God gave them the faculty of healing gratis for the alleviation of those who suffer and as a means of propagating faith. Jesus, then, recommended that they did not turn this into an object of commercialization, neither speculation, nor a means of livelihood.

PAID PRAYERS

3 - *Then in the audience of all the people He said unto His disciples, Beware of the Scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation. (Luke, 20: 45-47; also Mark, 12: 38-40 and Matthew, 23: 14)*

4 - Jesus also said: “Do not make charges for your prayers; do not do as the Scribes who on pretext of long prayers, devoured the homes of widows”, that is to say, they took possession of their fortunes. Prayer is an act of charity... To charge someone for the prayers we direct to God in their name, is to transform oneself into a paid intermediary. Then prayer becomes a mere formula whose length is in proportion to the amount it cost... In this case what is the situation of those who cannot pay?...

God does not sell His benefits; He concedes them. How then can one who is not an agent and cannot guarantee results, charge for a petition which may produce no results?... Reason, good sense and logic tell us it is impossible that God, Who is absolute perfection, could delegate to imperfect beings the right to establish a price for His justice, which is like the Sun: it exists for all, rich and poor alike...

...The one who buys prayers judges himself, in most cases, to be relieved from the need to pray... We know that Spirits are touched by the fervour of the thoughts of those who are interested in them, but what fervour can be felt by one who arranges a third party to pray for them on payment of money?...

GRATUITOUS MEDIUMSHIP

7 - Mediums today (since the Apostles also possessed mediumship) have equally received a faculty gratis from God. This is of being interpreters of the Spirits for the instruction of mankind, to show them the pathway of goodness, conducting them along by means of faith. Not to sell words which do not belong to the mediums, seeing that they are not fruits of *their conception, nor of their research, nor of their personal work*. God wants the light to reach everyone. He does not want the poorest to be deprived of it so they can say they have no faith because they could not pay for it... Mediumship is not a privilege, and is to be found in all places. To make someone pay for it is to turn it away from its providential objective.

8 - Those who understand the conditions in which good Spirits communicate, could never accept that Superior spirits are at the disposal of the first who comes along and evokes them, at so much per session. Simple good sense rejects such an idea... Those who desire serious communications should before all else ask with seriousness, and following this, should inform themselves of the nature of the sympathies the medium may have with the beings from the Spirit world. Therefore, the first conditions necessary to attract the benevolence of the good Spirits are humility, devotion, abnegation and total disinterest, *both moral and material*.

9 - Serious mediumship cannot be, and never ever will be a profession; not just because it would be morally discredited and rapidly become mere fortune-telling; but because there is a material obstacle in opposition. Mediumship is a faculty which is essentially unstable, elusive, and variable, whose permanency no one can count upon. It is a very uncertain source for anyone wishing to exploit it, and can fail at the moment it is most needed... Mediumship is neither an art nor a skill; therefore it cannot become a profession. It only exists through the cooperation of the Spirits. If they are absent there is no mediumship. The aptitude can exist, but the exercise of it would be annulled. Also there is not a single medium in the world who can guarantee the obtaining of a spiritual phenomenon at any given moment. So then to exploit mediumship is to make use of something which does not really belong to that person... Modern Spiritism, understanding the serious nature of this question, has completely discredited any kind of exploitation, so elevating mediumship to the category of a *mission*. (THE MEDIUMS' BOOK, 2nd part, chapter 28 and also HEAVEN AND HELL, 1st part, chapter 11)

10 - Mediumship is something sacred which should be practised in a saintly and religious manner, and if there is one type of mediumship which requires this condition even more absolutely than the others, it is that of healing... A curing medium retransmits healing fluids from the good Spirits, and consequently has no right to sell them. Jesus and His Apostles, although poor, did not charge for the cures they obtained.

So then, those who lack the necessary means of financial support can seek their funds wherever they like, except within mediumship, and if necessary only dedicate their spare time to this work after material needs have been satisfied. The Spirits will take into

consideration the devotion and sacrifices, whereas they will turn away from those who expect to turn them into a ladder for material ascension.

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN

The quality of prayers. - The efficacy of prayer. - The action of prayer. Transmission of thought. - Intelligible prayers. - Prayer for the dead and for suffering Spirits. - Instructions from the Spirits: The way in which to pray. - Happiness proportioned by prayer.

THE QUALITY OF PRAYERS

1. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corner of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their rewards. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for they much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye need of, before ye ask Him. (Matthew, 6: 5-8).

2. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in Heaven may forgive you for your trespasses. (Mark, 11: 25 & 26).

3. And He spoke this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank ye, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers or even as this publican. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful unto me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (Luke, 18: 9-14).

4. Jesus clearly defined the quality of prayer. He said that when you pray you should not make yourself conspicuous, but rather pray in secret. Do not prolong your prayers because it is not by the multiplicity of the words that you will be heard, but by their sincerity. Before praying, if you have anything against another, forgive them. Finally, pray with humility. Look at your defects, not at your qualities, and if you compare yourself to others, look for what is bad in yourself.

THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER

5. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them. (Mark, 11: 24).

6. There are those who contest the effectiveness of prayer on the grounds that, as God knows all our needs it is useless to enumerate them to Him and then our petitions cannot change God's decrees.

Beyond all doubts there are natural and immutable laws which cannot be annulled at the caprice of each individual; but from this fact to the belief that all circumstances in life are submitted to fatality is a long step indeed. If it were like that, then Man would be a passive instrument without free-will or initiative. God did not grant reason and intelligence for Man not to use them. As Man is free to act one way or the other, for himself and towards others, the consequences depend on what he does or does not do. By his initiative there are events which forcibly escape fatality and yet do not destroy the harmony of the universal laws. God then can accede to certain petitions without destroying the immunity of those laws which govern the whole, as consent is always dependant on His Will.

7. From the maxim: "Whatever you ask for through prayer will be granted," it would be illogical to conclude that one can receive just by asking, and unjust to accuse Providence if a request made is not conceded, because it is known what is best for our own good. Generally, Man only sees the present moment. Meanwhile if the suffering is useful to our happiness, then God will let us suffer.

What God will concede if we direct ourselves to Him with confidence is courage, patience and resignation. What He will also concede are the means of resolving situations with the help of ideas suggested to us by good Spirits at God's instigation, whereby we retain the merit for the decisions taken.

8. Let us take an example. A man finds himself lost in the desert. Thirst is torturing him terribly. He asks God to help him and waits. No angels will come to give him water. However, what does happen is that a good Spirit *suggests* the idea of picking himself up and taking one of the paths that are before him. Uniting what is left of his strength, he gets up, walks and discovers not far away a brook. On sighting this he gains courage. If he has faith he exclaims: "Thank you dear God, for the idea you inspired and for the strength you gave me." If he is without faith he will say: "What a good idea I had. How lucky I was to take the right-hand path and not the one on the left! Chance sometimes serves one admirably! I must congratulate myself for my courage and for not being defeated!"

But you may ask why the Spirits did not say clearly: "Follow that path and you will find what you need"? Firstly, so as to teach him that each person must help themselves and make use of their strength. Secondly, because the man doubted His existence God put the confidence he had in Him to the test, as well as testing his submission to His will.

THE ACT OF PRAYER. TRANSMISSION OF THOUGHT

9. Prayer is an invocation through which, by means of thought, Man enters into communication with the being to whom he directed himself. This may be for the purpose of asking for something, giving thanks or as a glorification. We may pray for ourselves or for others, for the living or for the dead. Prayers addressed to God are heard by those Spirits who are charged with the execution of His will. All those addressed to good Spirits are referred to God.

11. It is through prayer that Man obtains the assistance of good Spirits who come running to sustain him in his good resolutions and inspire wholesome ideas. In this manner he acquires the moral strength necessary to be able to surmount all difficulties, and come back to the straight and narrow path should he at any time stray from it. By these means he can also turn away from himself all the evil which he attracts through his faults.

12. If we divide the evils of life into two parts, one being those which Man cannot avoid and other those tribulations of which he himself is the principal cause, due to carelessness and excesses, we would see that the number in the second group far exceeds those in the first.

It is no less certain that these miseries are the result of our infractions against God's law and that, if we duly observed these Laws, we would be completely happy. If we did not exceed the limit of what is necessary for the satisfaction of our needs, we would not have the sicknesses which are provoked as a consequence of these excesses; nor would we experience the vicissitudes which derive from them. If we put a limit on our ambitions we would not have to fear ruin; if we were humble, we would not suffer the deception of hurt pride; if we practised the law of charity we would not be slanderers, jealous or envious. If we did no evil to anyone we would not need to fear vengeance, etc.

Admitting that Man can do nothing with respect to other evils; would it not mean a great deal to have the possibility of exempting ourselves from those ills which stem from our own behaviour? Here it is easy to conceive the action played by prayer, which aims at attracting wholesome inspirations from the good Spirits. In this case, *what the prayers do is not to remove the wrong from us, but turn us away from our bad thoughts which cause us harm. The prayers in no way prevent the fulfilling of God's laws, nor do they suspend the course of the laws of Nature. They stop us from infringing these laws by guiding our free-will.* Yet they act by default, in an imperceptible manner, so as not to subjugate our free-will. Man finds himself in the position of one who solicits good counsel and then puts it into action; but is always free to follow the advice or not.

Could not the effects of prayer, even when reduced to these proportions, bring immense results? It has been reserved for Spiritism to prove its action through the revelation of the relationship existing between the physical and spiritual worlds. But its effects are not limited just to these results.

Prayer is recommended by all the Spirits. To renounce it is to ignore the benevolence of God.

13. On attending to a request which has been addressed to Him, God desires to recompense the intention, the devotion and the faith of the one who prays. This is why the prayers of a good person have greater merit in God's eyes and are always more effective, because the corrupt and evil person cannot pray with the same fervour and confidence which comes only from a sentiment of true piety. From a selfish heart, the one who prays only with the lips, there can come *only words*, and never a charitable impulse which is what gives force to prayer.

14. The person who does not consider themselves sufficiently good as to exercise a wholesome influence, should not refrain from praying for the good of another because of a mistaken belief of being unworthy to be heard. The consciousness of their own inferiority constitutes a test in humility, which is always pleasing to God. Fervour and confidence in God are the first steps in the return to goodness. Prayer is repelled only from *the prideful who deposit faith in their own power and merits, believing it possible to superimpose themselves upon the Will of the eternal Father.*

15. The power of prayer lies in the thought and does not depend on words, the place or the moment in which it is proffered. Therefore it is possible to pray in all places, at any time, alone or with others. The influence of a place or time is only felt according to the circumstances which favour the meditation. *Communal prayer has a more powerful action when all who are praying join together in a heartfelt thought and envisage the same objective.* A hundred people can pray selfishly, whereas two or three joined by the same aspirations, praying like true brothers and sisters in Christ, will give more power to their prayer than would the hundred selfish persons.

INTELLIGIBLE PRAYERS

16. *Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified (I Corinthians, 14: 11, 14, 16 & 17).*

(prepared by Janet Duncan & Jussara Korngold)

