

The greatest commandment. - Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. - **Instructions from the spirits:** The love law. - Selfishness. - Faith and charity. - Charity toward criminals. - Should I risk my own life to save a criminal?

The greatest commandment

1. *Having heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. Then one of them, a law doctor, asked Jesus, aiming to tempt him: Rabbi, which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus said to him: You shall love God your Master with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And similar to the first is the second: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. These two commandments embrace the whole law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:34-40.)*

2. *Do to others whatever you want others doing to you, for this is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12.)*

As you want that others do to you, do also to them likewise. (Luke 6:31.)

3. *The kingdom of Heaven is like one whose king requested accounts from his servants. When the king began reckoning, one man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. As the servant lacked means by*

which to pay, the lord commanded him to be sold, as well as his wife, sons and all that he had, so that payment could be done. But the servant, falling down, besought the king, saying: Be patient with me and I will pay you all. Moved by compassion, the lord loosed the servant and forgave him the debt. However, after having gone out, that same servant found one of his own servants, who owed him a hundred pence. He laid hands on his debtor, saying: Pay me what you owe. His servant, falling down at his feet, besought him, by saying: Be patient with me and I will pay you all. But that creditor had no patience. He cast his servant into prison till he could pay the debt.

But when the king knew what happened, he called that servant again to him and said to him: You wicked servant! I forgave you your debt when you asked it to me. Shouldn't you have also had mercy with your fellow-servant as I had pity on you? And his lord, being angry, delivered the servant to the tormentors, till he could pay all that was due.

So, God will also do to you likewise if you do not forgive, from your hearts, every neighbor their trespasses. (Matthew 18:23-35.)

4. “Love your neighbor as yourself; Do to others whatever you want that others do to you.” This maxim encloses the most complete charity because it summarizes all human duties toward each other. This is the greatest conduct

rule: doing to others whatever we want others doing to us. The practice of this guideline leads to selfishness extinction. Before demanding others to be better behaved, benevolent or devoted to us, we must first do the same to them. When humans adopt this rule as the cornerstone of all institutions they will live a true fraternity. Peace and justice will reign. There will be no more hate, no more discord. There will be only harmony, concordance and mutual benevolence.

Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar

5. The Pharisees took counsel on how they could entangle him in his speech. And they sent out to him their disciples, with the herodians, saying to him: Master, we know that you are true and care for no human, for you do not regard the person of men, and truly teach the way of God. Therefore what do you think: Is it right to pay tax to Caesar, or not?

But Jesus, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them: Why do you make trial of me? Bring me a penny that I may see. And they delivered a coin to him. And Jesus said to them: Whose is this image and inscription? They said to him: Caesar's. Jesus, answering, said to them: Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.

And they marveled at him and went their way. (Mark 12:13-17; also Matthew 22:15-22.)

6. The Pharisees asked Jesus a question about the Roman tax because the Jews hated it. They even turned it into a religious subject. Strong anger was motivated by the tribute and a numerous party was set up against it. Thus, there was a trap inside that question because the answer would place Christ against either the Roman authority or the dissident Jews. But Jesus, having understood their malice, took advantage of that opportunity to gave them a justice lesson, by teaching that each one is entitled to receive what each one is due. (See also “Introduction” - *Publicans*.)

7. We should understand in a broad sense the principle “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar.” It stems from the maxim that teaches we must do to others whatever we want others doing to us. It dooms any kind of harm, material or not, that we might inflict on others. It teaches us to respect all of our neighbors just like we want being respected. From this rule it follows that we must respect everybody, that is, family members, colleagues, authorities, society, as well as all individuals and groups, both friendly and antagonistic.¹

¹ - Respect does not mean concordance. The former is a duty, the latter an option. We are allowed to disagree with our fellow beings but we must always *respect* their opinion and free-will. One who respects other people never offends nor harms anyone. Moreover, we should remember that God is fair, and that all evildoers will, sooner or later, be properly charged, either during present

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

The love law

8. Jesus' doctrine is summarized by love, the feeling par excellence. Primitive humans have only instincts. After some moral progress, and being still corrupt, they have sensations. When they become instructed and purified they have feelings. Moral evolution turns instincts into feelings, and the topmost feeling is love, not in vulgar sense, but that inner sun which concentrates all aspirations and superhuman revelations at its shining focus. The love law replaces the individual personality by the creatures' fusion; it extinguishes social misery. Blessed are those who, overcoming their natural limits, intensely love all beings. Blessed are those who love because they surpass the misery of body and soul. Light-footed, they live as outside of themselves. When Jesus pronounced the divine word “love” the people startled, and the martyrs hopefully died at the Roman circus.

Spiritism has come to pronounce “reincarnation”, another divine vocabulary word. It removes the headstones of empty

life or in a future incarnation. The Greatest Judge is unbiased and corrects all the injustices. This is a major reason why everybody must respect each other. - Versionist's note.

tombs. Triumphant over death, it reveals to the astonished people their eternal intellectual and moral wealth. It doesn't lead people to be sacrificed anymore, as the first Christians were. Rather, reincarnation induces us to conquest our own beings, elevated and transfigured. Blood redeemed the spirit. Today, the spirit will free humanity from matter.

We have said that primeval humans had only instincts. Therefore, those ones in whom the instincts predominate are still nearer to the start than the goal. In order to advance, we must master the instincts and develop the feelings; improve the sentiments and choke the material trends. Instinct is the feelings embryo. It brings progress within it, as the acorn contains the oak. Creatures slowly emerge from their chrysalises. The less advanced beings remain enslaved to instinct. Like soil, the spirit demands cultivation. Your future success depends on your present labor, which will provide you a glorious elevation rather than earthly goods. Then, once you have understood the love law, which joins all beings, you will find in it the softest soul delights, which comprise a celestial happiness prelude. - *Lazarus*. (Paris, 1862.)

9. The love essence is divine. Everybody, from the first one to the last, has the spark of this sacred fire in the bottom of their hearts. Even the most vile, base and criminal person can devote a passionate, resilient and sometimes

sublime affection to a living being or to an object.

Yes. There are people with love-overflowing hearts who, complaining about humanity, dedicate a treasure of care to animals, plants and even to material things. Resisting their natural inclination of seeking sympathy and affection among other humans around them, these misanthropist people reduce the love law to the instinct level. But, no matter their resistance, they will fail choking the living seed God planted inside their hearts at the creation moment. This seed develops and grows together with morality and intelligence. Although often compressed by selfishness, it generates the virtues that create the sincere and lasting affections, that help human beings to overcome the rugged existence pathway.

There are people who reject reincarnation because they refuse the idea of outsiders sharing the affectionate sympathies they are jealous. Poor children! Their affection makes them selfish! To a restricted circle of friends and relatives they are devoted, but to everyone else they just offer indifference.

In order to practice the love law, as God understands it, we need, step by step, learn to love everyone without distinction. Although challenging, such task will be fulfilled because God so desires. There are several kinds of selfishness: personal, domestic, sectarian,

national. The main Spiritist precept is the love law, because it will destroy all types of selfishness. Jesus teaches we must love our neighbors as ourselves. But what is the limit regarding our neighbors? Is it family, sect, group, party, country? No. It is the whole humanity! Mutual love presides the advanced spirits that inhabit the superior worlds. Your planet will soon experience a meaningful progress. Earth will also see its inhabitants practicing the divine love law due to the social transformation the globe will pass.

The love law morally improves human species and will make happiness possible during terrestrial life. Keep the principles “Never do to others what you do not want others doing to you” and “Do to others all the good you can do to them”. When the rebellious and vicious ones see the benefits which stem from practicing them, they will renew themselves.

Do not believe in sterility and hardening of human heart. Even unintentionally it gives way to true love, which acts like an irresistible magnet. The true love touch fertilizes the love seed which is inside every heart. World of exile and atonement, planet Earth will be purified by this sacred fire. Then, on this globe, we will see charity, humility, patience, devotion, abnegation, resignation and sacrifice, virtues that are all offspring of love. Mind John the Evangelist's lesson. When age and sickness forced him to

stop preaching, he just repeated these gentle words: “My children, love one another!”

Beloved siblings, practice these teachings. Although challenging, they will greatly benefit you. Believe us! Make the sublime effort we suggest you: love one another! And soon you will see the Earth becoming a paradise, where the fair souls will come to. - *Fénelon*. (Bordeaux, 1861.)

10. Dear fellows, we, the spirits here, say to you: “Love others very much so that others may love you too.” This divine guidance solaces and relieves the daily trials. If you follow it, you will prioritize less the material concerns, and you will become spiritualized before leaving your fleshly body. Spiritism develops the understanding about the future. Now, with answers for your soul's aspirations, you are sure you walk toward God. This is why you must not condemn your neighbors. Before judging them, raise your thought to the Most High, so that you may calmly ponder the facts.

Those who love are loyal, honest and conscientious, so that they become able to do to others what they want others doing to them. They study their neighbors' pain, aiming to relieve it better. One who loves considers the whole humanity as their own family, because all people are God's children, destined to infinite elevation. The Almighty's mercy has permitted you to enjoy talents and resources. Thus, you

should use these gifts to assist your neighbors because, in turn, you would be quite glad if they gave you what you are needing. Provide hope and comfort to the sufferer, so that you may be fair and loving.

The principle “Love greatly in order to be greatly loved” is sure and invariable. It will revolutionarily open ways. You have already achieved a meaningful progress for your own good, because today you are much better than you were a hundred years ago. Now you accept several liberty and fraternity ideas that you would reject before. Similarly, within a century ahead you will easily embrace principles you are still unable to admit.

The last centuries implanted great progress ideas in the earthly society, which is now prepared for a fruitful sowing. Present in the Spiritist works, and related to the divine seed which lies inside each heart, the renewal and justice precepts start being increasingly accepted. God presides the human evolution toward siblingly love, which will be fostered by the received and learned lessons. Being able to better feel and judge, the incarnated spirits planetwide will join hands in order to cease injustice and discord.

Love greatly so that you might be greatly loved! The understanding and practice of this renewing teaching, so well stressed in *The Spirits' Book*, will perform the miracle of

harmonizing the spiritual and material interests.
- *Samson*, ex-member of the Spiritist Society of Paris. (1863.)

Selfishness

11. Selfishness, humanity plague, hinders the Earth's moral advancement and has to disappear from the planet. Spiritism will help this globe to raise rank in the hierarchy of worlds. Thus, we must use all our resources, strength and courage against egoism. Yes; we are requested far more courage to win ourselves than to defeat others. All earthly miseries are caused by selfishness, this monster that devours intellects, this pride offspring, this charity denial. We must do our best to combat our own egoism, because it is the worst hurdle to the human happiness.

Jesus gave us the example of charity and Pontius Pilate of selfishness. When the former, the Fair One, was about to face the Calvary, the latter, although sure of Christ's innocence, just washed hands, said "I do not care!" and permitted his martyrdom.

Christianity hasn't fully accomplished its mission due to the opposition between charity and selfishness, this leprosy that invaded the human heart. You are the new faith apostles. Spread the guidance you receive from the good spirits. Expel egoism from the planet. Do your

very best to fight this evil, that delays the love diffusion. Time has come for earthly humanity to steadily go ahead. In this direction, your first task is expelling selfishness from your own hearts. - *Emmanuel*. (Paris, 1861.)

12. Charity will be widespread when humans love one another. However, first we should unfreeze our hearts, so that we may become more sensitive to the agony of others. Stiffness kills the good feelings. Christ never denied assistance nor repelled anyone, whoever they might be. He helped both the adulterer and the criminal, no matter how badly they could harm his reputation. When will you choose Jesus as the model for your actions? *When charity reigns on Earth, evil will be weak; it will hide itself and will flee in shame, because it will feel uncomfortable everywhere*. Then, be sure evil will disappear.

Begin by giving you the good example. Be charitable to all, without distinction. Pardon those who scorn and harm you. Entrust justice to God, who everyday separates wheat from chaff.

Charity is the opposite of selfishness. Without charity there will be no peace for humanity. Furthermore: there will be no security. Life alongside with pride and selfishness will always be a race where the most cunning wins, an interest struggle which treads the most saintly affection underfoot and spoils even the dearest family ties. - *Pascal*. (Sens,

1862.)

Faith and charity

13. Beloved children: charity without faith cannot maintain a social order capable to make humanity happy. Actually, charity is impossible without faith. Even the most anti-religious one is able of many generous impulses. But only faith can inspire the discreet charity that demands permanent sacrifice of selfish interest. Only faith can make people to face all kinds of hardship without complaint.

There are people who, being eager for pleasure, think they are allowed to live only for themselves. They self-deceive about their actual role on this planet. Of course we were created by God to be happy in eternity. But earthly life must serve firstly for our moral evolution, which is easier to achieve with assistance of physical organs and material world. The diversity of tastes, trends and needs provide opportunities for improvement through charity practice. Indeed, harmony between so many different people can only be permanent by dint of mutual concession and sacrifice.

Humans will conquer happiness when they pursuit virtue rather than material satisfaction. History tells us that Christian martyrs serenely faced their execution. You, present Christians, are not required to sacrifice

your lives anymore. But you are expected to sacrifice your selfishness, pride and vanity. Seek inspiration in charity and strength in faith. Do it and you will triumph. - *A protective spirit*.
(Cracow, 1861.)

Charity toward criminals

14. True charity is sublime. Fraternity must be complete among true followers of Christ's doctrine. Criminals are also God's children. Thus you should love them too. Just like you, they will deserve new opportunities if they repent of the offenses they have committed. They are often much more ignorant about God than you. So, no matter how harshly you condemn them, they are often less blameworthy than you and, so, they will be asked less than you.

Do not judge! Never judge, my friends, because the verdict you apply to others will be perhaps more severely applied to yourselves. You need indulgence for the sins you are always committing. Mind that many actions God considers as crimes aren't even regarded by humans as petty faults.

The Universe Master demands from us true charity, which is more than just giving alms. Charity, as Jesus teaches, is also permanent benevolence toward our neighbors. You can use this virtue with everyone, because

many do not need alms but lack encouragement, solace and love.

The time approaches when a great fraternity will reign on the Earth. Everybody will obey the Christ's laws, which, brake and hope, will guide all souls to the happy realms. Love one another as siblings in God, who equally considers all the humans. Do not establish difference between criminals and you. Never despise anybody! God allows crime to be among you because you still need taking lessons from it. Soon, when people start obeying the true laws of God, such learning will become unnecessary. *Then, all impure and rebellious spirits will be sent to inferior worlds, according to each one's tendency.*

Pray for the criminals. This is also charity! Never think about them: "They are worthless people. They must be swept out from the Earth. Death penalty is gentle for them." This is the wrong way to think! Remember Jesus, the conduct model we must follow. What would Christ say if he met such unfortunates? He would lament; he would consider them sick and pitiable. Then, he would offer them a helping hand. You are not expected to do the same. However, you can at least pray for them. You can assist their souls during the time they still have to live on the Earth. Your faithful prayers help them to repent. Just like the best humans are your sisters and brothers, the

criminals are your siblings too. Their souls, although strayed and rebellious, were created, as your own spirit, to be perfect. Thus, pray for them. Help them to escape from the quagmire they live. - *Elizabeth of France*. (Havre, 1862.)

Should I risk my own life to save a criminal?

15. *The life of a criminal is in danger. In order to help this person, I must risk my own life. However, the felon may commit other misdeeds after escaping the threat. Despite this chance, should I hazard my life to save the evildoer?*

This is a serious question. I will answer it according to my moral advancement. Devotion is blind. Enemy soldiers are rescued. Thus we should rescue the society enemies too. By hurrying up to save them, you will pull them out from death and, maybe, from crime too. The past of an evildoer suddenly looms in front of them during their final moments of life. Perchance death comes to them too soon. Their reincarnation may be terrible. So, rush forward! Rush forward all of you, who already know the Spiritist teachings! Rescue them from their doom and they, whose last words would be blasphemies, perhaps throw themselves into a new life. However, do not ask them what they will do in return. Just save them! By proceeding

this way, you will obey that inner voice which
tells you: “If you can save them, save them!” -
Lamennais. (Paris, 1862.)