

Justice of afflictions. - Present causes of afflictions. - Past causes of afflictions. - Forgetfulness of the past. - Reasons to be uncomplaining. - Madness and suicide. -

Instructions from the spirits: To suffer well or badly. - Evil and its remedy. - Happiness is not of this world. - Loss of loved ones. Premature death. - A good person would have died. - Voluntary torments. - True misfortune. - Melancholy. - Voluntary trials. True immolation. - Should we finish our neighbor's trials? - Euthanasia. Should we hasten the death of an incurably sick one who suffers? - Own life sacrifice. - Making one's own suffering useful to others.

1. *Blessed are those that mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after justice, for they will be filled. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 5: 5, 6 and 7.)*¹

2. *Jesus lifted up his eyes on his disciples and said: Blessed are you poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God; Blessed are you that hunger now, for you will be filled; Blessed are you that weep now, for you will laugh; But woe to you that are rich! For you have received your consolation; Woe to you that are filled! For you will hunger; Woe to you who are*

laughing now! For you will mourn and weep. (Luke 6: 20, 21, 24 and 25.)

Justice of afflictions

3. The compensation Jesus promises to the afflicted people is mainly associated to their future life. Without certainty of future, these maxims would lack sense. Still more, they would be a paradox. But even with this certainty, people hardly understand the convenience of suffering in order to be happy. Some might say that ordeals allow one to acquire greater merit. But then another one could ask: Why do some people suffer more than others? Why are some people born in misery and others in wealth, without having done anything in life to justify their situation? Why some people never manage to achieve anything, while, for others, everything seems to smile? What is even harder to understand is why benefits and misfortunes are so unequally divided between vice and virtue. Why do we find virtuous sufferers side by side with prosperous wicked people? Faith in the future can provide solace and patience, but it lacks explanation about such anomalies that apparently deny the God's justice. However, once the Almighty's existence has been admitted, one can only conceive the Universe Master as being infinitely perfect. God is

¹ Quotations are in accordance with the primitive Bible text, from *Vulgata Latina*.

naturally all powerful, all fair and all good. Otherwise, God would not be God. Being supremely good and fair, the Creator cannot be capricious nor biased. *The setbacks of life must come from a cause. As God is fair, this cause must also be fair.* All of us must realize it. Through the Christian teachings, God places the human beings on the path which takes to this cause. Now, as we humans are enough mature to understand this cause, God discloses it by means of *Spiritism*, that is, through the *words from the spirits*.

Present causes of afflictions

4. Misfortunes of life stem from two different sources. Some afflictions come from present-day life; others, from past existences. Many problems are natural consequences of the sufferer's personality and behavior.

How many people fail due to their own fault?

How many humans become victims of their own thoughtlessness, pride and ambition?

How many men and women destroy themselves due to indiscipline, misconduct or unbounded desires?

How many marriages become disastrous because they have been built upon calculated interest or vanity, in which hearts took no part?

How many disagreements and deadly

fight could have been prevented with moderation and less susceptibility?

How many diseases stem from intemperance and excesses of all kinds?

How many parents are unhappy because they did not combat their children's bad tendencies since an early age? Either due to weakness or indifference, parents have let the germs of pride, selfishness and stupid vanity grow up in their children, allowing their hearts to dry. Later on, reaping what they have sown, the parents get surprised and afflicted by the ingratitude and indifference with which they are treated.

If people that have been hurt by vicissitudes and disappointments closely studied their own conscience; if they went back, step by step, to the origins of each pain; then they would likely say: *If I had acted better I would be happier.*

Who is to blame for human afflictions if not the human beings themselves? Humans are often the authors of their own misfortunes. But many refuse admitting this, because it would belittle their vanity. So, they prefer accusing God, their bad luck or their unlucky star, although the root cause of their problems is actually their own negligence.

The sorrows of life mostly come from disregard. By improving themselves, both morally and intellectually, people will be able to

avoid suffering.

5. The human law addresses and punishes several crimes. Prisoners normally recognize that they suffer the consequences of the wrong they have committed. But the earthly law does not cover all crimes. Nevertheless, God is fair and punishes any detour from the straight and narrow path. No matter apparently small, all wrongdoings or divine law violations bring inevitable consequences. In either small or great matters, people are always punished according to their wrongs. Suffering works as a warning that some evil has been done. The pain provides experience to the guilty ones. It makes them feel the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, and the need for self-improvement, which enables them to escape from the bitterness fountain in the future. Misfortunes comprise a motive for betterment. If people were sure of impunity, they would delay their spiritual evolution and, so, their future happiness.

But sometimes experience arrives rather late, when life has already been wasted and disordered, when strength is spent and wrongdoings are irreparable. Then many people use to say: “If I had known it since the beginning, then I would have avoided many wrong steps. *I would begin again differently if I could.* But there is no more time now!” So they often regret: “I have wasted my life!” But as the

sun, that shines again after each night, granting the worker a new day to repair the wasted time, a new life will shine forth after the tomb's night, enabling humans to take advantage of their past experience and to put into practice their good resolutions.

Past causes of afflictions

6. Although there are misfortunes caused by humans themselves, there are miseries that, at least apparently, are completely strange to them, which seem to fall upon them like fate. Loss of the family's upholder, for instance, or loss of beloved ones. Accidents which no forecast could have prevented. Wealth setbacks, that no prudence could have avoided. Natural disasters. Infirmities from birth, specially those that prevent people to work, such as deformities, insanity etc.

Those who were born with such unavoidable handicaps, which they are totally incapable to change, have surely done nothing in their present life to deserve such a sad fate, that makes them to depend on mercy from others. So why are there such unfortunate beings while, just beside them, sometimes under the same ceiling, there are others who are blessed in every way?

What can be said about the children who died very young and, during their short lives,

knew only suffering? If soul and body were simultaneously created, if our destiny was irrevocably determined after just one short passage on the Earth, then such anomalies would deny the justice and goodness of God. If such unfortunate creatures had just left the Creator's hands, what could they have done to deserve such a misery? As they are unable to practice either good or evil, how will they deserve any reward or punishment?

Nevertheless, according to the axiom which states that *every effect has a cause*, such miseries are effects which must have a cause. Once we admit God is fair, then such cause must also be fair. The cause always precedes the effect. So, if present life lacks a cause, then the cause must relate to a previous existence. If we are under punishment, then we must have done a wrong, because God is always fair. If such wrong is away from the present life, then it must come from a former life. This is a logical interpretation of God's justice, which no one can escape from.

People are not always punished in their current life. However, in terms of eternal life, nobody flees from the divine justice. The prosperity of the wicked ones is just temporary. If they escape from atonement today, they will have to atone tomorrow. Likewise, those who suffer may be atoning for their past. Even miseries which are seemingly undeserved have a

reason to be. We who suffer should always say: "Forgive me God, because I have sinned."

7. Due to a rigorous justice, men and women must suffer that which they have made others to suffer. Afflictions are often consequences of errors, committed in either a previous incarnation or during the present life. If we have been hard and wicked, we may be treated with harshness and wickedness. If we were proud and arrogant, we may be reborn in a humble cradle. If we have been miserly, selfish, or if we have badly used our riches, we may become needy. If we have been a bad son or daughter, we may suffer from our children's behavior, and so on.

The multiple existences and the current destiny of our planet, as a world of atonement, explain the abnormal distribution of joy and sorrow among good and bad people. But such anomaly is just temporary, although it might look long-lasting. If we raise our thoughts and think of the many existences series, we will understand that we are given what we deserve and need. God's justice always perfectly works.

We, earthly people, must remember that we still live in an inferior planet, which only our imperfections keep us tied to. We would be happier if we lived in a more advanced globe. But deserving a better dwelling world depends only on ourselves. We can achieve it by working hard on self-improvement.

8. The life tribulations may be imposed to the hardened or ignorant spirits, in order to induce them to make conscious choices. But among the *repentant* spirits, who wish to behave better and want to repay the evil they committed, tribulations are often voluntarily chosen. If we fail to accomplish a task, we can ask for a new opportunity. During the new incarnation we, taking advantage of our past experience, can strive again to finish mission. Tribulation may be an atonement for the past which we need to expiate, or a trial for the future that we must prepare. We should always thank God who, all merciful, grants us endless opportunities to repay our debts and never irrevocably condemns us due to our first fault.

9. We should avoid thinking, however, that all suffering is due to wrongdoings. Pain may be a trial the spirits request in order to speed up their evolution. Although atonement always works as a trial, a trial is not always an atonement. Notwithstanding, both trial and atonement indicate a relative inferiority, because perfect human beings are free from these needs. Having reached a certain degree of elevation, and wishing a further progress, a spirit may request a tough mission. If successful, the spirit receives its prize, which is proportional to the challenge. People with evolved souls and inborn good feelings, who bring no evil from their past incarnations, who, despite harsh torments,

undergo hardship with Christian resignation, and who ask God to help them to withstand afflictions without complaint, give us an example of suffering as trial. On the other hand, people who blaspheme and complain of affliction give us an example of suffering as atonement.

However, even people who suffer without complaint may be atoning. But in this case their submission shows that they voluntarily sought expiation, what requires strong resolution and indicates a meaningful progress.

10. Spirits can only hope achieving complete happiness after having become pure. Any stain prevents them to enter into the blissful worlds. It is like passengers on board a plagued ship, who are forbidden to go ashore before having become cleansed. Step by step, along their many reincarnations, the spirits get rid of their imperfection. The bodily life tribulations, when well endured, help their evolution very much. As atonement, tribulations can erase faults and purify spirits. Expiation works as the remedy that cleanses the wounds and heals. The worse the illness, the more severe must be the medicine. Atonement also works like this. Each one can take advantage from trials and atonement by patiently and bravely facing the challenges of life, without complaint. Those who resignedly atone should rejoice, because

their cure is about to happen. On the other hand, the impatient ones spoil, with their revolt, the fruit before ripeness. So, due to their folly, they will need to begin tribulation all over again.

Forgetfulness of the past

11. Instead of material success, the true purpose of life is achieving the spiritual success. Along the many bodily existences of a spirit, its most important conquests are firstly the virtue and secondly the intelligence it has managed to acquire. The virtue we have acquired is somehow recorded in our conscience. Depending on the circumstances, our acquired skills give rise, in flesh, to innate talents. So, whenever we use our conscience and innate talents, we are indirectly using the spiritual heritage we acquired during past incarnations, regardless the lacking remembrance we might have about them. God, almighty and merciful, hides our past from us in order to help us. On Earth, which is still an atonement world, remembrance of the past would strongly disturb most of people. It could, in certain cases, cause serious humiliation or perhaps, on the contrary, make people to be so proud that it could harm their free will. In any case, it would certainly cause unavoidable damage in social relationships.

Spirits are often reborn in the same

ambient they previously lived. There, they may reestablish past relationships, in order to either repay the evil they committed or to forgive the evil they suffered and reconcile. The positive recognition of an enemy of the past could revive hate. Offenders would probably feel humiliated on confronting their victims.

Aiming at our good, God deprives us of what is harmful to our evolution and provides us, from the past, with just what is necessary and sufficient for us, namely, our conscience voice and our inborn capabilities.

On being reborn, people bring with them what they have acquired. They are born exactly the way they have built themselves. In each earthly life we begin from a new starting point. Aiming at our spiritual evolution, it matters little to us knowing exactly who we were in the past. If we are being punished, then it happens because we did wrong. Our current evil tendencies indicate what still needs correction. Upon our bad trends we should concentrate all our attention, as no stain is found on what has already been polished. The good resolutions that we feel bound to make come from our conscience voice, which gives us strength to resist temptation and evinces what is right and what is wrong.

Forgetfulness of the past only occurs during bodily existence. On returning to the spiritual world, remembrance of the past is

gradually regained. So, forgetness of the past is like a slight interruption, similar to sleep, which cannot prevent us to remember today what occurred yesterday.

But even during its incarnation, a spirit may partially recover remembrance. Indeed, the past lives memory is never totally lost. During sleep, period of soul emancipation over which the spirit enjoys a relative degree of liberty and, if it decides wisely, absorbs new strength, we can somehow remind our past actions. This partial memory, which vanishes when we wake up, may help us to know why we suffer and to understand the justice of our pain. These remembrances need to be only partial. If memories of the past were fully detailed, they would certainly add needless suffering and harm.

Reasons to be uncomplaining

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

Those words can also be interpreted in the following manner. If we suffer, we must feel really blessed by God, because the pain of this world is the way we pay our past debts. If we

patiently withstand earthly pain, we will avoid centuries or even millennia of suffering in the future. We should be glad because God lowers our debt and allows payment now, assuring us a happier future.

Those who suffer are like debtors who, although owing a very large amount, listen to the following words from their creditor: “If you pay me today even a hundredth part of your debt, I will set you free from it; but if you miss this opportunity, then you will have to pay all the due, till the very last installment.” Even withstanding all kind of hardship, such debtors must feel really happy, because they can get rid of debt through paying only a small part of it. Instead of complaining of their creditor, they should be grateful.

This is the meaning of the following words: “Blessed are the afflicted for they will be consoled.” The afflicted are blessed because they pay their dues and will be free after payment. However, if people pay debt on one side and becomes indebted on the other they will never be liberated. Each new fault increases the dues. Every new wrong implies unavoidable consequences. If not for today, then for tomorrow. If not in this existence, then in a future incarnation. In the list of failings, lacking submission to God's designs is placed first. If we reject our afflictions or complain of them; if we refuse being resigned or if we accuse God of

being unfair, then we lose the fruits that we would harvest from suffering. In this way we acquire new dues and we will have to begin ordeal again from the start. It is like someone who takes a new loan just after having paid the first installment of a big due.

When leaving the Earth and entering into the spiritual world, humans resemble workers on the payment day. To some, the Master says: “Here is your wage for the days you have worked.” To other people, the so-called lucky ones on the Earth, who lived in idleness or who spent their lives on selfish satisfaction and worldly pleasures, the Almighty says: “There is nothing else for you, because you already received your reward on Earth. Now go on and begin your task again.”

13. We can soften or increase the harshness of our trials according to the way we face the earthly life. The longer we imagine our suffering is, the more it seems to grow. But those who see pain through a spiritual viewpoint can better understand the purpose of bodily existence. They see that, in eternity, the earthly life is just an instant. They understand that this painful moment will soon pass. Certainty of a happier future sustains them. Far from complaining, they thank God for the opportunity which, although painful, will allow them to spiritually advance and be free. On the other hand, for those who see only the material life,

any suffering looks endless. Thus, the pain smashes them with all its weight. Those who understand that the purpose of life is the spiritual success assign to the worldly things just a relative importance. They trend to moderate desires, to accept their social walk without envying others, and to cope with life disappointments and setbacks. With this attitude, they are awarded strength, calmness and resignation, virtues which are greatly beneficial to both bodily and mental health. On the opposite side, those who feel jealousy, envy and greed torture themselves and worsen the anguish they have to undergo during the earthly life.

Madness and suicide

14. People who understand that life goes far beyond the short terrestrial passage acquire calm, resignation and confidence in the future. These virtues provide serenity, which is the best prevention against *madness and suicide*. Indeed, many insanity cases result from shocks that the sick lacked strength to face. In comparison with eternal life, present existence is just a short while. Those who understand this truth can confront with resilience and calmness the pain which otherwise would make them to despair. Strength and serenity protect their mental health from serious injuries.

15. Disappointment is often the root cause of suicide, except when it is unconscious. People who know that their unhappiness lasts just a moment and that better days will come are more likely to be patient. Humans tend to become desperate when they believe their suffering is endless. What is a lifetime compared to the eternity? It is less than a day! But those who deny eternity, or who judge that everything ends with bodily death, may see suicide as the only solution for their sorrow. Expecting to find the nothingness after death, they are more likely to be seduced by the misleading idea of self-murder in order to supposedly shorten their miseries.

16. Incredulity, doubt about the future and materialistic ideas are strong suicide stimulators. They promote *moral cowardice*. Scientists and authors which, upheld by the authority of their knowledge and recognition, do their best to persuade people that there is nothing to expect after death, are, even unknowingly, guiding their followers to kill themselves in case of wretchedness. What motive can such authors give to the desperate ones for they to outbrave hardship and keep alive? What compensation or hope do they have to offer? No one except emptiness! Due to such misguidance, hopeless people may conclude that, as suicide looks to be the only remedy, they had better to immediately seek it in order to

shorten suffering.

Materialistic doctrines inoculate suicidal ideas into many minds. The apostles of such doctrines assume huge responsibility. With Spiritism, the look of life changes. Believers know that life continues and changes after fleshly death. This knowledge feeds them with patience and resignation which remove suicidal ideas and provide *moral courage*.

17. Through mediumistic means, the spirits of the very suicidals tell us their dreadful situation and warn us that every violation of God's laws, which forbid self-murder, brings punishment. They report an extremely dark suffering. Discouraging the self-destruction ideas, Spiritism teaches that the *future life is a certitude*; that the most wretched and uncomplaining person will be, in the future life, the happier one; that the results of suicide are totally opposed to self-killer's expectations; that those who commit suicide intending to escape from life trials will need to undergo worse and longer sufferings; that those who think they will more quickly reach Heaven through suicide are completely mistaken; that suicide prevents the self-murderers from meeting their beloved ones in the spiritual world; and that, due to its disastrous consequences, self-murder is completely contrary to the interests of those who seek it. That is why Spiritism have been saving many people from suicide. When all men and

women become Spiritists, conscious suicide will cease to exist. While materialistic doctrines lead towards suicide, the Spiritist doctrine prevents it.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

To suffer well or badly

18. The Christ's words “Blessed are the afflicted for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs” do not refer to all those who suffer. Everyone on Earth suffers, no matter they seat upon thrones or lie upon straw. But, alas! So few humans suffer correctly! Just some people understand that only well-endured trials lead to God. Despondency is a fault. Those who lack courage receive, in turn, lacking consolation. In the other hand, prayer strengthens the soul. But besides praying, we also need having an alive confidence in God's designs. The Most High only entrusts a heavy burden to strong shoulders. Just as merit depends on one's submission and courage, each burden is proportional to one's strength. Recompense is greater than affliction is painful. We have to make ourselves worthy. This is why life is full of tribulations.

Firefighters who stay long away from the burnings become unsatisfied, because they need facing fire in order to develop their background

and skills. So, we have to act like the firefighters. We must run away from the rest that weakens body and benumbs soul. We must be cheerful when God entrusts us the mission of outbraving the flames of life. However, in order to overcome the troubles of life, we are often required more courage than we would need to fight a material fire, because many people who remain steady in front of blazes go down before a moral challenge. Moral energy is seldom recognized on Earth. But God, whose viewpoint is different from human, reserves victory laurels and a glorious place for those who morally struggle. If you find suffering and hindrances, place yourself above them. After having dominated your impulse of impatience, anger and despair, say to yourself, with a well-deserved satisfaction: “I have been the stronger one. I won myself!”

The words “Blessed are the afflicted” may be interpreted in the following way: Blessed are those who are granted opportunities to strengthen their faith, firmness, perseverance and submission to God's will, because they will be given a hundredfold the happiness they lacked on the Earth. They will deserve the peace that comes after the storm. - *Lacordaire*. (Havre, 1863.)

Evil and its remedy

19. Is the Earth a planet of enjoyment? Is this globe a paradise of delights? Did you forget that Jesus warned us that there would be weeping and teeth gnashing? So, all of us must expect corrosive tears and suffering. But, no matter how painful your sorrow might be, lift your eyes up to Heaven and be thankful to God, because the Creator decided to cleanse your spirit! Oh humankind! Do you only notice the divine goodness when the Providence cures your wounds and crowns your days with beauty and fortune? Do you only acknowledge the divine love if the Omnipotent gifts you all the glory, brilliance and wealth? You should mimic those who, even after having fallen to the lowest misery rung, even laying upon a dung heap, still bravely say: “God, I knew abundance and you have reduced me to an extreme misery. I trust in you, my Master! Thank you for teaching and testing your servant!”

How long will your eyes remain limited by the horizon of death? When will your souls finally decide to see beyond the tomb limits? Even if we have been suffering and crying all life long, we must remember that lifetime is very short when compared to the eternal liberation that is reserved for those who face their trials with faith, love and submission. About your ills, search their causes in the past. Seek consolation in the future that God prepares for you. And you, who have been suffering a lot,

consider yourselves the most blessed creatures on the Earth.

When you were disembodied beings; when you were living in space, you chose your own trials, judging yourselves strong enough to withstand them. Why do you complain now? You who asked for riches or glory: you intended to fight against temptation. You who asked to fight with body and soul against both moral and physical evil: you knew the harder the trial the greater the victory. You also knew that your body, even lying upon garbage at death, could release a shining soul, purified by the baptism of atonement and suffering.

What medicine can be prescribed for those who suffer, attacked by cruel obsessions and mortifying evil? There is just an infallible remedy: faith. The appeal to God. If you think of the Almighty during your trials, then your guiding spirit will show you the salvation path and the place that you can occupy in the future. Faith is the only sure remedy for suffering. Faith will always show the infinite horizon that dispels present clouds. Abstain from asking us questions about treatment for ulcer or sore, temptation or trial. The remedy of faith always strengthens the believer. Those who lack faith even for a while are immediately punished, because they promptly feel painful afflictions.

The divine seal has been put upon all those who believe in the Supreme Love. Jesus

teaches us that faith can move mountains of hindrances. The believer who suffers remains under God's protection and will be free from ache. Faith will turn your toughest moments into the first happy notes of the eternity song. Your soul will detach from your body in such a manner that, while your flesh still writhes in convulsion, your spirit will glide into the celestial regions singing, together with angels, gratitude and glory hymns to the Creator.

Fortunate are those who resignedly suffer and weep on the Earth! Happy be their souls, because God will heap them with blessings. - *Saint Augustine*. (Paris, 1863.)

Happiness is not of this world

20. People from all walks of society often say: "I'm not happy! Happiness is not for me!" This, dear brothers and sisters, proves the truth of that maxim from the book of Ecclesiastes: "Happiness is not of this world." Indeed, richness, power and even the blossom of youth are unable to ensure bliss. Even these three conditions united are still unable to assure happiness as we hear, from all-aged people, even from the most privileged ones, bitter complaints of their situation.

So, we are unacceptable to envy those who look favored by fortune. Despite our best personal efforts, each one on this world must

face their share of misery, their quota of suffering and disappointment. From this, we confirm the Earth is a planet of trials and atonement.

Deceive their listeners those who preach that this planet is the only home, and that only on it, during just one existence, people are to reach the greatest happiness because, as experience shows, the necessary conditions for a full happiness are seldom found on this globe.

Happiness here is somehow a utopia, whose conquest has been unsuccessfully sought by all generations. On this world wise people are rare, but the completely happy person has never been found.

Joy on the Earth is very fleeting for reckless people. In order to get a year, a month or even a week of complete satisfaction, they often transform the rest of their lives in a series of painful disappointments. Notice, dear children, that I refer to those who the crowds envy.

Far beyond this planet, which is still destined for trials and atonement, there are many more favorable dwelling globes. The spirit there, although still prisoner of a material body, enjoys all the happiness that is inherent to human life. This is why God has created the superior planets, which your good efforts will one day take you to, provided you have become sufficiently purified and perfected.

But the Earth itself will stop being a prison. From the progress and social betterment that have already been achieved, you may infer further evolution and more fertile improvement. This huge task is assigned to this new doctrine, which the spirits have been revealing.

So dear children, may you be animated by a saintly endeavor, so that each one among you can get rid of the old human being. All of you should spread Spiritism, which has already begun your own regeneration. You are expected to help your brothers and sisters to receive the rays of this sacred light. Let us work, beloved children! May all hearts within this meeting want to prepare, for the future generations, a planet where the word happiness will really be meaningful. - *François-Nicolas-Madeleine, Cardinal Morlot*. (Paris, 1863.)

Loss of beloved ones. Premature death

You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. (John 8:32.)

21. When death takes a beloved one away, carrying off the youngest before the oldest, you use to complain that it is unfair because God has sacrificed the youthful ones, who would have an entire future before them, and has left on Earth the long-lived, weary of disappointments. You use to protest because the

Almighty has taken away the useful ones and has left behind those who became unable to work; because the Providence has broken a mother's heart by taking her innocent child, who was her only joy.

Children! Goodness is often where you judge there is only evil! Divine wisdom frequently is where you think there is only blind fatality. Why do you evaluate the divine justice by your own concepts? Do you suppose the Universe Master allows cruel sufferings on you as a mere whim? Everything has a wise purpose. Whatever happens, there is always a reason for. If you studied better your ache then you would find a divine regenerating reason behind it, you would see the worthlessness of your material concerns and you would assign them the least priority.

Disincarnation is preferable, even for a young, than the moral decay which smites worthy families, lacerates mothers' hearts and quickly whitens parents' hair. Premature death is often a great blessing that God grants to those who depart, because decease preserves them from undeserved miseries and from seductions which could lead them to the moral downfall. People who disincarnate during youth are not fate victims. God has judged unsuitable for them to stay longer on Earth.

What a terrible tragedy, you say, to see an early life, so full of hope, expired! But, to

what hope do you refer? That of the Earth? Where the gone ones were supposed to shine, make their way and become rich? Such restricted vision prevents many people from rising above the matter. Who can tell you what might have been the actual fate of that life, supposed to be so full of hope? Who can assure it would not have been saturated with pain? Do you disdain the future life hope, in such a way that you prefer this fleeting existence on the Earth? Do you assign to a high position among incarnated humans more worth than an elevated place among the blessed spirits?

Instead of complaining, rejoice when God decides to withdraw, from this misery valley, one of your beloved children. Would it not be selfishness of yours, wishing they to stay suffering at your side? Oh! Such pain is felt by those who lack faith, who see in bodily death the eternal separation! Spiritists, you know that the spirit lives better when it is separated from matter. Mother and father: know that your beloved children may be nearby you. Yes, very near! Their fluidic bodies embrace you. Their fond thoughts protect you. The loving remembrance that you keep inside your hearts delights them with happiness. But your unreasonable pain disturbs and afflicts them very much. Desperation means lacking faith and revolt against God's will.

You, who understand the meaning of the

spiritual life: whenever your heart beats for your beloved ones, ask God to bless them. You will promptly feel a great consolation that will dry your tears. You will feel magnificent aspirations which will show you the future that our Creator has promised. - *Sanson*, ex-member of the Spiritist Society of Paris. (1863.)

A good person would have died

22. When a bad person escapes a danger, people use to say that a good one would have died. This is somehow a truth. God often gives longer trials to the spirits who are beginners on the progress path. Evolved spirits may receive, by merit of their worthiness, the blessing of the shortest possible trials.

When dies a good person, whose neighbor is considered to be bad, some people say it would have been better the neighbor had died instead. By saying this they, even unsuspectingly, utter a blasphemy, because God's decisions are always right. Those who naturally depart have completed their tasks, whereas the others, who are left, have perhaps not even begun theirs. Why do you want bad people to be denied the necessary time to complete their mission? Why do you expect the good ones to be needlessly kept as prisoners on Earth? What would you say if, after having served a sentence, a convict were to be kept in

prison while another convict, who lacked right, was set at liberty? A spirit remains prisoner while it stays upon the Earth. The true freedom for a spirit is the natural break of the ties which keep it captive within a physical body.

Avoid reproaching what you still lack capability to understand. God is always fair. What seems to be an evil is really a blessing. Your limited faculties and senses prevent you to clearly view the whole truth. So strive, by means of thought and prayer, to reach beyond your limited sphere. As you raise yourselves, you will assign less importance to material life, which will show itself as a mere incident in the infinite course of the spiritual existence, the only true life. - *Fénelon*. (Sens, 1861.)

Voluntary torments

23. People are always in search of happiness but it always escapes from them, because there is no pure joy on the Earth. However, despite the unavoidable ups and downs of life, people could enjoy a relative happiness if, instead of seeking it within perishable things and material pleasures, which are subject to the same ups and downs, they sought it in the soul joys, which comprise a preview of the eternal celestial bliss. People anxiously look for what stirs and troubles them, instead of seeking the *heartfelt peace*, the only

true happiness of this world. By prioritizing what is material, they, curiously, attract afflictions that were up to them to avoid.

The worst torments are those created by envy and jealousy. For envious and jealous people there is no rest. They suffer a never-ending fever. Both what they lack and what their neighbor possesses provoke them sleepless nights. Their rival's success causes them dizziness. They endeavor to eclipse all those around them. They feel glad in spreading, over the unwise people, the jealousy rage which burns them. Poor foolish beings they are indeed. Their lives are poisoned by greed! They forget that tomorrow they will have to leave all such trifles behind. The words “Blessed are the afflicted because they will be comforted” do not apply to them, because their anguish is petty and selfish.

Such torments are never felt by people who are glad with what they have; who can see, without envy, others possessing that which they lack; and who abstain from looking greater than they really are. Wise people feel always rich because by looking below them, instead of above, they see many others that have much less. They keep calm because they abstain from creating imaginary needs. And calmness, in the midst of the life turmoil, is a happiness! - *Fénelon*. (Lyon, 1860.)

True misfortune

24. Everyone talks about unhappiness.

Everybody has experienced it and therefore thinks to understand its many facets. I have come to tell you that almost everyone is mistaken. The real misfortune is quite different from what it is supposed to be. People use to see unhappiness in the unheated stove, in the threatening creditor, in the empty cradle, where the smiling little angel disappeared from, in the tears, in the funeral followed by broken hearts, in the anguish of betrayal, and in denudation of pride, which longs to be dressed in red but can barely hide its nakedness beneath the vanity tatters. The human language calls misfortune all of this and much more. But it means pain only for those who see just the present moment.

Actual unhappiness lies more in the fact consequences than in the fact itself. An event which is initially considered joyful but causes harmful consequences is much more unfortunate than another, which initially produces misadventure but brings benefits in the end. A storm which uproots trees but dissipates sickly pollutants and purifies the air is more a blessing than a tragedy.

In order to judge a fact we must analyze its consequences. Thus, in order to properly assess what is supposed to be fortunate we must see beyond the fleshly life. We have to consider

the spiritual life, because the consequences will be felt there. Everything that human myopia calls "unhappiness" ends with bodily life and is compensated in the spiritual life.

We will explain misfortune according to another viewpoint, different from the beautiful and attractive shape that deluded people promptly accept and earnestly desire.

Unhappiness is the void distraction, pleasure, fame, vain excitement and crazy satisfaction of senses, pride and vanity, that silences the conscience, compresses the thought and makes people to be dazed about their future.

Misfortune is the escape opium that the crowds frantically hunt.

Hold on all you who cry! But tremble all you who mockingly laugh, because your senses are satiated! Nobody deceives God. No one escapes from the divine justice. The ordeals, creditors more pitiless than wolf packs, are always lurking your illusory repose in order to suddenly take you to the agony of the real unhappiness, which surprises all souls that have become flabby due to indifference and selfishness.

Let Spiritism offer enlightenment and clearly separate error and truth, that have been so singularly deformed by human blindness! You should act like brave soldiers who, far from running away from battle, prefer fight than rest. It doesn't matter if fighters have missed

weapons, baggage and uniforms during the struggle when, after having accomplished their duties, they come out as winners. In a similar way, people who keep faith in the future disregard if they have left riches and physical bodies on the life battlefield, provided their souls can joyfully enter into the Celestial Kingdom. - *Delphine de Girardin*. (Paris, 1861.)

Melancholy

25. Do you know why sometimes a vague sadness fills your heart and leads you to consider that life is bitter? This happens because your spirit, wishing happiness and liberty, on finding itself tied to a physical body, which works like a prison, becomes exhausted due to its vain efforts to escape from it. When recognizing its attempts are useless, the soul becomes discouraged. Flesh undergoes influence from the spirit. So, your body feels weary, apathetic, despondent and you judge yourself unhappy.

Such harmful tendencies weaken your will-power. You must resist these damaging trends with all your strength. Inside all human beings there is an inborn wish for a better life but don't expect to find happiness on the Earth! Advanced spirits, sent by God, now guide you about the real happiness which awaits for you. Keep struggling patiently. Liberating angels will

come and help you to break the chains which still hold your spirit captive. During your exile on Earth, you have an important mission to fulfill, which you often do not even suspect, be it dedicating yourself to your family, or carrying out the various tasks that God has bestowed upon you. If, when fulfilling your mission, uneasiness, dismay and sorrow fall upon your hearts, remain strong and courageous in order to overcome such noxious feelings. Resolutely face all your challenges, because they will last short and will lead you to a region that is inaccessible to the earthly afflictions. After having resignedly surpassed the life grief, you will be granted a permit to meet again the beloved ones you long to see. - *François de Genève*. (Bordeaux.)

Voluntary trials. True immolation

26. Are we allowed to lessen our own ordeals? Yes! This query equals other questions, such as: Is it admissible for drowning people to save themselves? Should people take thorns away from their hands? Should we go hospital when we are ill? The purpose of a trial is developing intelligence, patience and resignation. Some people may be born into a difficult and painful situation precisely to be motivated to solve problems. Their merit lies in enduring the inevitable misfortunes without

complaint, in steadily struggling, and in keeping effort and hope in case of failure.

Then another question comes up. As Jesus says “Blessed are the afflicted”, is there any merit in seeking additional affliction and voluntary suffering, which aggravate one's trials? The answer to this question is both yes and no. Yes, there is a great merit in a voluntary sacrifice, provided it only aims at benefit of others. This is charity through suffering. But no, there is not any merit when the voluntary sacrifice only aims at self-benefit. This is fanatical selfishness.

We advise you to be satisfied with the trials God sends you. Don't seek increasing their volume, as they alone may be quite heavy. Accept them faithfully and without complaint. That's all God asks us. Never weaken your bodies with useless hardship and senseless flagellation because you need all your strength to fulfill your duties on the Earth. Voluntarily torturing and martyring one's own body is against the divine law. God expects human beings to sustain and strengthen their bodies. So, to needlessly jeopardize one's own body is indeed a suicide. Use your body but don't abuse it. This is the law. The punishment for abuse lies in its unavoidable consequences.

Quite the contrary occurs when one self-imposes suffering in order to relieve the pain of others. When you maltreat your body,

withstanding cold and hunger, in order to help a needy one, you make a sacrifice that God blesses. When you leave your perfumed home to go to an infected hovel in order to offer solace; when you voluntarily dirty your hands to treat wounds; when you lose sleep to hold vigil at bedside of a sick one, who is just your sibling before God; when you jeopardize your health in order to practice good, then you are making your real immolation, the true and blessed sacrifice. The worldly pleasures have not frozen your hearts. You have not slept on the illusory breast of wealth. Rather, you have become a consoling angel to the sadly deserted ones.

But what use have you who flee and live away from the world to escape its enticement? Where is your courage to face trials, as you have run away from fight and deserted the combat? If you want immolation, then sacrifice your soul instead of your body. Discipline your spirit instead of your flesh. Whip your pride. Receive humiliation without murmur. Scourge your selfishness. Toughen yourself against the pain of insult and slander, which is more distressing than physical pain. This behavior comprises a blessed immolation whose burns will be taken into account, because they testify courage and submission to God's will. - *A guardian spirit*. (Paris, 1863.)

Should we finish our neighbor's trials?

27. Should we, if possible, finish our neighbors' trials? Or should we, respecting the God's will, leave their trials to continue without our help?

You are on this atonement planet to overcome trials. Many hindrances of life are consequences of past lives. They come as a debt interest we have to pay. However, some people are confused about this idea and give rise to harmful thoughts, that must be fought due to their potentially hurtful effects.

As most of we come to Earth to atone, some people think that all afflictions must follow their course without interference. Others still think that besides denying the sufferers any relief we, rather, should increase their pain allegedly because sufferers, in this way, would benefit more from distress. This is a huge mistake. Any trial must follow its course, as marked by God. But do we know this course? Do we know to what extent an ordeal must go? God might have decided this or that pain have been long enough. The Divine Providence might have chosen exactly you yourself as a soothing balm to comfort sufferers and to help healing their wounds. God never wants you to be a torture instrument. Our Creator expects you to relieve your neighbors' pain. Thus, when seeing unhappy people, never say: “They suffer

because they deserve it. That is God's justice. So, we must deny them our assistance.” Rather, think like this: “Let me see what means God has put within my reach, so that I may lessen their suffering. Let me see if moral consolation, advice or material help can assist them to overcome trials with greater energy, patience and resignation. Let me see if God has given me the means to finish their suffering. Perhaps I have been given such means as a test, or even as an atonement, so that I may allay their troubles and replace their distress by peace.”

Therefore people must always assist one another. All of us must reject being a torture tool, especially the Spiritists, because we understand the God's justice better than anyone else. Our lives must be full of love and devotion. The Spiritists can fearlessly apply all their strength to lower the bitterness of their neighbors' atonement because, whatever we do, the God's designs will always be fulfilled.

Only the Omnipotent is entitled to harden or prolong a trial. Those who, in a manner of speaking, turn the knife into their neighbor's wounds or increase the poison dose in the sufferer's viscera, under the excuse that it is part of probation, are insanely proud. Always consider yourselves as instruments for pain alleviation! In conclusion, all of us are on the Earth to overcome trials and all of us must strive, according to the law of love and charity,

to lessen the atonement of our fellow beings. -
Bernardin, a protecting spirit. (Bordeaux, 1863.)

Euthanasia.

**Should we hasten the death of an incurably
sick one who suffers?**

*28. When people agonize under cruel
suffering; when their state is hopeless: are we
allowed to mercifully hasten their end?*

We are not allowed to judge God's purposes. Life sometimes leads people to the grave brink and then withdraws them, in order to make them wake up and think. Human predictions may fail. Even when a dying person seems having reached the last extreme, nobody can assure the final moment has really arrived. Of course there are cases that can be considered desperate. But even when there is not any hope of return to life, dying people may recover mind at their last minute, as often testified. This God-granted grace time is extremely important. The reflections and lightning repentance a spirit may have during its last fleshly agonizing moments, which constitute the climax of its bodily life, can save it from many torments in the future life. If there is still life, there is still hope of reflection and repentance.

Materialists are unable to understand it. But the Spiritists, who know what happens in

the afterlife, understand the value of the last thoughts. So, as much as you can, mitigate the moribunds' suffering but never shorten their lives, not even for a minute, because such minute can save them from much pain in the future. - *Saint Louis*. (Paris, 1860.)

Own life sacrifice

*29. There are people who are tired of life
but refuse suicide. Are such people allowed to
seek death in a hazardous task, on a battlefield,
for instance, in order to make their death
useful?*

No matter people self-kill or make others to kill them, the intention is always cutting the existence thread. Therefore there is the wish to commit suicide. The idea that such a death could be useful is just an illusion. This is only a pretext to cover up such act, and for them to excuse before their own eyes. Those who seriously want to serve do their best do stay alive because their corpses will be useless. People who aiming at a useful purpose are not afraid of death and bravely face danger, and who promptly sacrifice their own life if necessary to save their neighbors, are really devoted humans. But seeking death with a *premeditated intent*, through a willful exposure to danger, even in order to supposedly render

service, cancels all action merit. - *Saint Louis*.
(Paris, 1860.)

30. *In order to save a fellow being's life, one, even knowing beforehand one's death is certain, decides to face a deadly danger. Is this act a suicide?*

If there is no intention to find death then there is no suicide in this act, only devotion and abnegation, even when bodily death is certain. But who can actually be sure about death certainty? Providence can reserve an unexpected means of salvation at the last moment! God can save even those who are in front of the cannon mouth! Life may sometimes take a submission trial to the extreme limit and then, in such cases, an unexpected circumstance wards off the deadly blow. - *Saint Louis*. (Paris, 1860.)

Making one's own suffering useful to others

31. *There are many people who, submissive to God's wishes and mindful of their future happiness, accept suffering without complaint. But are not they working only for their own benefit? Is it possible for them to make their suffering useful to others?*

Their suffering can be both materially and morally useful to others. In a material sense,

the work, privations and sacrifices they endure can contribute to materially help their neighbors. In a moral sense, the example of faith and submission to the God's will that they offer can induce many unfortunate and wretched people to quit despair and its disastrous consequences. - *Saint Louis*. (Paris, 1860.)