

The Gospel According to Spiritism - 3rd Edition, by Allan Kardec
2024 version by Cesar Bezerra (SpiritistPhilosophy.info)
INTRODUCTION

I - PURPOSE OF THIS WORK

The subjects contained in the Gospel can be divided into five parts: *the events of Christ's life; the miracles; the predictions; the passages that support dogmas; and the moral teaching*. Although the first four parts have been subject to controversy, the last one remains unassailable. In front of that divine code even disbelief silences. All people of good will, regardless of their beliefs, can gather on that ground because it has never been a reason for religious dispute, which usually comes from dogmas. The moral guidance of Jesus Christ is the only object of this book.

The crowds admire the Gospel and praise its sublimity. However, how many people actually put it into practice? Many deal with it to fulfill a duty, like someone who says a prayer without understanding it. Furthermore, different adaptations removed simplicity of some of its moral precepts and reduced the meaning of others, by omitting the circumstances to which they refer.

There are points in the Gospel that might seem obscure and even absurd due to conceptual incompleteness. The Spiritist Doctrine, also called Spiritism, sees the

Gospel from a reincarnationist point of view, which allows understanding from the perspective of spiritual evolution.

In this book we bring together principles that, far away from sectarian interpretations, constitute a universal conduct code. We grouped each maxim according to its nature. To each evangelical precept we added instructions received from the Spirits through various mediums, the majority of whom requested anonymity.

Our purpose is to facilitate the understanding of Jesus' moral code aiming at its practical application in life.

II – WE KNOW A TREE BY ITS FRUIT

New beliefs, theories and interpretations emerge every day. What method should we use to evaluate them? The Christ himself teaches the wisest criterion, by recommending us to analyze each tree according to its fruit, because *a good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit*.¹ This is the main characteristic of a good doctrine: *it produces only good fruit*. Therefore, the value of the Spiritist doctrine lies in its moral excellence.

1 - Matthew 7:18.

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INTRODUCTION

Regarding the mediumistic communications in general: should we trust them all? To analyze them, it is prudent to employ the same criterion.

The discarnate Spirits only partially know the truth. Each one's knowledge is proportional to their evolution degree. Ordinary Spirits know as much as ordinary people do. Just relatively few Spirits master great cognizance. Among the disembodied, as well as between the incarnate, there are pedantic individuals who suppose they know what they indeed ignore, as well as those who consider their own mistaken ideas to be the sole truth. They are pseudo-sages. Only advanced Spirits are free from prejudice. On the other hand, numerous frivolous Spirits, that often hide themselves behind fake names, deceive their followers and impose them their fantasies. Therefore, the mediumistic revelations in general must be considered primarily as just opinions, without any reliability seal. Therefore, it is prudent to be suspicious of the messages that reach us. Discarding a thousand truths is better than accepting one lie.

The superior Spirits are wise. They disclose subjects only gradually, as people become capable of dealing with more advanced concepts. Resisting the

impatience of those in a hurry, they refuse to answer hasty questions. As a prudent incarnate does, they never give absolute answers to questions about which they feel insufficiently clarified. In such cases they warn us that their answers express just their opinions and need confirmation. But multitudes of inferior Spirits say whatever they want, and irresponsibly answer any kind of question without any commitment with the truth. So, controversial and sometimes absurd answers are expected from them.

To analyze a communication, the first test to be carried out is that of reason, to which we must submit all the content we receive. Any theory that goes against common sense, facts or Science must be rejected, no matter how respectable the name of the supposed author might be. Likewise, we should refuse the communications whose essence contradicts the practice of the unconditional love preached by Christ. Therefore, the way forward is to analyze each content according to its ability to promote the good.

III – HISTORICAL REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

To better understand the Gospel, we need to know some concepts about society at that time. Some terms today have different meanings and are thus incorrectly interpreted. Proper understanding clarifies certain maxims that, at first glance, may even seem weird.

Essenes

Jewish sect founded around the year 150 before Christ. Its members lived in monasteries and formed a moral and religious association. Distinguished by their pacific ways and austere virtues, they taught the love to God and neighbor, soul immortality and resurrection. They were celibate, devoted to agriculture, shared their goods and condemned war and slavery. Unlike the Sadducees and Pharisees, the Essenes dispensed with political disputes. In their way of life the Essenes were similar to the first Christians. The moral principles they professed led many to assume that Jesus belonged to their community before the beginning of his public mission, but there is a lack of evidence for this.

Nazarenes

Name given in the ancient law to the Jews who took vow, either temporary or perpetual, to keep perfect purity. They promised to observe chastity and abstain from alcohol and haircut. Samson, Samuel and John the Baptist were Nazarenes. Later, the Jews gave this name to the first Christians, alluding to Jesus from Nazareth.

Pharisees

From discussion about Jewish theology different parties arose. Among such groups the Pharisees comprised the most influential one. Its origin dates to about 180 or 200 years before Christ. They remained powerful until the ruin of Jerusalem in the year 70 AD, when they dispersed. Active players in religious controversy, full of ardent zeal of proselytism, enemies of innovation, they were practitioners of outward cult. Behind a devotion cover they hid dissolute habits, a great deal of pride and an excessive desire to dominate. It is supposed they believed in the Providence, soul immortality, eternal punishment and resurrection. However, they used religion more as a means to achieve their goals than an object of sincere

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INTRODUCTION

faith. Although they lacked virtue, they were experts at appearing righteous. So they exerted strong influence over the people, before whose eyes they were sacred creatures. Jesus unmasked the hypocrisy of Pharisaism. That is why the Pharisees considered him an enemy and joined the high priests, with the intention of eliminating him.

Publicans

In the Roman Empire, this was the name given to those who collected taxes and all kinds of income. They were reputed dishonest. Later, this denomination was extended to those who dealt with public budget. Today the word can be used pejoratively to denote an unscrupulous person.

The Jews strongly rejected the Roman tax. Many riots happened due to this subject, that became even a religious issue, as many considered the tax contrary to the Scripture. Even a powerful party was formed, whose basis was tax rejection. By generalization the Jews hated all those who were entrusted the task of tax collecting.

There were decent people among the Publicans. However, due to their job they

were despised together with anyone who kept company with them. Prominent Jews considered dishonorable having personal relationship with them. Thus the word publican became an expression of contempt, synonymous with unworthy people. That is why we often find it in the Gospel associated with sinners.

Sadducees

Jewish sect, founded about 248 before the Christian era, whose name came from Sadduc, its founder. They denied immortality, resurrection and angels. However, they believed in God. But as they expected nothing after death, they served the Creator intending only earthly recompenses that, according to them, were limited by the Providence. Thinking like this they prioritized physical sense satisfaction. Regarding the Scripture they followed the Ancient Law. Refusing Tradition and interpretations, they placed good deeds and law observance above outward worship practice. They were the sensualists of those times. This sect had few followers, but there were some important people among them. It became a political party, often in opposition to the Pharisees.

Samaritans

After the ten-tribe schism, Samaria became a dissident kingdom of Israel. The Samaritans were almost constantly in dispute against the Judea's kings. There was a deep aversion between Jews and Samaritans, who avoided any type of relationship. In order to widen the separation, and prevent going to Jerusalem for religious parties, the Samaritans built a private temple. They admitted only the Pentateuch, which contains the Moses' Law, and rejected the books that were attached to it later. Their sacred texts were written in very ancient Hebrew characters. According to the orthodox Jews they were heretics. Consequently, the Samaritans were despised and persecuted. They were sort of the Protestants of those times. They observed the Moses' Law more strictly than the other Jews and married only among themselves.

Scribes

This denomination was initially given to the Judea kings' secretaries and certain Jewish army supply officers. Later, it was

applied to scholars who taught the Moses' law. The scribes were allied of the Pharisees. This is why Jesus included them in the reproach he launched against Pharisaism.

Temple and Synagogues

All the great worship ceremonies in Judea were held at the Solomon's Temple, located in Jerusalem. It was the biggest sanctuary of the Jews. Every year they went there in pilgrimage for the main festivals, such as Passover, Dedication and Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus also used being there during the feasts.

The other cities lacked temples, but they had synagogues, buildings where the Jews met on Saturdays, aiming to make public prayers under the leadership of elders, scribes, or versed-in-law scholars. Synagogues also sheltered the sacred book reading, followed by explanations and comments, activities which everyone was allowed to participate. This is why Jesus taught at synagogues on Saturdays, although he was not formally considered to be a rabbi. Ever since the destruction of the Temple, the synagogues became places of worship and celebrations.

Therapists

They were Christ-contemporary Jewish sectarians, mostly established in Alexandria, Egypt. They practiced all the virtues, like the Essenes, with whom they held relationship and shared principles. They were extremely frugal in eating. Also celibates, devoted to prayer and living solitary lives, they constituted a truly religious order. Philo, a Jewish platonic philosopher from Alexandria, was the first to speak about the Therapists, whom he considered to be a Jewish sect. Eusebius, Saint Jerome and other Church pioneers believed they were Christians. No matter Christian or Jewish, the fact is, like the Essenes, they represented a link between Jewish and Christian faiths.

IV – TRIBUTE TO SOCRATES AND PLATO

Socrates, like Christ, experienced death as a criminal for having questioned existing beliefs and religious prejudice. Like Jesus, Socrates placed virtue above form and proclaimed the immortality of the soul and the future life. Just like the doctrine of Christ, which only became known through

the writings of his followers, the Socrates' teachings only became known through his disciple Plato. So we pay them a tribute, by mentioning some thoughts attributed to them.

I. Humans are incarnated souls. Before incarnation they existed united to the primordial categories of the ideas of the true, the good and the beautiful. They separate from them on incarnating. When remembering their past, they are more or less tormented by the desire of returning to it.

II. Souls keep disturbed and confused when using the body in order to consider any object. They become dizzy, as if drunk, because they tie to things which by their own nature are subject to changes. On the other hand, when the souls contemplate their own essence, they recognize what is immortal, eternal and pure. Those that belong to this nature remain in it for as long as possible. They become attached to the immutable and thus their disturbances cease. Such state of soul is what people call wisdom.²

2 - See chapter 2, item 5.

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INTRODUCTION

III. As long as we have bodies, and our souls are steeped in this corruption, we will never possess the object of our desire: the truth. Body brings a lot of hurdles because we need to care it. It fills us with desires, appetites, fears, thousand fancies and follies, in such a way that, with it, it is impossible for us to be wise even for a moment. However, since it is impossible to truly know something while the soul is bound to the body, then there are two possibilities: either we will never know the truth, or we will know it only after death. After we have been liberated from bodily madness, we hope talking to similarly liberated humans. Then we will know by ourselves the essence of things. This is why true philosophers prepare to die and see death without fear.³

IV. In this state the impure soul remains numb and is dragged again to the visible world by its fear of the invisible and immaterial. As it is said, the impure souls roam around tombs and monuments, where people can sometimes see gloomy ghosts that, somehow, retain part of their material form, to the point of becoming visible. But those are the wicked ones'

spirits. They are forced to keep wandering in such places, dragging their last life pains, until their wishes, inherent to the material form, bring them to a body. Then they resume the same habits they preferred during their last existence.⁴

V. After our death the (guiding) genius assigned to us during life takes us to the place that concentrates all those who must be judged in Hades. After remaining long enough in Hades, souls return to this life in many and long periods.

VI. Demons fill the space that separates Heaven and Earth. They are the link that unites the Great All to itself. Since Divinity never directly contacts humans, divine assistants talk to people through demons, both during wake and sleep.

In antiquity the word demon was used to designate the spirits in general.

VII. The constant concern of philosophers should be taking care of the soul with a view to eternity rather than the present life, which lasts only a moment. Since the soul is immortal, would it not

³ - See Heaven and Hell, first part, chapter 2; second part, chapter 1.

⁴ - See Heaven and Hell, 2nd part, Examples.

make more sense to live minding the eternity?

VIII. If the soul is immaterial, then it must return after this life to an equally invisible and intangible world, just as the body returns to Nature through decomposition. But it is important to distinguish the pure soul, which is truly free from matter, and which is nourished by science and thoughts, as God does, from the soul which is more or less stained by material impurity, which keeps it far from the Divinity and close to the places of its stay on Earth.⁵

IX. Total disintegration through death would be very advantageous for bad people. If that were the case, death would set them free from body, soul and vices at the same time. However, only those who adorn their soul with suitable ornaments, avoiding strange junk, can calmly await their departure to the other world.⁶

X. The body retains marks of the care it received and the accidents it suffered. The same applies to the spirit. When freeing itself from the body, the soul

maintains the marks of its character, feelings and life story. Thus, the worst misfortune a person can suffer is to return to the other world with crime-loaded soul. See Callicles that you, Pollux and Gorgias are unable to prove the existence of another way of life capable of helping us on the other side. From so many different opinions, the only certainty is that it is better receiving injustice than committing it.⁷ Above all, we should strive to be truly good people, instead of just appearing to be.⁸

XI. One of two options: death is either the destruction of the soul or its passage to another place. If everything is extinguished, death would be like a dreamless and unconscious night. But if death is just a change of residence, a passage to the place where the deceased must be, then what happiness it would be seeing again there those we love! My greatest pleasure would be to closely examine its inhabitants and distinguish, as we do here, the worthy from those who self-consider worthy but are in fact vile.

5 - See Heaven and Hell, second part.

6 - See Heaven and Hell, second part, chapter 1.

7 - See chapter 12, items 7 and 8.

8 - Text taken from a dialogue between Socrates and his followers in prison.

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INTRODUCTION

*Now it is time for us to go apart. Me to die and you to live.*⁹

XII. We must neither repay an injustice with other injustice nor harm anyone, whatever hurt the offender might have inflicted upon us. But just a few will accept these principles, and those who refute them will keep despising one another.

XIII. We know a tree by its fruit. Every action must be evaluated according to its consequences. It is bad when it causes harm. It is good when it produces good.

*XIV. Wealth is an enormous danger. Those who love wealth love neither themselves nor that which they have. They love something that is even more alien to them than their belongings.*¹⁰

XV. The most beautiful prayers and sacrifices please the Divinity less than a soul that strives to attain virtue. It is a serious mistake thinking that the gods appreciate our souls less than our offerings. If that were the case, the most guilty one could buy their favors. But not!

*Truly fair and wise people are those who, through their words and deeds, fulfill their duties before the gods and humanity.*¹¹

XVI. I call vicious the person who loves body more than soul. Love is everywhere in Nature, which invites us to use our intelligence. We find love even in the planets motion. Love garnishes Nature with rich carpets. Love beautifies itself and lives where it finds flowers and perfume. Love also gives to humans peace, to seas calm, to storms silence and to pains rest.

XVII. It is impossible to teach virtue. Whoever has it received it as a gift from Divinity.

According to the Spiritist Doctrine, we can acquire virtue through our own efforts, throughout multiple reincarnations, by striving to replace our imperfections with qualities.

XVIII. We are much more likely to notice other people's flaws than ours.

9 - Socrates to his judges.

10 - See chapter 16.

11 - See chapter 10, items 7 and 8.

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INTRODUCTION

The Gospel says: “you look at the speck of sawdust in the other’s eye and disregard the plank in your own eye.”¹²

XIX. Doctors fail in many illnesses because they treat the body without treating the soul. A part will hardly be able to remain healthy if the whole is sick.

XX. Since childhood humans do more evil than good.

In this thought, Socrates addresses the predominance of evil on Earth. This subject is developed in chapters 2, 3 and 5.

XXI. You will be wise if you avoid assuming you know that which you ignore.

12 - Mathew 7:3. See chapter 10, items 9 and 10.