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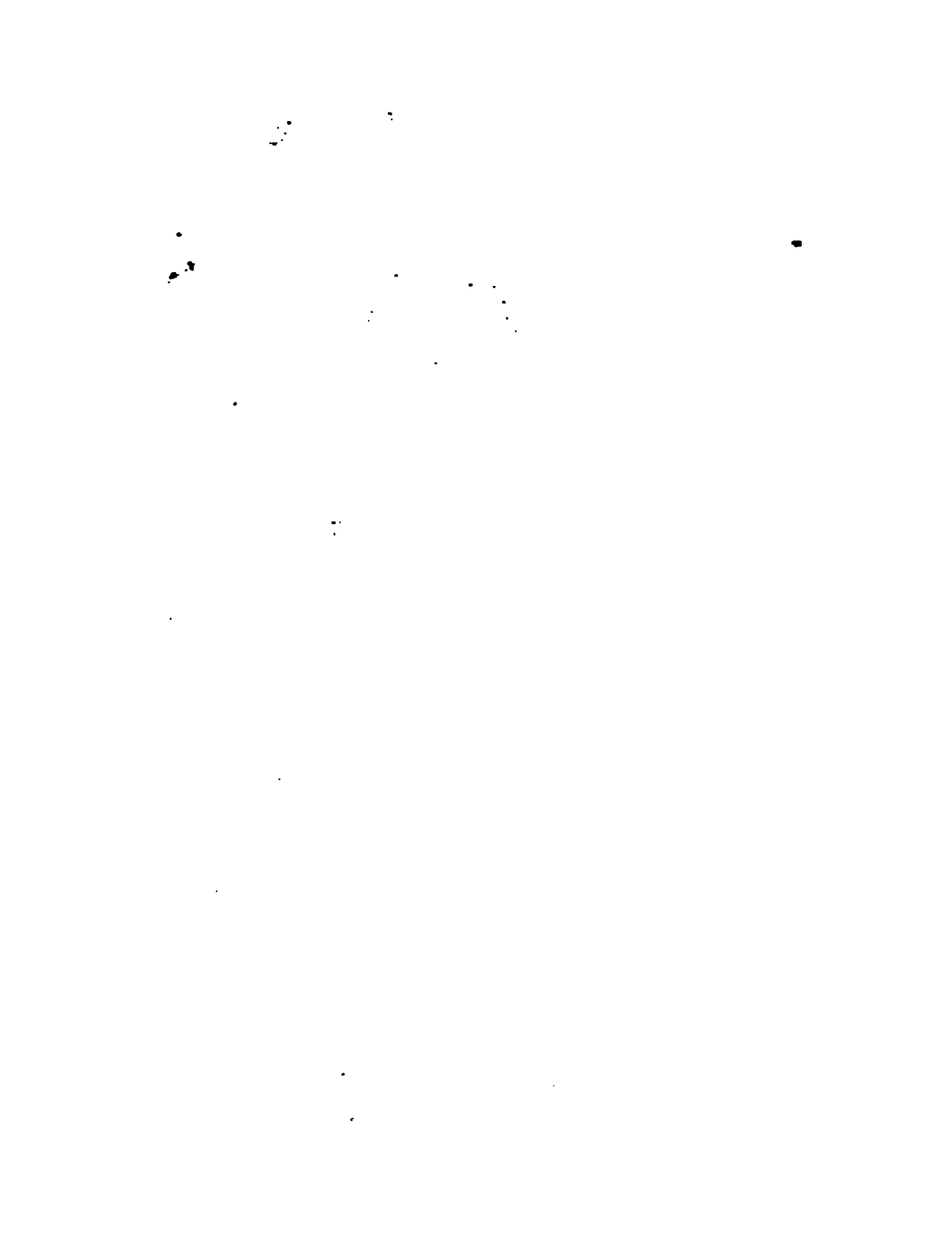
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THE FOUR GOSPELS



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THE FOUR GOSPELS

EXPLAINED BY THEIR WRITERS

WITH AN APPENDIX

ON

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

EDITED BY

J. B. ROUSTAING

TRANSLATED BY

W. F. KIRBY

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I

LONDON

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PREFACE

TO
THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION.

THE work now offered to the English public is highly esteemed on the Continent, as a further development of the religious philosophy of which the first principles are laid down in the works of ALLAN KARDEC. The circumstances under which it was written are fully detailed in the "Editor's Preface ;" and there is nothing to add on this subject, except to suggest that it should be read impartially and judged on its merits, without any bias for or against it on account of the origin which is claimed for it.

Of the purity and sublimity of the moral teachings of the present work there can be but one opinion ; while many of the views which it contains will be found to be not only interesting and suggestive in the highest degree, but, in some directions—and notably as regards the hypothesis of Evolution, of which they present a *rationale* that effectually rescues it from the grasp of Materialism—to have anticipated the latest results of scientific research. It will also be seen that they explain the *modus operandi* of the most recent phenomena of ostensible spirit-action, now commonly known, for want of a better term, as "materialization ;" that is to say, the production of seemingly human forms, possessed of temporary visibility, tangibility, and the power of simulating various human attributes and functions : phenomena to which they give additional importance and dignity by showing that their production is providentially designed as preparing the necessary basis for the acceptance of the leading doctrine of what claims to be a "Revelation

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of Revelation," precursor of an approaching transformation of human society as a consequence of the transformation of human belief.

It is much to be regretted that the Editor, overlooking the inevitable imperfections attendant on intermundane communication at its present stage of development, should have copied (as he has evidently done) the entries of the séance-book *verbatim*, without venturing to suppress even the word-for-word repetitions which constantly occur in the original, owing either to old ground being gone over again, or to emphasis having degenerated into prolixity. In order to render the book readable in English, it has been necessary to avoid reprinting useless repetitions ; but great care has been taken not to omit anything which forms an essential part of the work. The Editor's Preface and Introduction have been thoroughly revised by Miss ANNA BLACKWELL, who, though unable to carry out her long-cherished intention of translating this book (to which her translations of the works of ALLAN KARDEC have been made as paving the way), has aided the Translator in performing the task which has thus come to be confided to him with her advice and co-operation.

As the English translation of the New Testament is glaringly faulty in many points bearing on the teachings of this work, and as the French translation of the same, being made from the Vulgate, though less incorrect in some respects, is more so in others, the Translator has found it necessary to render the text of the Gospels throughout from the Greek. In doing this he has especially endeavoured to distinguish between the three meanings of the word "Heaven," which are wholly confused in the English version. In the Synoptic Gospels, when the word is used in the plural, it denotes the Spirit-Worlds ; and when used in the singular, it frequently means the sky. But in the Gospel of John, it is generally employed in the singular, to denote the region whence Christ descended, and to which He would return—*i.e.*, the abode of the fully purified spirits, or Nirvana.

No attempt has been made to revise the text of the Gospels, or to suppress doubtful or even notoriously

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spurious passages. The teachings of the present work, respecting the temporary usefulness of the errors resulting from the action of the human element in the production of the Gospels, render such elimination superfluous. It may be added that Ainslie's translation of Tischendorf's New Testament has been occasionally consulted.

The Translator has appended a few illustrative notes, all of which are marked "TRANSL.," in order to distinguish them from those of the original work.

W. F. KIRBY.

ANNA BLACKWELL.

LONDON AND PARIS, 1881.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE explanation of the Gospels which I now offer to the consideration of my fellow-men is not mine ; it is the work of those who prepared, took part in, or recorded, the mission of Jesus upon the earth.

Having borne witness to the events of that mission *as they then understood it*, under the veil of the letter, they now, at the period predicted for the commencement of a new era, bear witness anew to the reality of that mission by this new Revelation, which yet is not *new*, being only an explanation of that former one, destined to prove its truthfulness, by showing the real nature of events which men have regarded as "miracles" or as "fables," because they have hitherto been ignorant both of the natural laws through whose action those events were made to occur, and of the necessity of progressive revelations, proportioned to the progressive receptivity of succeeding ages. All those who took part in the mission of Jesus will return to the earth to aid in the fulfilment of his promises, as the organs of the Spirit of Truth whose advent he predicted ; and when the work of the Spirit of Truth shall have been accomplished in the purification and transformation of the people of our planet, Jesus himself will return to it, in all the glory of his real nature, as the visible Sovereign of creatures who, through their purification and transformation, will have become capable of receiving the unveiled truth which he will bring to them.

The present age being one of incredulity and negation, it is right and fitting that I should briefly state the circumstances which have led to the production of this work.

Let me say, then, that I was thrown on my own resources from my youth, and that I had to achieve my literary, scientific, and legal education, and my position as a barrister in large and lucrative practice, through a long and arduous struggle with poverty and difficulties of all kinds. Having in 1826 successfully passed my examinations at the University School of Toulouse, I obtained a clerkship in Paris that enabled me to complete my general and special studies in the great schools of the metropolis. On being admitted to the bar, I returned to my native town, Bordeaux, and devoted myself with untiring assiduity, during a period of thirty years, to the profession to which I owe a free and independent position and the means of aiding those who, less fortunate than myself, are in need of friendly counsel and a helping hand.

This busy career of public and private activity was interrupted in 1858 by a serious illness that compelled me, during a couple of years, to lay aside all business and to occupy myself solely with the care of my health, on the recovery of which, in 1861, I was about to return to the exercise of my profession, when I happened to meet an eminent physician of our town, who spoke to me of the possibility of communication between the people of the earth and the people of the spirit-world as a truth resulting from the theoretic inductions of a doctrine which was obtaining wide acceptance under the name of "Spiritism," and which was abundantly confirmed by the facts of this communication occurring in harmony with that doctrinal theory among the converts to the latter; concluding his statements by expressing his conviction of the vast importance of this communication between the earth and the spirit-world, as being destined to usher in a new revelation of religious truth for the whole human race.

All this was absolutely new to me, and my first impression in regard to it was one of incredulity. But my long experience of life had taught me that an *impression* is not a sufficient ground for a *decision*, and that no one should affirm or deny any proposition until he has fully

acquainted himself with the subject to which it refers. I therefore suspended my judgment in relation to the matter thus mentioned to me for the first time, and determined to investigate it for myself before coming to any conclusion in regard to it.

My respect for the principle of liberty of conscience had made me tolerant of all creeds; but, at the time referred to, I had no settled religious belief. My reason refused to admit the statements of the Gospels concerning the personality and mission of Jesus. I revered his pure morality; but the real nature and aim of his appearance upon the earth being concealed from my view by the veil of the letter, I took no interest in the narrative of events which, for want of their true explanation, could only be classed as "miraculous" in the sense of *a departure from the known laws of Nature*, and which were consequently beyond the pale of my convictions.

Deeply interested in the pursuit of truth—physical, moral, and intellectual—I had been accustomed to conduct all my inquiries through the double process of study and experimentation; and I resolved to prosecute my inquiry, as to the reality of the asserted possibility of communication with those who are commonly called "the dead," with the aid of the same methods of investigation which I was in the habit of employing for the elucidation of all other subjects.

I therefore commenced this new inquiry by a careful perusal of the works of ALLAN KARDEC, the pioneer of the Spiritist movement. In "The Spirits' Book" of this author I found a perfect code of morality, an explanation of life in general and of human life in particular, in harmony with reason and progress, and a fore-glimpse of the progressive modifications of our relations with the Creator, as the result of our progressive obedience to divine law (synonym of natural law), that appeared to me to be equally rational and consoling. The statements contained in this work in relation to the soul in the incarnate and disincarnate states, to the phenomena of birth and of death, to the beings loosely styled "angels" and "demons," to the

relations between the earth and the spirit-world, and to the various agencies by which the Almighty conducts the government of the universe and effects the gradual development and purification of all creatures, appeared to me to be fully consonant with reason and with the discoveries of modern science ; as did also the views therein presented in regard to the plurality and hierarchy of worlds and of their inhabitants, and to the law of re-birth, which regulates and harmonizes all the phenomena of existence, through the progress thus made by each soul in intelligence and in its control of the elements of matter.

The perusal of this work brought home to my mind, more forcibly than ever before, the sense of the vastness of the universe and of the density of our ignorance of our relations, both with our own world and with the other worlds, which link all existences into one endless chain, and of the manner in which the laws of existence of a superior world are adapted to those of an inferior one (such as our earth evidently is), when a "Messiah," or special Messenger, is sent to it by God, to accomplish some great mission for the advancement of its people, and assumes, for this purpose, a body in harmony with his own spiritual degree, and yet relatively in harmony with the life of the men among whom he comes to mark out the paths of human regeneration, and to bring them the truth (which is life) under veils that adapt it to their present backwardness, but that are destined to be gradually withdrawn according to the growing receptivity of each succeeding age.

In "The Mediums' Book," by the same writer, I found a rational explanation of the possibility of communication between the people of the earth and those of the spirit-world, with practical instructions in regard to the exercise of mediumship, the dangers to be avoided in the exercise of this faculty, and the frame of mind best calculated to ensure a profitable result from our intercourse with disincarnate spirits.

I next reviewed the history of the world from the earliest times, and perceived that the records of all nations in all

ages fully confirm the fact of intercommunication between the people of the earth and the spirit-world, by the testimony of the most trustworthy historians.

I then directed my attention to the various religions and philosophies of our globe, and to the works of the most renowned poets and other writers who have most vividly reflected the manners and opinions of their age; and I thus arrived at the certainty that all of these bear witness (though obscurely, and with large intermixture of error) to the great truths which spirits of high degree are now, under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, preparing to bring more clearly to the knowledge of mankind.

I completed this course of preparatory elucidation by a perusal of the Old and New Testaments. Though I had tried to read these books before, I had never been able to do so, so obscure and unintelligible did they appear to me. But the Spiritist theory threw a new and brilliant light on the pages that had formerly defied all attempts on my part to penetrate their meaning, and showed me that the communication between the earth and the spirit-world is the instrument that has been employed by God in all ages for giving to men the light which each age could profitably receive, as the condition and means of progress. I thus perceived that the Divine Revelation is permanent and progressive.

Interpreting the Gospels with the aid of the Spiritist theory, I now saw that they assert, under the veil of the letter, the plurality and hierarchy of inhabited worlds, and the law of re-birth, as the sole means whereby men can "see the kingdom of God" and attain to the immortality which is their destiny.

But though I now understood the sublime morality of Jesus as emanating from a Divine source, and though much of the obscurity which had formerly surrounded the so-called "miracles" of the Gospels disappeared in the light of the Spiritist theory, my reason failed to comprehend the origin, nature, and authority of Jesus, his relations to God and to the human race, the various abnormal facts recorded of his

life, death, and resurrection, and his predictions of his second coming. I felt that human reason was unable to penetrate the darkness of the letter, and that a new revelation, explaining and completing the Hebraic and Messianic revelations, was necessary for the thinkers of our age.

Having thus arrived at an opinion based on inquiry and examination, it remained for me to submit this opinion to the test of experiment ; for science and revelation must rest on laws of nature, and must proceed, by induction, from the known to the unknown. I therefore placed myself in communication with various mediums belonging to respectable families of our town. I sat with them daily, experimenting and carefully observing the manifestations elicited, and I was deeply impressed both with the importance of the teachings communicated, and with the constant inculcation, by the disincarnate intelligences with whom I thus found myself in communication, of charity and kindness towards the crowd of backward and unhappy spirits in the other world, who have not yet entered upon the path of repentance and expiation, but who may be aided to do so by the earnest and persevering efforts of those to whom they appeal for compassion, instruction, and advice.

This practical observation of Spiritist phenomena, both physical and intelligent, showed me that communication between the earth and the spirit-world is one of the laws of nature, and that there is no such barrier between the living and the so-called "dead" as, in my ignorance of that law, I had hitherto supposed to exist.

Continuing my experimental investigation, I speedily perceived that the mesmeric fluid plays an important part in all Spiritist phenomena, and that they are, in fact, inseparably connected ; that fluid (which from its attractive and repellant action, may not improperly be termed "magnetism") being the universal agent and motor in all the realms of nature, and all the bodies of the universe being produced by magnetic attraction under the universal action of spirit. I accordingly entered on a theoretic and practical study of human magnetism, as a preparation for the study of spirit-magnetism,

which appeared to open up vast possibilities of future progress for mankind ; my historical researches having shown me that human magnetism had existed in all ages, and that it had always been the vehicle of communication between mankind and the spirit-world.

I now began to regard the general outbreak of spirit-manifestation, all over the world, as a sign of the commencement of the new era predicted by Jesus and anticipated by many eminent modern writers.

Profoundly impressed with this presentiment, I earnestly, in 1861, besought of the Almighty to grant me the favour of a manifestation from the spirit of my father, and from John the Baptist (after whom I am named). The manifestations I so earnestly desired took place shortly afterwards, quite spontaneously, to the great surprise of the medium and to my unspeakable joy. By the messages thus transmitted, I was told that the new revelation promised by Jesus was already beginning—that the nations now devoted to the idolatry of wealth must be led to turn from this profane adoration, and to raise their thoughts aspiringly towards the celestial regions—and that spirits of high degree are charged by the Almighty to bring in a new era of freedom and fraternity, as the aim and result of the Spiritist movement now occurring all over the world, through the substitution of belief based on knowledge, in place of the unbelief which has grown out of ignorance, and of gentleness, justice, and kindness between all the members of the human family, in place of the pride and selfishness that now prevail. I was assured that the time has come for the fulfilment of the promises of Jesus, and that I should be permitted to take part in the work of preparing for the ushering in of the new era of truth and progress ; that era which I had perceived to be approaching, and to which it was my most ardent desire to be allowed to consecrate my efforts.

I was still going on with my researches and experiments when, in the course of that same year, I was invited to call on Madame Collignon, a lady of our town, previously unknown to me, in order to see a large picture, medianimi-

cally produced, which purported to give a view of some of the worlds scattered through space. I did so ; and a week afterwards, I again called on the lady, to thank her for having allowed me to see the picture.

After a short conversation on indifferent subjects, I rose to take my leave, when Madame Collignon felt her arm moved by the fluidic agitation so well known to mediums, and indicative of the presence of spirits who desire to write by their hand. Yielding to this impression, Madame Collignon's hand then wrote as follows :—

“The present age being an era of transition, some are busy overthrowing the ancient formulas, already tottering to their fall, and others are seeking to erect new ones, in which uneasy souls may rest. Those who overthrow do not trouble themselves about replacing what they destroy ; those who seek to build up are uncertain as to the foundations on which they should build. It is the mission of Spiritism to prepare the site, to gather together the materials, and to lay the firm foundations, of the temple in which Truth shall have her altars, and from which she will diffuse her light.

“Men's minds are wavering between the doubts that beset their reason, and the yearning for a true faith that stirs their heart. To those who are thus groping in darkness, you must give the truth that shall become their beacon. To those who can no longer rest on the dogmas of the Church, you must offer the solid support of the New Revelation. You must show them that the grand and noble figure of Christ, looking down upon the world from the height of the ignominious Cross, is neither a myth nor a legend, but a reality whose true nature has been hidden by the veils that have obscured it, so that men have only seen an indistinct presentment, incapable of satisfying their reason. You must show the world the truths underlying what is regarded by those who reject the Gospels as falsehoods, and that those who defend the events therein narrated as ‘miracles,’ and those who deny them as ‘impossible,’ are equally in the wrong, because these events really occurred, but in virtue of the

laws of nature, and have only appeared to be 'miraculous,' or 'impossible,' because the world has hitherto been ignorant of these laws.

"It is for you, whom we have chosen as our mediums, to prepare the way for the new era and for the advent of him who is shortly to come among you, to trace out the road, and to begin the work, of reformation and renewal.

"For this purpose, we are about to give you the explanation of the Gospels which will pave the way for a unitary belief for all mankind. This explanation, emanating from the Spirit of Truth, will be a Revelation of the Revelation given in the Gospels.

"The time has come when the letter which killeth must be replaced by the spirit which giveth life. The letter has borne its fruits according to the various phases of human progress, and now it kills.

"Devote yourselves with zeal, perseverance, and courage, to the task which is thus laid upon you ; remembering, with humility and charity, that you are only the instruments employed by God to show the truth to men.

"We shall notify you when we wish you to publish the explanations we are about to dictate to you, and which will unite all sincere seekers in a common faith."

(Signed) "MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE,
JOHN.

"Assisted by the Apostles."

"December, 1861."

This manifestation, calling on me to undertake, with the aid of the medium, Madame Collignon, a work of such great importance, filled us both with extreme surprise ; but the joy we might otherwise have felt at being chosen for such an undertaking was sobered by our fear lest we should be incapable of accomplishing it worthily.

The commencement of our medianimic work having been fixed by our spirit-guides for the following week, we set ourselves resolutely at the time appointed to the discharge of the task, which we should certainly not have undertaken of our own accord, ignorant, blind, and incapable as we felt

ourselves to be, and which we could only hope to accomplish as the amanuenses of spirits far more advanced and enlightened than ourselves.

As the work of explanation proceeded, my mind was more and more filled with admiration of the truths that were thus shown to have been embodied in the Gospels, though, for providential ends, they had been surrounded by a veil of mystery that would necessarily lead men's reason to reject the letter of those writings in course of time. In the fervour of my thankfulness for the new light thus vouchsafed to me, I solemnly pledged myself anew to the discharge of the task to which I had been called, exclaiming, with entire sincerity, "My heart, my time, my reason, O my God! shall henceforth be entirely devoted to thy service; and happy indeed shall I be if, despite my weakness, I may become a useful instrument for inclining the love and reverence of thy creatures towards Thee, the Sovereign Master of all that is!"

In the prosecution of our work we had come to the words, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Matt. xix. 19), when the following was medianimically written:—

"When we have finished our commentary on the Gospels, we shall give you explanations concerning the commandments of the Decalogue, and the love of God and the neighbour, which you will append as a supplement to our work on the Gospels."

(Signed) "MOSES, MATTHEW, MARK,
LUKE, JOHN.

"Assisted by the Apostles."

On the conclusion of the work on which we had been engaged, the order to publish the explanations thus medianimically transmitted was given me in May, 1865, in the following words:—

"The old, worn-out doctrines, originating in ages of barbarism, intolerance, and cupidity, have so disgusted the modern mind, that men, repudiating the very idea of religion, are losing their belief in God and their hope of

immortality. A new light must therefore be thrown upon the chaos in which they are wandering, to show them the path they have missed for so many ages. This light will be given by Spiritism, which is destined to rekindle the love of God and of the neighbour now dying out in the human heart; to bring back to a reverent belief in God the atheists who imagine that they live only by matter; and to win the affection of mankind for the pure and glorious Spirit who came, commissioned by God, to lead them all back, purified and ennobled, to the common Father.

“For a long time past the personality of Jesus has led to wide differences of opinion. Those who could not believe in the divinity attributed to him by the Church have endeavoured to represent him as a man; but this representation was as irreconcilable with the tenor of the Gospel narrative, and with the facts of human nature, as the divinity erroneously attributed to him by the Church. ‘The idea of Jesus as the ‘Man-God’ was an absurdity; his devotion, a delusion; his self-sacrifice, a lie; his purity, a necessary consequence of his divinity. On the other hand, Jesus, regarded as a man of flesh, like the men of your planet, was a problem no less inexplicable; and, if he were a man like other men, the so-called ‘miracles’ performed by him, the disappearance of his body from the tomb while the seal on the stone that closed its entrance remained intact, his resurrection, his subsequent appearances to his followers, and his ascension to the ethereal regions, could only be regarded as fanciful tales, fitted to amuse a generation of slight advancement, but that must necessarily be rejected as fables by minds arrived at a higher degree of scientific knowledge.

“The explanation of the Gospels which we have given you, and which, by our command, you are now to publish, will show men that Jesus is the Protector and Ruler of your planet; that he presided at its formation; and that he directs its development, devoting himself to the progress and advancement of its inhabitants.

“It will show them that he assumed, for the accomplish-

ment of his mission upon the earth, a body in harmony with his own higher nature, and relatively in harmony with the material conditions of your planet, in order that the seeds of truth, the time for the sowing of which had then arrived, should be sown by him as appointed by the ordering of the Almighty, and should be left to germinate and to grow, giving rise to much contradictory speculation, until the progress of human intelligence should have reached a point which would render it possible to unfold the hidden meanings that, as the grain which has come to maturity within the protecting folds of the blade and the husk of its earlier growth, shall produce the rich harvest foreseen by the sower—viz., the furnishing of the true basis of belief in God and of charity for all mankind, and the true key to the comprehension of the nature, acts, and mission of Jesus, who came to show you how to live and how to die for the achievement of the progress of the human spirit; the great law of re-birth and re-incarnation as the sole road to purification and progress, and which alone can reconcile the Divine Justice with the apparent injustice of Fate; and the primordial, fundamental, and definitive faith in the existence of the one sole, omnipotent Creator of all that is; in the eternal duration of the intelligent principle; and in the continuity of existences—expiatory at first, and then glorious—for all the souls who have fallen from their first estate.

“But be assured, and assure your brethren, that this explanation, which we have charged you to bring to their consideration, is still only preparatory and incomplete, being an adaptation of the truth to the present state of your world, a preface to the work of him whom the Master is about to send to you, to enlighten the human mind by a further freeing of the spirit from the veils of the letter.

“The mission of him who will carry forward the work of revelation, and whose first Messianic years will be witnessed by your generation, will still be only preparatory; and, after him, a succession of Messiahs, or special messengers of God, will succeed one another, until the new day shall have dawned for the whole human race.

"In the work which we have now accomplished through your instrumentality, we have given our own names, in order to avoid mentioning Him who, through our intermediary, has directed our labours, and who will direct the successive workers through whom we shall carry on the work of revelation committed to us by Him.

"What you are now to publish is only the first part of what we have to give you. The second part will be (1) a refutation of the objections that will be made to our explanation of the Gospels and Commandments, and (2) a similar explanation of the Acts of the Apostles, of those passages of the Epistles which corroborate the present work, and of the Apocalypse.

"Be of good cheer, faithful labourers ! The Master will not overlook the sincerity of your devotion.

(Signed) "MOSES, MATTHEW, MARK,
LUKE, JOHN.

"Assisted by the Apostles.

"May, 1865."

My duty, as a simple instrument, is to execute the command of those who have employed me, by publishing this work, which is not mine but theirs, and which makes manifest the essentiality of all that is sublime in the beneficent paternity of God, and in the self-abnegation and fraternal devotion of Jesus, who is called the Christ, and who so well deserves the title of Saviour of the World and Protector of the Earth.

The duty of my brethren, whoever they may be and whatever may be their religious opinions, is to suspend their judgment of the work I now offer them, until they have read the entire book from beginning to end, and seriously reflected upon it as a whole, of which all the parts mutually sustain and uphold the others.

At every epoch of the life of our planet, man is at liberty to accept or reject the light which is offered him. But much is required of him to whom much has been given, and a spirit's responsibility is always measured by the means of instruction which it has possessed.

Before Truth can triumph, it must necessarily contend with the contradictions of error; for the whole truth can never be revealed at once, but only such a measure of revelation as men's minds are ready to receive and to profit by: and error, though doomed to perish with the progress of intelligence, is none the less preparatory to the reception of the truth, whose eventual triumph it ensures through the inquiry it excites by its attacks.

The work which the ministers of the Highest have caused us to write has for its aim the purification and happiness of the human race, and the exaltation of the glory of God. Preparing the ground of a common religious belief, it furnishes the true basis of human fraternity; and it will thus fulfil the promises of the Master by bringing in the Kingdom of God on earth, under the law of love and unity. And we publish this book in full confidence that it will attain its end.

J. B. ROUSTAING.

BORDEAUX, *June*, 1865.

INTRODUCTION

BY THE EDITOR.



THIS work, emanating from spirits of high degree, is designed to throw light on everything which has appeared obscure, and to demonstrate the truth of everything which has been regarded as false, in the great work of the Messianic Revelation, accomplished by Jesus, and recorded in the Gospels. It shows that the doctrine of Jesus is, as he said, "not his own doctrine, but the doctrine of Him who sent him," and that it is the source of all truth and progress for mankind; the lode-star of humanity for the fulfilment of its destinies. It shows that the worship instituted by Jesus is wholly spiritual; inwardly by prayer and self-examination, and outwardly by kindness, charity, and the giving of mutual aid in all the various relations of life. It shows that the Baptism of Water, instituted by John the Baptist, and continued by the disciples of Jesus, was a transitory rite, intended for the Christian era under the veil of the letter, and adapted to the needs of the men of that period, but destined, under the empire of the Spirit, and during the new era of the Christianity of Christ, to be wholly spiritual, symbolising the repentance to which all must be called, and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is the assistance and protection of good spirits, whom men should always endeavour to attract to themselves by humility, justice, and charity. It shows that the Paschal meal partaken of by Jesus and his disciples, and which has been made the foundation of an external human worship, was in reality the last solemn appeal made by Christ to human fraternity, and should be retained under the new dispensation as a bond of fraternal union, apart from all

external forms of worship. When men shall have learned to practise the two commandments which Christ proclaimed to be the fulfilling of the law and the prophets, and shall love the Creator above all things and their neighbour as themselves, they will no longer worship the Father on the mountain, nor in Jerusalem, but will become more and more the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, through the noble activity of their charity, humility, study, science, and mutual aid in the cause of progress ; for all the members of the human race will then be for each, and each for all. It also shows that this purification and transformation of the earth can only be accomplished when the tares shall have been separated from the wheat, at the time appointed by Providence for its regeneration, when those who still persist in evil will be "cast into outer darkness ;" in other words, will be removed from the earth, and cast down to worlds of a lower degree of advancement, where they will expiate their obstinacy, their rebellion against moral progress, and their wilful blindness, in conditions appropriate to their culpability and to their need of expiation, reparation, and progress.

The present work, co-extensive with the Gospels, which it explains in spirit and in truth, forms a compact whole, of which every part is necessary to explain and complete the rest. It throws new light on the knowledge of the Father ; it teaches who is the Son, by revealing to men the origin and nature of Jesus, and his position with reference to God and to our planet ; and it also reveals the origin of the Soul, its phases, aims, and destinies in infinity and eternity. It makes known the extra-human nature of the body which Jesus assumed for his manifestation in the world as God's messenger among men, and the manner in which this manifestation was effected. It explains all the events called "mysteries" or "miracles," and shows that they took place according to the laws of nature. It explains the words spoken by Jesus under the guise of parable and the veil of the letter ; the actions performed by him ; and his predictions relative to the future of our planet and its humanity, and the

manner in which they will be fulfilled : thus revealing the grandeur and importance of his mission in the past, the present, and the future.

"All things," said Jesus, "have been given into my hands by my Father, and no one knoweth the Son except the Father, and no one knoweth the Father except the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him."

In speaking thus, Jesus proclaimed the unlimited supremacy, authority, and powers which God has given him over our planet and its inhabitants, and the necessity of successive and progressive revelations in the past, the present, and the future, to reveal who is the Son and who is the Father. He alone is commissioned to make these revelations, through the ages, by errant and incarnate missionaries, charged to give to man what his intelligence is able to receive, proportionate to the receptivity of each succeeding era. Thus, just as the revelations given to the Hebrews by Moses and the Prophets contained promises of future revelations by announcing the advent of the Messiah, so the revelation of the Gospel made by Christ, the promised Messiah, contains promises of the future revelations of the Spirit of Truth.

Jesus said, "Eternal life consists in the knowledge of Thee, the only true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." He thus bore witness both to the undivided unity of the Father, and likewise to the greatness of the mission which had been entrusted to him by the Father, to lead men, whose guidance he had accepted, on the path of intellectual, moral, and social progress.

God.

During the Pagan and Hebrew ages, the existence of occult or open relations between incarnate and disincarnate spirits commenced the work of eternal life, by revealing to men the existence of God as the Creator and Sovereign Master of the Universe, and the fact of communication between the spirit-world and mankind as one of the laws of nature, and therefore eternal. These relations between men and the

various classes of disincarnate spirits, both good and evil, gave rise to polytheism; but, among all nations and in all religions, the idea of the Divine Unity was preserved by the initiated, and dominated over all the secondary divinities worshipped by the masses, who were intentionally kept in ignorance and error by their rulers for their own selfish ends.*

The Hebrew nation acquired the Pagan beliefs in Egypt; for these prevailed among the Egyptians as well as among other nations. They were placed under the leadership of Moses to inaugurate the preparatory era, which was carried on by the succession of Hebrew prophets, until the time appointed for the advent of the promised Messiah.

In accordance with the necessity for linking together the past and present in the development of beliefs, the Hebrew revelation proclaimed God to be the Eternal and only God, the God of Gods. "God," said the Hebrew prophet, "has taken his place in the assembly of the Gods, and seated in the midst of them, he judges the Gods. . . . I said, Ye are Gods, and ye are all the sons of the Most High."

Thus the Hebrew revelation prepared the way for the knowledge of the one sole and only God, the uncreated Creator, Source and Author of all that exists.

Jesus carried on the knowledge of the Father, that had already been imparted by the Hebrew revelation, and by missionary spirits among the Gentiles, by saying, "God is a spirit." These words were intended to do away with anthropomorphism, and to pave the way for a purer idea of the Godhead, having regard to the distinction which must always obtain between the infinite and the finite; between that which is without limits, and that which is circumscribed; and, consequently, between the uncreated Creator and the creature. The Apostle Paul was one of the organs of the Spirit of Truth, under the dominion of the letter, and was inspired by the spirits of the Lord, who aided him in the accomplishment of his mission. He spoke words which,

* These truths had long been known among the Gentiles, for Socrates was made to drink the hemlock 400 years before Christ.

like those of Jesus, were intended to aid in the development of human knowledge respecting the Divine nature, and to provide the means of purifying the beliefs formed under the empire of the letter, which subsequently perverted and falsified the Messianic revelation.* “And there is no other God but one alone. For even if there are those who are called gods, either in heaven or on earth, as if there were many gods and many lords, yet to us there is one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him” (1 Cor. viii. 4-6). “From him, and through him, and in him are all things” (Rom. xi. 36). “In him we live and move and have our being” (Acts xvii. 28). “He is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who alone hath immortality,† dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man hath seen or can see, to whom be honour and age-long dominion” (1 Tim. v. 18, 19). “The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you the spirit of wisdom and enlightenment in knowing him” (Eph. i. 17).

According to the words of Jesus and of Paul, the Spirit of Truth has now come to shed new light upon our knowledge of the Father by the present revelation, and to correct the erroneous ideas which have grown out of the obscurity of the letter.

This Revelation of the Revelation shows man the Father, who is the only true God, immutable, eternal, the Uncreated Creator, One and Indivisible, the sole and only Principle of Life, who has in himself all existence from all eternity, through his divine essence as the emanating principle of all things. He regulates universal life, harmony, and progress, according to laws which are as immutable and eternal as his essence and will, from whence they proceed, by means of agents, occult or visible, errant or incarnate, directing every-

* The words of Paul are explained in the commentary on the first verse of the first chapter of John.

† Every creature must be born, die, and be born again before arriving at eternal life, reason, and free will. See the commentary on the three first Gospels (§§ 55 et seq.) on the origin of the Spirit.

thing according to his infinite justice, wisdom, and goodness, under the operation of the great law of magnetic attraction, in the spiritual, fluidic, and material orders. He is the Spirit of Spirits, the Being of Beings, Intelligence, Thought, and Fluid, ruling over everything which depends upon him. The universal fluid proceeding from him is the instrument and means of all creations, through the combinations and transformations effected by it. He thus produces diversity in unity, for the development and progress of spiritual essences, spirits, worlds, and bodies; and he thus creates life and universal harmony in space and time. He creates the spiritual essence (which is the principle of intelligence, consisting of intelligence, thought, and fluid), by means of a subtle combination, of which the essence is found only in the divine radiation. This principle is destined to become a formed spirit, capable of endless development and progression; for everything proceeds from and returns to God, through successive purifications and transformations, from the inferiority of the initial starting-point to the attainment of individuality and immortality. He thus causes the spiritual essences to pass through the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms for development and progress, under the supervision of guardian spirits, until they reach the precincts of individualized personality, thus arriving at the period preparatory to the state of formed spirit. When the spiritual essence has passed through the preparatory periods, it becomes individualized, and is ushered into the state of innocence, simplicity, and ignorance, in which it acquires the knowledge of its faculties and actions. It thus receives the precious but dangerous gift of reason and free-will, and is raised to the state of a spirit possessed of independent consciousness. Having thus become a responsible creature, endowed with free-will and understanding, and the power of independent action, it becomes capable of choosing its path under the friendly advice and direction of its guides. If it fails, it becomes humanized, and suffers human incarnation on the primitive or other worlds, under conditions appropriate to the degree of its guilt, and to its need of expiation and

progress. If it remains steadfast, it proceeds gradually and steadily in the path of progress, remaining obedient to the advice of its guides, until it has reached (without failure, and therefore without humanization) the culminating point of perfection, and has thus become a fully developed and unfallen spirit, of perfect and immaculate purity. But all spirits—both those who have fallen and have been purified by expiatory incarnations, and then glorified, and the un-fallen spirits who have always remained pure are originally equal, start from the same point, and will finally arrive, though by different routes, at the same goal of perfection ; each spirit receiving according to its works.* God has no preference for any of his creatures, and none of them will, in the long run, be disinherited.

Thus the New Revelation explains the meaning of the words of Jesus, "My Father and I judge no one ;" "I judge no one."

JESUS.

By some, Jesus is looked upon as having been, as regards his corporeal envelope, a man like themselves, clothed with a fleshly body, liable to death like that of the men of our planet, and as having been born of a human mother, like other men. But they also regard him as God himself, miraculously incarnated, conceived and born of a virgin by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Thus they regard Jesus as a God-Man or Man-God, and attribute divinity to him by believing him to be God made man, divine, and yet mortal like themselves. They also assert that he really died on Calvary, and that he was resuscitated by the return of his spirit into a human corpse.

Others regard Jesus as having been a man of flesh and blood like themselves, the son of Joseph and Mary ; and they suppose that he really died on Calvary, and did not rise again.

These two opinions, which have always existed under

* Compare the Commentary on the first three Gospels, §§ 55, 56 et seq.

the veil of the letter, separate those who call themselves orthodox Christians from those who call themselves Free-thinkers. It was intended that these differences of opinion should exist, in order that men might be gradually led on by the progress of mental and moral development to the New Revelation, which was to be given when, in the course of ages, the field should have been prepared for its reception by the thinkers whose efforts bore witness at once to the activity of human reason, and to its inability to rend the veil of mystery which covers the Hebrew and Messianic revelations, thus proving the necessity for this New Revelation, that the previous ones may be explained instead of being rejected.

Everything in the successive revelations given to mankind has its use according to the foreknowledge of God, and contributes to the development of humanity, and to its advance on the path of intellectual and moral progress. These revelations are always appropriate to the necessities of each era, and are proportioned to what man is able to receive and to comprehend, under the influence of the circumstances, prejudices, and traditions amidst which he finds himself.

God, in his infinite wisdom, knew under what conditions Jesus must manifest himself to men in accomplishing his earthly mission, in order that it should yield its desired fruits as the means of their regeneration, and the guide to their attainment of eternal life ; and should accomplish its aim in reference to the destinies of our planet and its humanity, through the knowledge that was to be gradually obtained from it by men, concerning the nature and mission of Jesus, and concerning the Father, who is the One True God ; to which knowledge they have been slowly conducted by successive revelations. Everything had been prepared to this end, through long ages, by the Hebrew Revelation, and by missionary spirits among the Gentiles ; and all was ready for the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus upon the earth.

The Hebrew Revelation had announced the coming of

the Messiah under a double aspect—firstly, with a human origin and nature, as being of the posterity of Abraham and of the house of David ; and secondly, under the obscurity of the letter, with an extra-human origin and nature, miraculously born of a virgin, and thus divine. Wherefore “men should call him Emmanuel, or God with us.”

According to the literal interpretation of the prophets, the Jews expected the promised Messiah to be the Son of David, and a Liberator who should lead them to conquer their national independence ; and Mary and Joseph were advanced spirits who had incarnated themselves in order to aid in the fulfilment of the Hebrew Revelation, by preparing the scene of the appearance of Jesus on the earth, and thus opening the way for the accomplishment of his mission. It was appointed them to receive the Messiah, firstly, under the dominion of the letter, and then to receive the true explanation of his nature and mission under the empire of the Spirit, the new era of the Christianity of Christ.

At the time appointed by God for the advent of Jesus, the revelation made by the angel to Mary and Joseph was made in such a way as to ensure its being kept secret during the Master's mission ; and it was only made known afterwards by the disciples to whom Mary had secretly divulged it, at the right time to be useful, under the influence and inspiration of the Spirits of the Lord.

The angel said to Mary, “You have found favour in the eyes of the Lord.” These words really meant, “The time is come for the accomplishment of the mission which you have asked and obtained.”

(Luke i. 30–35 ; Matth. i. 18–23.)—Jesus made his appearance among men under the auspices of the Hebrew Revelation, as regarded his supposed human origin and nature. He appeared to the Hebrews to be a man like themselves, and a prophet, the son of David by descent, and immediately of Mary and Joseph ; the revelation made to Mary and Joseph, which excluded the paternity of the latter, remaining secret.

When the earthly mission of Jesus had been accomplished and the revelation of the Angel to Mary and Joseph had been made known, his personality became a mystery to the disciples and the multitude. He was looked upon as the son of David ; at first, as the son of Joseph and Mary, and then of Mary only. He belonged to humanity by his death on Calvary, for he was regarded as having suffered real death, like the men of our planet ; and he was divine, as being the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and risen from the dead. His life upon the earth was also regarded by them as a continual miracle, both physical and moral ; an opinion resulting from his superhuman actions, the literal interpretation of some of his words, his death and resurrection, his appearances to the women and to the disciples, his ascension to heaven, and the other incidents of his earthly mission.

The field was thus left open to human interpretations and contradictions ; but everything was prepared for the fulfilment both of the Hebrew revelation and of that made by the Angel to Mary and Joseph, firstly by the mission of Jesus himself, and afterwards by the missions of the Apostles (especially the Apostle Paul), who were guided by superior spirits to carry out their work in such a manner as to lead men on, through the ages, with the aid of missionary spirits, to the advent of the Spirit, the giving of the New Revelation that was to come, at the appointed time, to replace the letter, which killeth, by the Spirit, which giveth life.

Before the close of the first century of the Christian era, the four Evangelists, who were incarnated for the purpose, wrote their Gospels under the influence and inspiration of the spirits of the Lord, at the time appointed, and according to the mental state, the needs, and aspirations of the period. These records were designed, by the will of God, to mutually explain and complete each other, and to preserve and transmit to future generations the great work of the Messianic Revelation, and the moral code for the redemption of the world. They form an imperishable monument, the work of the Spirit of Truth ; and everything false or

apocryphal, resulting from human errors, will sooner or later fall before them. They were destined to become the source and rule of faith for all time; firstly, under the empire of the letter, next under the rule of the Spirit, and afterwards for ever, being progressively explained and developed by the Spirit of Truth.

It is through the earthly mission of Jesus and the Apostles that everything which was ordained to take place during the empire of the letter has been accomplished, and that everything which is to take place under the empire of the Spirit must now be accomplished.

The Jews regarded the Holy Spirit as God himself, manifesting himself to men by some action; and they were consequently led to attribute a divine origin to Jesus by a literal interpretation of the Hebrew and Angelic revelations. They regarded the birth of Jesus, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, as a real but miraculous and mysterious incarnation of God himself, at once human as regards his body, and divine as regards his soul. Interpreting literally the Angel's words, "Son of the Most High," "Son of God," and certain expressions of Jesus isolated from their context, such as "My Father," and being unable otherwise to explain his pure and spotless life and the various abnormal details of his sojourn upon the earth, they came to regard Jesus, the Son of David and the Son of Mary, as God himself, miraculously incarnated; God made man, dead, and risen again; thus attributing divinity to Jesus, under the combined influence of Hebrew traditions and the circumstances around them. In the confused gatherings of Jews and Gentiles at the commencement of the Christian era of the letter—some of the early Christians being influenced by Monotheism and others by Polytheism, and the Holy Spirit being generally regarded as God manifesting himself to men—there arose the idea of a Triune God, consisting of three distinct persons, separating and re-uniting themselves at pleasure. Those who held this dogma, endeavouring thus to retain unity in plurality, failed to perceive the mingled Pantheism and Polytheism of such a theory. Firstly, there was God the

Father, who himself effected the incarnation of his Son, and who afterwards, when Jesus was entering on his public career, caused his voice to be heard on the banks of the Jordan, in the presence of John the Baptist, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Secondly, there was God the Son, at once a man and the Son of God, God in flesh; and thirdly, there was God the Holy Spirit, who descended upon Jesus on the banks of the Jordan under the bodily form of a dove. And these Three Gods were One God.

But these human aberrations, arising in the infancy of Christianity, were not destined to remain without contradiction; for their reign was to be only transitory, and they were to disappear under the action of reason and science, clearing the road for the advent of the Spirit. But the infinite wisdom of God did not permit these opinions to be overthrown until the time had arrived when they could be replaced by the truths of a new Revelation.

These erroneous interpretations of the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations, and of the earthly missions of Jesus and the Apostles, which first arose in the early days of Christianity, prevailed more especially during the fourth and sixteenth centuries, and have continued until our own times. They exhibit the efforts and struggles of human reason, which have gradually prepared the way for the principle of free inquiry, and thus for the advent of the Spirit of Truth. But men have struggled in darkness and a mingling of truth and error, without being able to solve the mystery, or to remove the veil of the letter from the spirit; and they have finally rejected both the Hebrew and Messianic Revelations, and now regard Jesus as a man of flesh and blood, the son of Joseph and Mary. They consequently reject as fabulous the so-called "supernatural" occurrences recorded in the Gospels. These human opinions sprang from the inability of human intelligence, aided by the freest examination, to replace the letter by the Spirit, and to explain the origin and real nature of Jesus Christ, and of his authority, powers, and mission in

reference to our planet and its people, the nature of the body which he assumed, the mode of its formation by the Holy Spirit, and the object and motive of this apparently miraculous origin.

From the first period of the era inaugurated by Christ, some have maintained the literal truth of the first phase of the Hebrew Revelation, which announced the coming Messiah as of the posterity of Abraham and of the house of David, but have rejected the literal interpretation of the Hebrew and Angelic revelations respecting the extra-human origin and nature of Jesus ; maintaining, like the chief priests and Pharisees and their adherents, who rejected him as an impostor, that he was a man of flesh and blood like themselves, the son of Joseph and Mary, that he really died on Calvary, and that he was not raised from the dead. But this retrograde opinion, which contradicts the letter and the spirit of both Revelations, must give way to the New Revelation, just as the Hebrew era has had to give way to the Christian, in the accomplishment of the destinies of humanity.

Others, setting aside the letter of the Hebrew Revelation respecting the human origin and nature of Jesus, and accepting the letter of the Angelic Revelation respecting his miraculous birth by the operation of the Holy Spirit, seek to explain it by asserting that Jesus had not a real human body, but a body of celestial substance, and that he was born of Mary without in any way detracting from her virginity, as light passes through crystal. This explanation, also, exhibits both the efforts of human reason to solve the mystery and raise the veil of the letter, and their inability to do so. It erred in partially freeing itself from the yoke of the letter, and in thus coming into collision with the prejudices of the age, while the time for the advent of the New Revelation was still far distant. It was an hypothesis within the bonds of the letter, but outside the truth, explaining nothing, unintelligible as the letter itself, and only substituting one mystery and miracle for another. It remained isolated and inoperative on the masses during the course

of ages ; but it was a sign-post set on the path of the future, which men would observe at the time of the revelation of the Spirit of Truth.

Others, again, reject entirely the letter of the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations respecting both the human origin of Jesus, and his extra-human origin by the operation of the Holy Spirit. They deny the humanity ascribed to Jesus either as the son of Mary and Joseph, or as the son of Mary only ; and assert that Jesus assumed a factitious or spirit-body, in which he descended from Heaven. This opinion, like the last, exhibits the inability of human intelligence to penetrate the veil of the letter, and likewise erred in opposing the prejudices and necessities of the age, and in abandoning the letter before the time had come for the Advent of the Spirit. It offered an hypothesis which was contrary both to the letter of the two revelations and to the events which had been accomplished before the eyes of men, as far as they had been able to understand them, and only substituted one mystery and miracle for another. Being the result of premature and impotent efforts, it, too, remained isolated and without effect upon the masses ; but it also remained as a sign-post on the path of the future, which men would observe at the time of the New Revelation. The opinion which, as stated above, arose according to the letter, in the infancy of Christianity, had prevailed from the earliest times among the Pagan nations, to whom the miraculous fecundation of virgins by a divinity, whose offspring were both human and divine, was a familiar idea, universally accepted ; and the Jews had become imbued with this idea during the Captivity. There was nothing surprising to them in the letter of the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations, respecting either the human and extra-human nature of Jesus through his miraculous conception by the Virgin Mary, or in his miraculous incarnation, at once human and divine, as a creation of the divine will ; and these revelations were received literally by them, conformably with their ideas and traditions. Regarding these events as mysteries or miracles, they did not attempt to explain or understand them.

But the divinity ascribed to Jesus was from the beginning denied by many, especially in the fourth and sixteenth centuries, at both of which periods speculations regarding the origin and nature of Jesus were rife. In the fourth century, Arius and his followers denied the divinity of the Word, and maintained that the Son of God was a creature created out of nothing, capable of virtue and vice, who was not God in reality, but only by participation, like all the other creatures who are called Gods, and that, although the Son of God might have existed before the ages, he was not co-eternal with God. In the sixteenth century, Lælius and Faustus Socinus in like manner denied the divinity attributed to Christ. Socinus even maintained that the Arians had ascribed too much dignity and importance to him, denied the pre-existence of the Word, maintained that the Holy Spirit was not a distinct person, that the Father alone was properly called God, and that, although the title of God was given to Jesus Christ in the Hebrew Scriptures, it was not used in the same sense as when applied to the Father, and only meant that the Father, the only True God, had given him a sovereign power over all his creatures, and had thus made him worthy of the adoration of angels and of men.

These controversies, due to the darkness of the letter and the subtleties of the schoolmen, profoundly affected the masses, giving rise to doubt and incredulity among Christians in regard to the double nature of Jesus, as man and also as God the Son. Being still in the bonds of the letter, these controversies were a mingling of truth with error. They were true in so far as they maintained that Jesus was not truly God, but was a creature of God; that the Father alone could properly be called God; and that, if the term God was applied to Jesus in the Hebrew Scriptures, it was only because God had conferred upon him a sovereign power over our planet and its humanity. They were also true in asserting that the Holy Spirit was not a distinct person, according to the assertion of the Church, in the doctrine of the Three Persons of the Godhead. But these

controversies erred in asserting that Jesus was a creature capable of vice as well as of virtue, and that he had no existence prior to the formation of the world. Arising amid the darkness of the letter, they were unable to explain what was meant by the Holy Spirit in the revelation of the Angel; and they thus allowed the interpretation attached to it by Hebrew traditions to maintain its ground.

In consequence of this confusion of opinions respecting the origin and nature of Jesus, and of human inability to solve the mystery of the letter, the men of the Reformation were unable to replace the ideas which belonged to the past by those which should form the basis of belief in the future. Their work was consequently accomplished without this replacing of the false by the true; and the Reformation necessarily accepted, and still maintains, opinions based upon the letter in the infancy of Christianity. But although premature and ineffective, all the efforts of human reason were destined to prepare the world for the advent of the New Revelation. All are so many sign-posts for the future, and aid in the progressive separation of truth from error.

The controversies that have arisen since the Reformation, under the influence of reason, which more and more distinctly refused to accept the defective beliefs of earlier ages that are still taught dogmatically as "miracles," have revived the old retrograde idea that Jesus Christ was of the same nature as the men of our planet, and was born, lived, and died like other men; they thus reject everything in the two Revelations which cannot be explained according to the known laws of nature. Nevertheless, although these infantile beliefs have falsified the meaning of both the Hebrew and Messianic Revelations, both have been preserved as a deposit for the new era; for it was intended that the old opinions, which maintained the reality of the abnormal events recorded in the Gospels, should only fade away in the light of the new era of the Christianity of Christ, in the luminous rays of the Spirit of Truth, who comes to clear up, by the Revelation of the earlier Revelation, everything which has hitherto remained obscure, and to show the

natural causes of what has been affirmed or denied as beyond the pale of the laws of nature. These old opinions are not to be rejected because they cannot be understood literally, but must be explained by the Spirit of Truth, who will thus produce a unity of opinion among all mankind, through the alliance of Faith and Reason.

Jesus is not God ;* he never claimed to be God ; and all his sayings, whether purposely veiled or not, were so arranged as to serve the time at which they were uttered, and to prepare the basis and elements of the future Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which he predicted and promised. He protested against the divinity which was attributed to him by saying, "My Father is greater than I." He is not God, for God is one ; and there is no other God but the Father, who is the only true God, from whom each and all derive their being ; who is above all ; beside whom all other beings are only creatures. But Jesus Christ was not a man of flesh and blood like the men of our planet, for the human body can only be formed according to the laws which govern generation in our world. God never contravenes the laws of nature, which are as immutable as his will, whence they emanate from all eternity. The revelation made by the Angel, or Superior Spirit, to Mary and Joseph, is not to be rejected because it cannot be understood literally, but must be explained by the adaptation to our world of laws of nature which govern worlds of higher degree. The body with which Jesus was clothed during his mission on the earth was formed independently of human generation, by an extra-human process. But this truth was veiled by the letter of the Revelation, according to the needs and receptivity of the age. The words of the Angel were designed to be useful at the time, and preparatory to the future Revelation of the Spirit of Truth. "That which was born in her was formed by the Holy Spirit," and its "birth" took place only in appearance, and in perfect accordance with natural law.

Jesus Christ was not subject to death like ourselves.

* Compare the commentary on the Gospel of John, § 1.

He did not die on Calvary, and was not raised again, as commonly supposed, by the return of his spirit to a human corpse; for the laws which govern our planet do not permit a spirit to re-enter the corpse it has quitted, to unite itself to corruption, and to resume its human life.

If Jesus had suffered real death, he could not have risen again with his dead body. If this had been a human body, the phenomena which followed his crucifixion could not have taken place. The disappearance of the body from the tomb while the stone which closed the entrance was sealed; the disappearance of Jesus from the eyes of the two disciples whom he met on the road to Emmaus, while he was at table with them; and his two successive appearances among his disciples, when the door was closed from fear of the Jews, would have been impossible, because contrary to the laws of nature. Nevertheless, all these events really took place, and were beheld by many witnesses. That the body which constituted his life in the eyes of men, as the instrument by means of which he accomplished his earthly mission, both before and after the Crucifixion, was not a human body, is evident from his own declaration concerning it:—"I lay down my life, and take it up again; no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again; this is the command which I have received of my Father."

What, then, was the nature of the body assumed by Jesus? How was this body formed, and according to what laws of nature? And how were these laws adapted to our earth? What was the real meaning of the "Miraculous Conception" by the operation of the Holy Spirit? If it was not real, because contrary to the laws of nature, and was only apparent, by what means and for what purpose were those appearances produced—appearances which Mary herself believed to be a reality?

These questions cannot be evaded, for Jesus has said, "There is nothing secret which shall not be known, and nothing hidden which shall not be revealed."

Those who represent Jesus as God himself made man, clothed with a human body, having died, and having risen again by the return of the spirit to a corpse, shelter themselves under the false and senseless term of "supernatural," implying a departure from the laws of nature. They admit everything in the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations, and in the Master's earthly career, not only without being able, but even without trying, to explain what they call "mysteries" and departures from the laws of nature ; rejecting and condemning, in the name of dogmatic authority, which permits neither examination nor discussion, all the arguments which weigh against their opinions. On the other hand, the representatives of free inquiry, who deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, do so without being able to explain his origin and nature, and his position in reference to God and our planet. Regarding Jesus as a man, they delight in opposing the advocates of the orthodox opinions by saying, "The laws of nature are immutable, and any departure from them is impossible ; therefore the basis on which you rest your dogmas is false, which proves them to be false also." After this easy triumph, they reject (for want of being able to understand them) all statements in the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations, and in the Gospels, which they are unable to explain ; not admitting the existence of any laws in nature but those with which they are already acquainted.

Thus, partly from the impotence of blind faith, and partly from that of human reason when groping amid the darkness of the letter, the activity of modern inquiry, in relation to the Gospel narratives, has led only to negation, which, destroying without replacing, has left men's minds unsettled and their faith uncertain, not knowing where to rest.

While the fields of the Hebrew, Angelic, and Messianic Revelations have been tilled in all directions, for nearly two thousand years, by the exertions of thinkers under the veil of the letter, human reason has remained unable to explain, in accordance with the laws of nature, the various problems of the nature and mission of Jesus Christ ; the necessity,

object, and end of the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations respecting him, the nature of the "Miraculous Conception" by the agency of the Holy Spirit, and what is meant by the Holy Spirit. Now that the beliefs which arose out of the letter in the infancy of Christianity have become insufficient and mischievous, leaving faith without nutriment, a new Revelation has become necessary to show the reality, according to the laws of nature, of those events which for want of this explanation have come to be regarded as fables. This Revelation of Revelation, which will usher in the Christianity of Christ, comes to fulfil the words of Jesus and of Paul—"It is the Spirit which giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak to you are spirit and life;" "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." It comes when the progress of intelligence has paved the way for it during successive centuries; when the phenomena of somnambulism have revealed the existence of the magnetic fluid, its action on the human organism, the disengagement of the spirit during magnetic somnambulism, and the relations of the disengaged spirit with the invisible world; and when the connection between the invisible and visible worlds, and between errant and incarnate spirits, has been made known by a general manifestation which has revealed the existence, action, and effects of spirit-magnetism, for which human magnetism and somnambulism had prepared the way. Lastly, the Spiritist Revelation,* by which missionary spirits have inaugurated the new era, has prepared men for the full explanation of the natural causes of the events called "miracles" in the great work of the Messianic Revelation.

The New Revelation gives this full and complete explanation of the Gospels. It shows the natural causes of the events called "miracles," and corrects all the errors which have arisen, from the darkness of the letter, respecting the nature and origin of Jesus, and his position towards God and our planet; the nature of the body which he assumed

* The basis of which is formulated in the works of Allan Kardec—viz., "The Spirits' Book," "The Mediums' Book," &c.

during his earthly mission ; what is meant by the Holy Spirit ; and the real nature of the " Miraculous Conception." It shows that Jesus Christ is not God, and that the divinity which has been ascribed to him during the Christian era, according to the necessities of the period and the influence of the letter, is absolutely inadmissible. It shows that Jesus was not a man of flesh and blood like the men of our planet ; and that this retrograde idea, contradictory alike to the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations, is likewise wholly inadmissible. It explains why it was necessary, for the progress of humanity and for the accomplishment of his earthly mission, that Jesus should have been presented by the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations under a double origin and nature, as both human and extra-human ; although it was to be revealed by the New Revelation, when the time should have come, as extra-human only, and in accordance with the laws of nature.

The New Revelation shows Jesus to be an unfallen spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, the origin of whose perfection is lost in the depths of past eternities. It shows that he arose, like all creatures, according to the eternal laws of nature, and that he sprang from the same source, God, the Uncreated Creator, who creates, but not by division of his essence. It shows that Jesus arose, like all creatures, from the initial state of spirit-essence, by passing, according to the laws of nature established for its development and progress, through the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, to the state of formed spirit, or spirit invested with free-will and reason, possessing freedom of thought and action ; but that, when he was required, like all other creatures, to choose his course, he remained constantly docile to the advice and instruction of his guides, and thus progressed from the original state of innocence, simplicity, and ignorance, remaining always pure in the path of progress, until he reached the culminating point of perfection, and became a pure spirit, without ever having fallen.*

* Compare what is said on the genealogy of Jesus, and the original phases and destiny of spirits, in the commentary on the three first Gospels, §§ 55, 56.

Having thus revealed the true origin and nature of Jesus, the New Revelation shows him to have been appointed by God as the Founder, Protector, and Ruler of our globe, and to be entrusted with the development and progress of our world and of all the creatures which inhabit it, in all the kingdoms of nature, as well as with the development and progress of the human race, which he is to guide to perfection.

The New Revelation makes known the mode of the appearance of Jesus upon the earth, the nature of his body, and the true meaning of the declaration of the Angel to Mary. It exhibits him as clothed with a body compatible with his own purity, and relatively in harmony with our sphere ; a fluidic body, capable of persistent tangibility, and formed according to the laws of nature which govern worlds of high degree, adapted and applied to the fluids which surround our planet, and from which all the bodies of our world are formed. It shows that the term "Holy Spirit" means the hierarchy of the spirits of the Lord, who are the organs of his inspiration and the ministers and agents of his will ; and it also explains why it was necessary that the illusory phenomena attending the "Miraculous Conception" should take place and be regarded as real.

The Divine Revelations to man being always successive and progressive, the new Revelation has its foundation, elements, and sanction, in the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations, and in the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles.

Inspired by the spirits of the Lord, who aided him in the accomplishment of his mission, the Apostle Paul proclaimed, as we have already pointed out, the indivisible unity of the Father, who is the only true God, and condemned the attribution of divinity to anything but the Father, either in heaven or on the earth.

After having thus proclaimed the only true God, condemned Polytheism, and condemned by anticipation the divinity ascribed to the Son and the Holy Spirit by the dogma

of the Three Persons (compare 1 Cor. viii. 4-6 : xi. 3), Paul proclaimed, under the veil of the letter, the superhuman origin and nature of Jesus, his position with reference to God and our planet, the extra-human nature of the body which he assumed for his earthly mission, and the simply apparent character of the circumstances attending his "birth" and supposed incarnation.

He proclaimed the origin and nature of Jesus as a created spirit, having started originally from the same point as all the other creatures of God, and sprung from the same principle, the Father. But he showed him to be a pure spirit, of perfect and immaculate purity. "He is pious, guileless, and undefiled ; separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens" (Heb. vii. 26) ; "Made perfect in the age" (vii. 28) ; "The reflection of the glory" (of God) (i. 3). Paul also set forth the position of Jesus as the Founder, Protector, and Ruler of the earth, entrusted with the development and progress of men ; and he alludes to the extra-human nature of the body assumed by Jesus, who was always a Pure Spirit clothed in a fluidic body, and was thus (by comparison of the finite with the infinite, the creature with the Uncreated Creator), the image and reflection, and substance of God, who is, in essence, intelligence, thought, and fluid, the substance of all existence ; for the universal fluid flows from him, and is the means by which he effects all spiritual, fluidic, and material phenomena, and rules over everything which exists (Heb. i. 3 ; x. 5 ; 1 Cor. xv. 39, 40, 45, 47).

The human birth and parentage of Jesus Christ being simply apparent, Paul represents him as without father, mother, or genealogy, having neither beginning of existence nor end of life (Heb. ii. 20 ; vii. 1-3) ; and it has consequently been said that he regarded Jesus as a mysterious being, who appeared among men as the incarnation of the Deity to accomplish a great expiatory sacrifice. But he did not explain the mode by which this incarnation was effected, or the nature of the instruments employed for this purpose.

He left these questions in obscurity, because it was so intended, and because he himself was ignorant respecting them. Like the other Apostles, the Disciples, and the multitude, he regarded Jesus as a mysterious being, as Christians have continued to do to the present day. His true origin and position towards God and our planet, and the nature and mode of formation of his body, were mysteries which human reason could not penetrate, and which could only be explained by a New Revelation, when men should have become able to understand them.

The Apostle Paul, like the other Apostles, was inspired by spirits who aided and guided him in the paths which Jesus had marked out. Jesus had made statements which were intended to attract attention, and to be understood literally, at the time of their utterance and in succeeding ages ; but he had also made other statements which were not designed to attract attention until they could be explained by the New Revelation, which should correct the erroneous opinions founded upon the literal interpretation of those statements.

The Apostle Paul, following the example of Jesus, also made statements which were designed to attract attention and to be understood literally, and other statements (under unconscious medianimic inspiration) of which he himself did not understand the exact meaning, and which were only intended to attract attention when they could be correctly explained by the New Revelation. Thus Paul represented Jesus Christ both as a man, sprung from the patriarchs according to the flesh, and mortal, dying on Calvary, and raised from the dead ; and likewise as the Son of God, who came into the world with a body formed by God himself, without father, mother, or genealogy, whose days had neither beginning nor end, his birth and death being such only in appearance ; God, who desired, neither sacrifice nor oblation, having formed for him a body which men could not destroy.

But why was it necessary that Jesus should be represented to men as possessed of both a human and a superhuman

nature? and what was the object of the revelations and missions which thus represented him?

These questions could only be answered by the knowledge of the real origin and nature of Jesus which is given to men by the New Revelation.

Jesus, a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, the Founder, Protector, and Ruler of the world, could not assume a body like that of the men of our planet, for such an assumption would be contrary to the immutable laws of nature.* Nevertheless it was necessary, for the accomplishment of his mission, that he should assume a body at once compatible with his own quality, and relatively in harmony with our sphere, and which should appear to be human to the eyes of men; a body which, although not of the same nature as the human body, should yet present the same form; so that men, regarding him as one of themselves, might be drawn towards him, and their hearts be reached by his teachings and example. His pure and stainless life, made up of charity and self-devotion, was intended to win their sympathy and admiration, so that they might love him and follow him, even while compelled by his superhuman actions to acknowledge him as a messenger of God, and his teachings also as coming from a divine source.

Hence the necessity for Jesus to be regarded, during his earthly mission, as a man of human origin, parentage, and genealogy.

But although the human nature and parentage of Jesus were realities in the eyes of men, as a necessary condition of the fulfilment of his earthly mission, they were, nevertheless, only apparent, since he could not assume a human body; and it was therefore needful that he should be regarded, after that mission had been completed, as of an extra-human origin and nature. He thus came to be looked upon, according to the traditions and necessities of the age, both as a man and as God, subjected to death, and raised from the dead by the return of the spirit to a corpse.

* For further explanations compare the commentary on the three first Gospels, §§ 67, 14, 31.

But although it was necessary that this opinion should be accepted as a reality for a time, yet this acceptance was to be only temporary, as a means of leading men onward in the path of light and truth.

Such an opinion could, in fact, only be transitory ; for a miraculous conception would be contrary to the unvarying laws of nature which govern the earth. Consequently, that conception was merely apparent ; and Jesus, as the Apostle Paul declares, had neither father, mother, nor genealogy—a declaration in strict conformity with the words of Jesus himself : “ You are from the earth, but I am from heaven, and descended from heaven.”

On the other hand, Jesus himself disclaimed the divinity which human interpretations falsely attributed to him, by declaring that there is no God but one, and that his Father is greater than himself ; and the Apostle Paul, treading in the steps of his Master, emphatically declares the indivisible and exclusive divinity of the Father, in whom and from whom and to whom are all things.

Hence, as Jesus Christ was neither a man of our planet, nor a God possessing the divinity attributed to him by human interpretations, a New Revelation was needful to show men his true nature, and the meaning of the statements made by the letter of the former Revelations in regard to him.

In order to prepare men for what was thus to be revealed to them, the Hebrew, Angelic, and Apostolic Revelations, like the mission of Jesus, while adapted to the time in which they were made, contained, under the veil of the letter, the foundation and elements of the New Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, foretold by Christ as destined to be made when men, having passed through successive stages of development, should have become able to receive it.

If, examining the successive stages of intelligence and opinions among the Hebrews and other nations who received divine revelations, we follow the slow and laborious progress of the human mind in all the various departments of thought, first from the time of Moses to the appearance

of Christ, and next, until our own times, we shall bow with admiration and gratitude before the infinite wisdom of God, who has given to each era what it was able to bear; so that the human race, being guided by missionary spirits incarnated among them, and always superior to the masses, might advance gradually towards the truth in such a manner as to be progressively enlightened without being dazzled.

Thus men have always been led forward, first under the authority of the letter, with its mysteries and miracles; and next by the endeavour to free themselves from the bonds of the letter, through the action of reason and of freedom of thought, until at length, weary of their vain efforts to penetrate the mysteries and explain the miracles, they abandon themselves to doubt, incredulity, and negation. But the progress they have thus made has prepared them to receive the new light of the Spirit which giveth life, which offers them a simple and reasonable faith by explaining everything obscure in accordance with the laws of nature, now that blind faith, having borne its fruits according to the letter, has become insufficient. It is thus that God in his infinite wisdom prepared, through the missions of Moses and the Prophets among the Jews, and of missionary spirits incarnated among the Gentiles, for the advent of the Messiah, who, through his own higher work, and that of the Evangelists and Apostles, has gradually prepared the ground for the mission of the Spirit of Truth, which will lead men to the acquisition of eternal life; for that life consists, according to the declaration of Jesus himself, in knowing the Father, who is the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

That men in the past should take appearances for realities was both inevitable and useful under the veil of the letter. But the truth must now be revealed, for the ushering in of the new era, the era of the Christianity of Christ, through the New Revelation, which, by showing the natural causes of the events hitherto regarded as departures from the laws of nature, places the words pronounced by Jesus under the

veil of the letter, the actions and events of his earthly mission, and the objects and motives of the Hebraic and Apostolic dispensations, in luminous harmony with the progress and aspirations of the present day.


The explanation of the origin, nature, and authority of Jesus given by the New Revelation—showing him to have proceeded, like all the creatures of God, from the initial point of creation, to have passed without failure through all the stages of spirit-development, and thus to have attained, without sinning, the perfection of purity and wisdom that allowed of his appointment by God as the Founder, Protector, and Ruler of our globe, entrusted with the development and progress of the world, and of all its creatures in all the kingdoms of nature, as well as with that of our human race, which he is to lead to perfection—is in perfect accordance with the statement of Paul that he arose from the same principle as men, and therefore calls them brothers; that he is holy, innocent, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and perfect for ever; but that his Head is God the Father, whence all things draw their being, and who has made men for himself; the only God, than whom there is none other; the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, by whom all things were made, and through whom men are what they are. It is equally in accordance with the statements of Jesus, who called men his brothers, saying, “My God is your God,” yet adding, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” As solemnly proclaimed by him, his Father is greater than he; but he is, relatively to the earth and its inhabitants, the only Teacher and Master, and the only Son of God, as being King over all in purity and wisdom, and invested with unlimited powers, all things having been put into his hands by his Father.

Jesus having voluntarily assumed a fluidic body for the accomplishment of his earthly mission, he is really, as Paul asserted, “without father, mother, or genealogy, and his days had neither beginning nor end;” the appearance of Jesus upon the earth being a spirit-manifestation, either tangible or intangible according to the needs of the moment, and

this fluidic body being one which could neither be the object of sacrifice nor oblation by mortal death, though constituting his life to human eyes ; and it was this apparently human life, which he was able to lay down and take up again at pleasure, which enabled him to appear to men to die and to rise again, to cause his body to disappear from the tomb, while the stone which closed it was sealed ; to reappear with the same body to the women and to the disciples ; to disappear from the eyes of the two disciples whom he met on the road to Emmaus, while he was at table with them ; and to appear in the midst of the Apostles while the door of the room in which they met was closed for fear of the Jews.

It was with this fluidic body that he rose into the ethereal regions at the time of his ascension, before the eyes of the assembled disciples ; a body which he then finally laid aside, returning to his own order of being ; for he only assumed it for the necessities of his earthly mission, and had the power to assume it or to lay it aside at will.

The New Revelation, by the light it gives us in regard to God, Christ, and the creation and origin of the soul, prepares us to understand the words of the Apostle Paul : “ You are one body and one spirit, for you are all called to the same hope. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism ; and one God, the Father of all, who is above all, and extends his providence over all, and who is in you all.” It thus prepares men for unity of belief, by leading them to recognise that there is only one true faith—viz., God, One and Indivisible, the Uncreated Creator, who creates, but not by division of his essence ; the Father from whom all draw their being, and who has made us for himself : and Jesus Christ, a Spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, the Constructor and Ruler of the world, our only Lord, Teacher, and Master ; by whom everything relating to our earth was made—not by any creative power on his part, for God alone creates, but as God’s minister, having arranged its materials under direct divine inspiration, according to the immutable laws of nature which spring from the will of God. By him we are all that we are ; not that he gave us our being, for life proceeds from God



alone ; but through his guidance as the Director of the development and progress of spiritual essences and spirits, in accordance with natural law.

The spirits of the Lord who worked at the formation of our globe under the direction of Jesus, and who have since worked at its development and at the progress of all its creatures in all the kingdoms of nature, as well as at the progress and development of the human race, are what is meant by the term, collectively, "the Holy Spirit." They are our brothers, protectors, and guides, inspiring and assisting our physical, moral, and intellectual advancement. They are the organs of the Spirit of Truth, whether errant, or incarnated among men on a mission of light and truth. Humble, intelligent, active, and devoted missionaries, they raise themselves by aiding their brethren to advance.


The New Revelation teaches us that there is only one baptism—viz., the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire, which is granted by Jesus to all the sincere and well-meaning, whether they are aware of it or not, by giving them the aid and protection of spirit-helpers, who lead them to repentance and reparation of past wrong-doing, inspire them with the love of study, labour, and charity, and open to them paths of purification and progress by successive incarnations, which are at first expiatory and afterwards glorious, and thus aid their advance, through successive and progressive lives, towards sidereal perfection, the eternal life of fully purified spirits. When those who are now men shall have attained to this perfection, they will share in the purity and happiness of Jesus, and will approach, like him, the Fire of Omnipotence, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who dwells in inaccessible light, whom no man hath seen or can see ; and they will then become the direct ministers of his will and of his providential designs for universal progress, life, and harmony in infinity and eternity : but they will always continue to grow in knowledge and in happiness, because no created spirit, however advanced he may be, can ever equal God, who alone has possessed absolute perfection from all eternity.

The book we now offer, under the direction of the Spirits

of the Lord, to the consideration of our fellow-men, will show them that, whatever may be their opinions or external forms of worship, there is but one way of salvation for all mankind—viz., charity, which implies and includes justice and kindness. It is the basis of faith and the source of hope; for, as the Apostle Paul has said, it is the end of all the commandments, and (as John the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth said to me through a medium on June 24, 1861), "If Faith and Hope are sisters, they are both the daughters of Charity." Charity must be practised in every form, material, moral, and intellectual—the unassuming, enlightened, active, disinterested and devoted charity, which is so well described by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. xiii.).

In conclusion, we repeat again the momentous words of Jesus, "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Yes; eternal life consists in knowing the Father, who is the only true God, the Uncreated Creator of all that exists in the spiritual, fluidic, and material orders; the source of all power, the sole principle of life, intelligence, light, truth and progress, in whom all things in infinity and eternity "live, and move, and have their being," of whom, by whom, and in whom are universal knowledge, justice, charity, life, progress, and harmony; and in knowing Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. In other words, in the recognition of the true aim and meaning of his earthly mission, by which he came to teach men how to live and how to die, for the advancement of their spirit, and to show them the path which they must follow by walking in his steps, in the light of the great Messianic Revelation, explained in spirit and in truth, which is destined to be, through its predictions and promises, the source of all light, truth, and advancement. Progressively explained and developed by the Spirit of Truth, it will lead our planet and its purified and transformed people to the second advent of Jesus, predicted and promised by him, when he will come, in all his spirit-glory, as the visible sovereign of the transformed and glorified earth, to display the unveiled truth to those whom



he will have brought to the threshold of sidereal perfection, and whom he will continue to lead onward for ever in the track of his shining footsteps. For when his pupils have become pure spirits, Jesus, our elder Brother, who had attained to perfection before he laid the foundation of our globe—Jesus will always be superior to them in wisdom and in power, and will be for ever their friend and guide, advancing before them in the acquisition of universal knowledge, which is as boundless and inexhaustible as God himself, the Source, Container, and End of all things, in Infinity and in Eternity.

J. B. ROUSTAING.

PART I.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW, MARK AND LUKE,* COMMONLY CALLED THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS.

*It is the spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing ; the words
that I speak unto you are spirit and life.—JOHN VI. 63.*

The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.—2 CORINTH. iii. 6.

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 1-4.

The Gospels.

(1) Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, (2) Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word ; (3) It seemed good to me also, having paid careful attention to all these things from the beginning, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, (4) That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed. .

§ 1. The Evangelists, unconsciously to themselves, were inspired historical mediums, but were subject to the limitations of humanity, and each preserved his individual independence, notwithstanding the spiritual influence under which he wrote.

The intuition which aided them in their revelation was due to the divine inspiration communicated through superior spirits, but was received by the Evangelists according to their independent and fallible human nature. They thus recorded either what they had witnessed themselves or what they had heard from others, who, as Luke says, "had been eye-witnesses and ministers of the word from the beginning."

Man will not understand that, whatever the end to be

attained, it is needful to employ such human agencies as are available ; and that as these agencies are themselves imperfect, it is vain to look for anything faultless in human works.

Each Evangelist wrote from his own point of view ; and translators and interpreters have frequently mistaken the original meaning. Besides this, the words of the Apostles were preserved by oral tradition long before they were written down ; and the discrepancies which exist are partly owing to this cause. If you always make allowance for the modifying influence which humanity exerts on medianimity, you will possess the secret of these comparatively unimportant variations. In certain cases, which we shall point out to you, the Evangelists were purposely left free to follow their own judgment with respect to such portions of the narrative as were based on popular report, and which were intended to be explained and understood at the time of the New Revelation.

The discrepancies between the various Gospels are strong evidence in favour of their authenticity ; for if they had been falsified in any other way than by the errors of translators, nothing would have been easier than to make the whole four agree in all points. Although nothing human can be free from error, the variations in the Gospels are confined to unimportant details. They result from the narrators having preserved the independence of their natures, although aided by intuition ; and they do not affect any essential portion of the Messianic Revelation. They do not affect the perfect and immaculate purity of the origin of the Christ (even though not actually divine, in the strict sense of the word*) ; his mission of love and devotion ; his moral teaching, (which is not his doctrine, but the doctrine of Him who sent him) ; the eternal truths which he taught ; his predictions and promises ; the manner of his appearance and existence on the earth, which was purposely veiled by the letter of the Revelation, which the angel (or superior spirit) delivered to Mary and Joseph ; his humble, pure and blameless life,

* Refer to §§ 55, 56 for explanations on the spiritual ancestry of Jesus, and on the origin of the soul.

whether viewed from a human or from a spiritual standpoint ; the so-called "miracles" which he performed while living among men ; his shameful "death," the disappearance of his body from the sepulchre, while the stone which closed it was sealed ; his "resurrection," his appearances to the women and his disciples ; nor his final return to his true spiritual nature, at the time of his "ascension."

Thus the Gospel narratives are trustworthy, and each mutually completes and explains the others in its own way ; and the four together form the entire record of the Messianic Revelation.

Do not pay much attention to mere verbal contradictions and slight differences of detail, which are of secondary importance, and have no bearing on the Master's work. Take a broader view of the task which is assigned to you. You are called upon to reveal the true spiritual meaning of hitherto unknown mysteries ; to teach men "who is the Son ;" and to prepare them to know "who is the Father." You are called upon to reveal the Truth to all men as it should be understood in its broad features, without lingering over unimportant details.

Time is fleeting, and your hours are numbered. Do not waste time in useless delays, but concentrate your attention on those important facts which may alter the beliefs of men, or which have been misrepresented by tradition ; and do not trouble yourselves to criticize puerile details, which are only worthy of the attention of children and triflers.

The Gospel narratives consist of two very distinct portions, which must never be confounded. The first consists of the words spoken by the Master (his revelations), and of the actual record of his acts ; but the second was designed to reflect and repeat the impressions, opinions and interpretations of the men of the Messianic age, respecting the nature and character of these revelations and events, and is therefore coloured by their prejudices and traditions.

To avoid repetition, you had better place the corresponding verses of the three first Gospels together, and we will give you one commentary upon them. The events related

in the Gospels are loosely strung together, and are not arranged in strictly chronological order. In the separate commentary on the Gospel of John, you may refer, when necessary, to the explanations previously given on corresponding passages in the three first Gospels. You must follow our directions, and arrange the passages under our control.

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 5-25.

Prediction of the Birth of John.

(5) There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth, (6) And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the ordinances and the commandments of the Lord blameless. (7) And they had no child, because Elisabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in age. (8) And it happened that while he was officiating as a priest before God, in the order of his course, (9) According to the custom of the priesthood, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord, (10) And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. (11) And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. (12) And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him, (13) And the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. (14) And he shall be to thee joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. (15) For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. (16) And he shall turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. (17) And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. (18) And Zacharias said to the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years. (19) And the angel answering, said to him, I am Gabriel who stand in the presence of God, and am sent to speak unto thee, and to announce this good news to thee. (20) And behold thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak until the day when these things shall come to pass, because thou didst not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their due season. (21) And the people waited for Zacharias, and wondered that he tarried so long in the temple. (22) And when he came out, he could not speak to them, and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. (23) And it came to pass that when he had completed the days of his ministration, he departed to his own house. (24) And after those days, his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, (25) Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

§ 2. The birth of John was intended to arrest public attention from the first.

Elisabeth remained childless until it became part of her mission to become the mother of John. Her barrenness does not mean that she had passed the age of child-bearing fixed by the laws of your planet, but merely that she had hitherto been childless, as is implied by the expression applied to Elisabeth by the angel in speaking to Mary (v. 36), "she who is *called* barren."

Every occurrence in human life springs from causes antecedent to your present existence, for any fault committed in a previous incarnation must be followed by its natural consequences. Man is born and dies many times before arriving at the state of perfection which allows him the full enjoyment of his spiritual faculties when he has attained to perfect love and charity, and the knowledge of God and his works. He will then perceive the unveiled truth in the physical world, whether material or fluidic, and in the spiritual world, whether moral or intellectual, having acquired the knowledge of all that lives, moves or exists in the immensity of Creation. When the spirit has attained to the culminating point of sidereal perfection, the vastness of Creation still expands eternally before him, to be explored for ever in the pursuit of universal science.

Each succeeding existence is linked to those which have preceded it, and it frequently happens that spirits who have not been guilty of great crimes, accept missions on your earth, and, at the same time, accept also a chain of events which must be accomplished, but which cause them much suffering in their incarnate state.

Thus Elisabeth, being one of those spirits who desired to take part with Jesus in his work of regeneration, had accepted the lot of a *barren* woman (which was a reproach among the Jews) in order to render the birth of John more remarkable ; and Zacharias had likewise consented to live childless.

Although they had forgotten these obligations when incarnated, they had nevertheless undertaken them, and were bound by their consequences.

Do not imagine that each individual plant, or organized being has an attendant spirit specially appointed to watch over its reproduction. Spiritual agency exists indeed, but it operates in a general manner. The fluids surrounding you are distributed according to the needs of the plant rooted in the soil, or the man seeking to raise himself towards heaven; and the birth of each new being takes place only at its appointed period. If the pollen falls on a flower at a period unsuitable for fructification, it remains sterile; and so in other cases.

In the case of plants and animals, reproduction takes place at definite periods regulated by general laws. In the case of man, however, you have been taught that the spirit itself chooses the experiences of its future life. It does not construct its own body, but before being incarnated, it asks for a body suited to the experiences which it is about to undergo. It is consequently the will of the spirit which attracts or rejects the needful elements, prepared by the spirits entrusted with the formation of material bodies generally, who combine and condense the animal substances into bodies, and thus play their part, according to general laws, in the actions of incarnate spirits, in order that these bodies should be suited to the kind of experiences selected by those who are about to be incarnated amid the varying circumstances of human life.

When the spirit is about to continue its experiences, it asks either for material fecundity, or persistent sterility throughout its existence, or for temporary sterility or fecundity, at periods determined by the character of its desired experiences. Hence the spirit attracts or repels the principles needful for the character of its experiences from the very first; and, consequently, undesired births may take place, or persons may remain childless in spite of the wishes of the incarnate spirit. In such cases, spirit influence only exists in the sense that the results spring from the desire of the spirit at the time when it selected its experiences. As soon as the body is fitted for the experiences which await the spirit who is about to inhabit it, the guardian spirits

limit their action to a general supervision, and allow each experience to run its course in the order of events, for the fluids have now received their determinate direction.

When a spirit who has chosen to experience temporary sterility, accepts its body, it repels the principles requisite for fecundity for a given time, after which it attracts them, (according to the nature of the experiences which it has chosen) under the supervision of the guardian spirits. Thus, Zacharias, the husband of Elisabeth, had often prayed to God to take away the reproach from his house, and to give him a male child. But Elisabeth had asked for temporary barrenness, as part of her mission ; and consequently she remained childless until the time appointed.

Humanly speaking, the prayer of Zacharias was answered ; and from a spiritual point of view, the trial of sterility had ceased ; for John was born.

Zacharias was, unknown to himself, a seeing and hearing medium, which explains his seeing and conversing with the spirit.

He was condemned to silence, not because he doubted the truth of what he had heard, but in order that this temporary infirmity might serve to corroborate the reality of the prediction.

He who reserves his opinion on what is unknown to him, is wise.

We must call your special attention to the words of the angel concerning Elisabeth. They were afterwards repeated and confirmed by public opinion. In truth, Elijah was John, and John had been Elijah.

When highly exalted spirits desire to elevate mankind, they often assume a form which appears mean in the eyes of men in regard to social conditions ; and their devotion can manifest itself in all situations. The great spirits of the Lord manifest themselves either by incarnations or apparitions according to their degree of elevation, and their spiritual nature. Such manifestations are rare ; but there are certain periods when they are necessary, both on your planet and on others. There are many

planets higher than yours, where more advanced spirits still require to have their aspirations after the good and the beautiful rekindled when they grow feeble.

In future, you may recognize the rank of such a spirit by his conduct as a man. His life will be spotless, and the love of God and the neighbour will regulate all his actions, and govern all his thoughts. His childhood will be gentle, exhibiting none of those evil tendencies which usually appear in children.

His youth will be laborious, and all material instincts will be subjugated by the love of work and progress. His manhood will be blameless, unsoiled by any abuse or excess ; and his old age will be worthy of all veneration as the reflection of a life that has been blameless in the sight of Heaven.

He will be indulgent towards all weaknesses, will lend his aid and support to all human deficiencies, and will wait patiently for the hour of his deliverance.

By these signs, O beloved friends, you may perceive that a superior spirit has descended among you, to give a fresh impetus to human progress.

§ 3. It has been authoritatively asserted that human science can terminate sterility by an appropriate regimen.

Do not some patients die notwithstanding medical aid, while others recover? Why is this? Because one has reached his appointed term, while the other has not yet finished his career.

Has not the treatment which, humanly speaking, has proved successful in one case of sterility failed in another? Why so? Because the sterility of one patient has reached its term, while that of the other is destined to continue either through life, or till it is removed by change of conditions and circumstances.

Do not suppose that there is any fatalism or predestination in these cases ; but attribute them entirely to the choice and duration of experiences. Birth and death are alike regulated by the immutable laws of nature according to

universal harmony. The moment of death is only inevitable when man has reached the limit which these laws have fixed as the irrevocable end of human life, beyond which man's free will is powerless to extend it ; but this free will can arrest the course of life at some definite period between birth and this natural limit, which, in fact, is but seldom attained. Life is generally terminated sooner, either on account of the resolutions made by the spirit before incarnation respecting the selection, duration, and termination of experiences, and the length of life, or by the use and abuse which men make of their earthly existence. Within these limits it is thus left to your free will to close your life at a definite period, conformably with the laws of nature, either by the choice of experiences in the spiritual state before incarnation, or by your actions during your earthly existence.

Thus, when a man dies, notwithstanding medical treatment, he dies either because his time has come, or because he has reached the natural period of human life, or because he has reached the limit to which his use of his free will has restricted him. In the first case, he dies conformably with the determination of his spirit before incarnation ; in the second, his life has reached the longest term allowed by the good use which he has made of his earthly existence ; and in the third, he has either made a bad use of his life or has neglected the precautions needful to enable his body to last till the end of his experiences.*

In the case of birth, nothing is inevitable except the times and conditions fixed for its occurrence by the natural laws of your planet. But the free will of man or woman may form a temporary or permanent obstacle to birth, by the resolutions of the spirit before incarnation. They may then either avoid the operation of the laws entirely, when they have chosen to experience permanent sterility during life ; or for a time only, conformably to the previous

* What is said above respecting the moment of death is fully explained in the section on the Fifth Commandment of the Decalogue, and should be read in connection with it.

determinations of the spirit, and to favourable circumstances.

Thus, when a barren woman has become a mother, (humanly speaking) in consequence of medical treatment, it is because she had resolved, before incarnation, that her sterility should be only temporary ; and it has terminated as arranged beforehand.

But the treatment fails in other instances, when a woman has resolved before incarnation that her sterility should be permanent, or when the time and circumstances fixed for its cessation have not yet arrived.

Your science cannot effect anything in your material life which is contrary to the laws of nature and incarnation, or to the selection and duration of experiences. If a spirit has chosen to experience permanent sterility nothing can terminate it. But if it has resolved either to remain barren or become fertile, according to circumstances, or to its own deserts, its human future may become modified. For example, a spirit may have neglected its duties as the father or mother of a family, and have firmly resolved to repair the wrong which it has done. But it is unwilling to take the responsibility upon itself without being certain of possessing the needful perseverance ; or else it has desired to be condemned to wait for a time, that the birth of the long-desired child may make it still more precious. In such a case, it will depend on the resolution and progress of the spirit itself, whether it will become a parent ; and it is then enabled to adopt means which may effect the accomplishment of its desires.

It is only in such a case as this, that science may assist the spirit to gain its end, when its acts or surrounding circumstances (acting independently of its external wishes, but conformably with its spirit-resolutions) combine to terminate its barrenness, by aiding in the development of the material conditions necessary to fruitfulness. And although sterility would then cease without the aid of science the study of these conditions is nevertheless useful.

Do not imagine that the researches of science are value-

less; for science is one of the agents employed to further the designs of Providence. The researches of science will result in man's discovery of facts previously regarded as secrets or mysteries of nature; and thus those who have chosen various experiences enable it in the course of time and progress to confirm the results and conquests to which it has attained.

You are now prepared to understand that the mystery of generation will one day be understood; but only by experimental study and perseverance. If you would make these researches easy, encourage those who desire to mitigate the sufferings of the incarnate spirits, whose mission it is to furnish opportunities for these studies, and thus will unhoped-for successes encourage those who are engaged in these profound researches. In the course of the purification of your planet and its humanity, man will finally succeed in acquiring a knowledge of the fluidic combinations which compose matter. He will be able to materialize the fluids like a new Prometheus, but, being more prudent and submissive, will not attempt to animate them, leaving to the Creator the task of vivifying them. Do not misunderstand us; we do not tell you that man will be able to manipulate the fluids at will, so as to condense them, and construct material bodies like yours, as the potter moulds the clay into an image of himself; but that he will be enabled to comprehend, regulate, and attract to himself the fluids and await the result in the formation of bodies. This is the case in higher planets than yours, where the needful fluids are drawn together only by a double and uniform thought; and this will take place in your planet also when it has reached the same degree of elevation.

§ 4. What is the exact import of the words dictated respecting the doubt felt by Zacharias: "He is a wise man who reserves his judgment about what is unknown?"

It is prudent not to adopt every new idea blindly, or to accept all maxims as good which are preached to you with more or less eloquence. It is needful to examine every new idea carefully, not with the bodily eyes, but with those of

the mind ; and to comprehend, not with the ears of the body, but with those of the spirit. Man should reason and study, and take everything into consideration ; and we therefore thought it needful to explain that Zacharias was not struck dumb because he doubted. He merely requested a proof that the vision was not a delusion, or hallucination of his own mind ; and he consequently received a proof, and not a chastisement. Could God hold a man criminally responsible for his ignorance ?

§ 5. How must we understand the words of Zacharias : (v. 18) "How shall I know the truth of what you tell me, for my wife and I are old," in connection with the angel's reply (vv. 19 and 20), "Because you did not believe in my words, which shall be fulfilled in due season ?"

Zacharias simply asked for a proof, without either doubting or denying ; but his asking for a proof implied that he did not believe that the event would really happen, solely on the authority of the announcement.

§ 6. How are we to understand that the angel's words respecting John were subsequently repeated and confirmed by public opinion ?

The Jews generally considered that John was Elijah who had returned among them ; and it was on this account that John was questioned on the subject in the course of his mission, and that Jesus repeated the words of the Pharisees to his disciples.

Are we to understand v. 17 to imply that the spirit of Elijah was about to be reincarnated in the child of Elisabeth and Zacharias ?

Most certainly.

Was it not intended that this hidden sense should only be fully explained at a later period as involving the principle and consequences of the law of reincarnation ?

Yes ; but this hidden meaning was contained in it from the first.

§ 7. How are we to understand that the form assumed by exalted spirits, who desire to aid humanity, often appears mean to men, according to human prejudices ?

You have only to consider the position of Jesus in the eyes of the world. What was his social position ; and what

was that of his faithful and zealous disciples and apostles ? O men, do you not still find examples of touching devotion among those whom you regard as belonging to the most degraded classes ? And do you not sometimes find among them a nobility of soul which your pride would desire to behold only among those whom you call the higher classes, whereas, (shame upon them !) it is generally among these that you find the least.

§ 8. What is meant by the words, "He will drink neither wine nor strong drink" ?

Men devoted to the service of God were restricted to a certain course of life, among which was the obligation of abstaining from spirituous or fermented beverages. The Hebrews frequently dedicated a firstborn child to the Lord, especially when they had long desired one ; just as many mothers among yourselves dedicate their children to the Virgin.

Please explain v. 15 : "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb."

Spirit-teachings have already informed you that when the spirit is about to incarnate itself anew, to pass through fresh experiences, it suffers greatly from anxiety as to the result, and these sufferings increase till the moment of birth, and continue, though gradually decreasing, during the first period of material infancy.

After a spirit has expiated its faults, by appropriate moral sufferings in the errant state, it is necessary for it to repair the past. It chooses the experiences which it thinks most fitting for its advancement ; but these experiences always appear terrible to it ; and it feels its weakness in the past so acutely that it mistrusts its strength in the future. Then begins the trouble and anxiety of which we spoke. It is definite at first, but afterwards increases in intensity, and lessens in clearness in proportion as the material body in course of formation drags the spirit nearer and nearer to its prison, with which it is connected by a fluidic link, which binds it from the moment of conception. As soon as it is

born, the spirit is completely linked to the body, and is no longer able to separate from it. It then commences its experiences, and undergoes the sufferings designed to alter its character. It no longer feels the anxiety of the first moments, in consequence of its senses being deadened by matter until this matter has become sufficiently developed to allow the spirit gradually to regain a *relative* liberty.

Do you suppose that it can be the same in the case of a purified spirit who assumes this fleshy covering only as one might assume a uniform to enable him to serve his country better?

In such a case the spirit endures the trammels of the flesh with joy ; and as long as the links between the body and the spirit are not tightened, he is free to survey the greatness of the work committed to his charge, and the confidence which his Master has shown in him, and his joy is great ! He is not entirely subjected to the yoke of the flesh from the earliest period, but preserves a certain amount of independence. He suffers no preliminary anxiety ; but only from the torpor occasioned by matter at the moment of birth, when the body contracts the spirit, until it gradually becomes sufficiently developed to allow the spirit to recover a relative amount of liberty. John was "filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb ;" that is, being a very elevated spirit, he attracted his equals and superiors around him.

§ 9. What is meant by the Holy Spirit?

During the Hebrew period and at the time of the earthly mission of Jesus, it was a familiar expression, and implied both the manifestation of God himself by any act, and the divine inspiration, the "breath" of God Himself.

When they wished to express that a man was inspired by God, they said "he was filled with the Holy Spirit ;" or "the Holy Spirit was in him ;" or "he was driven by the Spirit ;" or "he was moved by the Spirit of God."

This expression was also used in speaking of Jesus, in accordance with the ideas of the time and people. They took him for a man like themselves, and were ignorant of

his nature and origin ; and they were consequently unable to understand how he could be so superior to all human weakness, without being "filled with the Holy Spirit," or inspired by God, like the prophets.

In times subsequent to the mission of Jesus, and according to the Catholic Church, the Holy Spirit was regarded as an individual part of God himself. They considered God to be the Supreme Intelligence, ruling over mankind. One fraction had assumed the human form, and had descended visibly among men ; another fraction was the intelligence and divine inspiration which was communicated to men, and inspired them ; and which required to assume a material form to become visible to their eyes.

These false interpretations were based upon a mixture of Hebrew and Pagan notions, which were partially theistic, combined with a confused recollection of Spiritist ideas of which some traces had been preserved by tradition, and interpreted by the imagination of men according to their necessities.

From the Spiritist standpoint, and according to the true teaching laid open to all by the New Revelation, the Holy Spirit was not, and is not, an individual spirit ; but is a figurative expression representing the totality of pure, superior, and good spirits.

This sacred phalanx is the instrument and minister of God, and is one and indivisible in the hierarchy of moral and intellectual elevation. It is eternal and infinite, and sheds its light everywhere, without ever being divided. The pure spirits alone receive inspiration and direction immediately from God, which they transmit to the superior spirits, through whom it descends to the good spirits, according to the degrees of the spiritual scale ; and lastly to you.

This holy company executes and superintends the inspiration and will of God in the physical, intellectual and moral universe, according to immutable and eternal laws. It watches over organization, the functions and fulfilment of life, and the universal harmony and progress in space of the more or less material or fluidic worlds, throughout the

whole universe. It watches over all spirits who are gifted with free will, whether they are errant, incarnated, or otherwise incorporated, as well as over all other beings, in all the kingdoms of nature.

This sacred phalanx is the true providence of God, who is the Father of all which exists ; and it manifests his justice, goodness, and infinite mercy throughout the spiritual worlds in space, and in all the planets according to their various degrees of moral and intellectual elevation. Thus, such expressions as “filled with the Holy Spirit,” imply to be aided, inspired, or guided by the Spirits of the Lord whom every incarnate spirit attracts to himself according to the degree of his moral and intellectual elevation, and the nature and importance of the mission or the work which he has to accomplish.

Jesus was a perfect spirit, and pure among the purest of those who work under his guidance to forward the destiny, development, and progress of your planet and its humanity, and direct their course. The origin of his purity and perfection rests in the obscurity of past eternities ; but he is the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet, and your Master and ours. He did not act under any external influence, but by the power of his own will ; but it might be said that he was “driven by the Spirit,” in the sense that his elevation and purity enabled him to approach the Source of Omnipotence, and thus to receive direct divine inspirations.

§ 10. Did the angel appear to Zacharias (v. 11) in a human form, as the Hebrews represented ?

Yes ; the Hebrews pictured the angels to themselves as clothed in white, and illuminated by rays flowing from an invisible source. They sometimes added wings, to teach the people that they could traverse space.

The apparitions which have appeared at different ages and at different times, have always obeyed the same law, by the spirit assuming that form which was best fitted to arrest the attention of the seer, or to remind him of what he desired to present to his sight.

§ 11. What is the meaning of the words (v. 11) "I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God."

These words do not imply that the spirit was always in the presence of God, like a human minister who awaits the orders of a king. He was one of those exalted spirits who are the messengers of God, and consequently in constant communion with him. The divine inspiration flowed to the spirit as that of your guardian angel flows to you, allowing for the difference of spiritual natures and relationships.

§ 12. How did Zacharias become dumb?

By fluidic action directed by the will of the angel. There is a spiritual magnetism resembling human magnetism; and thus the tongue of Zacharias was weighed down with fluids which caused a kind of temporary paralysis, just as the magnetiser acts upon the limb of a subject when he wishes to render it immovable. Magnetism, which you still understand very imperfectly, is a property of our nature; and your fluids act more or less powerfully according as they are more or less impeded or altered by the action of the flesh.

In the spirit, the fluids act freely, and you are more or less susceptible to our influence according to your degree of materiality, just as the subject is more or less impressionable, or clairvoyant under the influence of his magnetizer. This explanation is sufficient to explain the nature of all reputed "miracles;" and it is for you to apply it in special cases.

§ 13. Why did Elisabeth hide herself for five months (v. 45) when the reproach of her barrenness, according to Hebrew prejudices, had been removed?

As an act of humility, and thus to prolong the reproach which rested on her by her own free will.

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 26-38.

The Annunciation.

(26) And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, (27) To a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David ; and the virgin's name was Mary. (28) And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, O highly favoured one, the Lord is with thee ; blessed art thou among women. (29) And when she saw him, she was confounded at his speech, and considered what manner of salutation this should be. (30) And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. (31) And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. (32) He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest : and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David : (33) And he shall reign over the house of Jacob through the ages, and there shall be no end of his kingdom. (34) And Mary said to the angel, How shall this be, since I know not a man ? (35) And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall rest upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also the holy thing which shall be born shall be called the Son of God. (36) And behold thy kinswoman Elisabeth hath also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren, (37) For no decree shall be impossible with God. (38) And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; let it be to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

§ 14. During the time that man has dwelt on earth, he has not always been qualified to comprehend the same language ; and what he was fitted to receive, has been given to him during each passing age. Must not man be prepared for the reception of truth, and must not every age be addressed in language which is fitted to its needs, and which can be listened to and understood ?

Men, do not forget that you were as little children when Jesus descended among you to show you the right way, and to lay the foundations of your regeneration ; and you are not much farther advanced now. Therefore, bow down reverently before the infinite wisdom which overrules and directs your progress, through Christ, your Master, who is the protector and ruler of your planet and its humanity. You will gradually receive light and truth, and be led towards perfection from age to age.

The advent of Jesus was announced to Mary, and afterwards to Joseph, as effected by the operation of the Holy

Spirit, and as the act of God himself, because the Jews regarded the Holy Spirit as the divine intelligence manifesting itself by some action. But the manner of the birth of Jesus was intended to remain a secret during the whole period of his earthly mission.

Mary confided this revelation to those disciples of Jesus who had followed him most faithfully, and whose virtue was most assured. They were faithful to the inspirations of their guides, and perceived that such a revelation would lead men to question the purity of Mary, and the origin of her son. They did not venture to impart it to the multitude till after the earthly mission of Jesus was accomplished. The belief in the divinity of Jesus was only accepted after his return to spirit-life at the time of his "ascension." His faithful disciples then understood his words relating to God "his father" literally, and thought that his origin and stainless life formed the only explanation of the surprising events called "miracles," which continually forced themselves upon their attention.

It was intended that men should regard Jesus, during his earthly mission, as the son of Joseph and Mary, and a man like themselves. The disciples and the multitude regarded him as a prophet, clothed with material humanity, like the ancient Prophets under the Law. The chief priests, the scribes, the Pharisees and their followers considered that he was an impostor, because they thought that in calling himself the Son of God, he arrogated divinity to himself, and asserted himself to be God.

It was therefore intended that all should regard Mary as the mother of Jesus; both when he was considered to be a man like yourselves, and subsequently, when he was considered to be God incarnate, born of a virgin by the operation of the Holy Spirit. It was therefore necessary first to materialize all the facts to render them accessible to matter; and afterwards, when the earthly mission of Jesus was finished, to idealize matter by ascribing a divine origin to him, that men should accept his mission, and submit to his laws, on account of his supposed divinity.

Man is proud ; and men would not have been satisfied if a spirit of the Lord had descended to redeem them. They required a God ; and those who shed the blood of bulls and lambs needed a sacrifice of flesh and blood. They could not have comprehended the boundless devotion of the radiant spirit who descended among you to set you an example of the life which you should lead in preparation for eternity. Nor would they have realized or been moved by the sufferings of Jesus, if they had not been represented as physical.

You must remember that the Jews were in direct contact with the Romans. The ideas and customs of the conquerors always more or less permeate those of the conquered nation ; and in this instance, polytheistic ideas existed side by side with monotheism. The life and actions of Jesus during his earthly mission ; his " death " and " resurrection," the events which followed, combined with the interpretations which men put upon his sayings, had already created a profound impression. After his mission was accomplished, his disciples divulged what the angel, or spirit, had announced to Mary and Joseph respecting the " miraculous " birth of Jesus, of a virgin, through the influence of the Holy Spirit.

As these events were all considered to be " supernatural," " miraculous," or " divine," the Jews felt the necessity of multiplying their divinity, and yet attempting to combine unity with plurality ; and this gave rise to the human dogma of the Three Persons.

At that time, as at present, materialism crushed the world under a leaden weight which would ultimately have destroyed it. It consequently became necessary to awaken the spirit, and give it strength to struggle with matter. For this, the world required an immaterial example (immaterial, that is, with respect to the divinity which was ascribed to it), for its materiality in the eyes of men only existed for a limited time, and as a necessary means of communication.

The " miracle," humanly speaking, consists in the entrance of this example into your world ; for it appears to men like a violation of natural law. But there was no " miracle," for

the will of God is immutable, and He never alters the natural laws which He has established from all eternity.

We will now explain this as far as your limited human intelligence is able to receive it. The "birth" was effected by the appropriation of the laws which govern the superior worlds to the fluids of your planet.

Mary was a superior and very pure spirit, who had accepted a sacred mission on your earth to aid in preparing for the regeneration of its inhabitants. She was spiritually in communion with the spirits of the Lord ; but was subject like yourselves to the law of material human incarnation. She was also a seeing and hearing medium, for she saw the angel, and heard his prediction. Her intelligence was dimmed by her material body, which prevented her from recollecting her mission ; and this will sufficiently explain why she questioned the angel respecting the possibility of his prediction being fulfilled ; for neither Mary nor any other person were intended to understand the spiritual origin of her son.

According to the traditions of the Jews, and the interpretations which they put upon the Old Testament, they believed that God himself communicated directly with men, and that the Holy Spirit was the intelligence of God manifested by some action. Hence the angel replied to Mary and then to Joseph that this birth was caused by the operation of the Holy Spirit ; an answer which was appropriate to the intelligence and necessities of the age. It was therefore understood in connection with the events which were about to take place, and prepared men for the teachings of a new and later revelation when they were fitted to receive them.

At that period men awaited a temporal chieftain who should revive the glory of their nation, and restore their national freedom and independence. They required a chief who should depart so far from the human programme that they should understand that his kingdom was not of this world ; and they needed a sacrifice to offer to that terrible God whom they supposed to take pleasure in holocausts. In order that this sacrifice should be great enough for those who

were not allowed to sacrifice men to their God, they sacrificed himself to himself.* The importance of man was enhanced, and his duty towards God appeared greater when, having taken Jesus during his earthly mission for a man like the ancient prophets, they supposed him afterwards to be God Himself, in consequence of his "death," "resurrection," and "miracles;" and the publication of the revelation which the angel had made to Mary and Joseph.

It would have been dangerous to reveal the secrets of the other world to these men. They had not strength enough to keep them from danger in communicating with the invisible world, or to receive and sustain the revelation of the principles and consequences of the natural law of Reincarnation. They had trembled so long under the iron rod of Moses that the paternal God, who was always ready to pardon, would have appeared so lenient that they would have made no effort to improve themselves. A Spiritual Redeemer would have made no appeal to their senses; they were so material that they required matter, although it was an ideal matter, which might gradually prepare them for a spiritual life, and lead them to it by easy gradations. Time is older now by nearly twenty centuries, during which successive re-incarnations have led to expiation, reparation, and progress, and have prepared you to understand the spiritual life, to which you are now to be gradually conducted. The letter is needful for matter, but the spirit is necessary for the intellect.

It is now time to reveal the spiritual origin of Jesus. The

* I may, perhaps, be allowed to quote here, an obscure passage from Thorpe's translation of the Icelandic Edda containing the same expression :

"I know that I hung,
On a wind-rocked tree,
Nine whole nights,
With a spear wounded,
And to Ódin offered,
Myself to myself,
On that tree
Of which no one knows
From what root it springs."
The High One's Lay, v. 140 (Transl.).

letter has borne its fruits, and now it killeth, and must be replaced by the spirit which giveth life.

The appearance of Jesus among men was not an event contrary to the laws of nature. The way is open for you to investigate these laws with the humility due from a creature to its Creator ; advance, and we will aid you.

You are aware that there are inferior and superior worlds ; material and fluidic worlds.

The spirit raises itself above material instincts in proportion to its purity ; but it abandons itself to its animal propensities according to its nearness to the primitive incarnations. It is the same with all the necessities of material existence, which change and even disappear in proportion to the increasing purity of the spirit.

The needs of the flesh, and consequently the laws of reproduction become modified and purified in proportion to the purity of the worlds. The contact of matter to produce matter is one of the conditions connected with your inferiority, and only exists in the material worlds, to which yours still belongs.

In the higher fluidic worlds, the law of reproduction is based upon the will, which draws the appropriate principles to the family where the will-power is exerted, by a kind of magnetic attraction.

The spirit appears on such a planet by fluidic incarnation, or rather by incorporation. When it reaches the planet it finds the elements needful for its incorporation, and incorporates itself by this means in the family appointed to train it. The will and desire of the parents attract it ; the elements necessary for incorporation attach themselves to the perisprit, combine with it, and form a body suited to the planet, but which may be relatively compared with yours.

The ties between parents and children in such worlds are stronger than with you, being understood by all to their fullest extent, and are not liable to be weakened or sundered.


In such worlds there is neither male nor female in the sense in which you understand these expressions on your earth. The instincts are subject to some variations, but as

they have no relation to your material senses, it would be both difficult and useless to endeavour to explain what you could not comprehend. We will only say that difference of sex exists from a moral or fluidic standpoint. This difference is owing to that which exists in the nature and properties of fluids, and in their action in the state of incarnation or incorporation. That which is moral is always connected with that which is physical in all spheres ; and the fluids serve to express the feelings and properties of the spirit. Have you not an illustration of this, although a material one, among yourselves ? Is not the incarnate spirit subject to the influence of matter, which is nothing but thickened and solidified fluid, as the ice on your rivers is a concentration of the light vapour which evaporates in the rays of the sun ? In these high worlds, Love (a word which is so profaned among you) attains a high development, but always under purified conditions.

The mirror of the spirit's past unfolds before its memory in proportion to its increasing purity. A pure spirit is one who has attained to sidereal perfection, and is consequently not subject to any incarnation on any planet whatever. Such a spirit alone has perfect knowledge to control all the fluids. He also preserves complete liberty and independence, and is fully acquainted with his origin, whatever may be the perisprit or fluidic body which he assumes and adapts to the regions which he traverses. When he visits a planet, he assumes a perisprit adapted to it, which he can take up, lay aside, or reassume by maintaining its constituent principles always ready to disperse or to reunite, according to the circumstances and requirements of his high mission.

Remember what Jesus said respecting the body which he had assumed, and which constituted his life in the eyes of men : " I lay down my life to reassume it ; no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord ; I have power to quit it, and I have power to reassume it " (John x. v. 18).

Jesus could have constructed the perisprit or tangible fluidic body which he assumed when he appeared in your world under the aspect of an infant, by simply exerting his



will, and attracting round him the necessary fluids ; but Mary, before her incarnation, and purely from love and devotion, had asked to participate in his work by forming his perisprit through the influence of her own. Her co-operation was accepted, but she had forgotten it herself, for the conditions of human incarnation did not permit her to remember it. At the appointed period, her ardent desire to fulfil the divine mission which had been revealed to her by the angel, led to an emanation of her perispritic fluids. This sympathetic radiation attracted the requisite fluids, but the unconscious action of Mary would have been of no avail, had it not been aided by the will of him who was about to descend among you. It was the will of Jesus himself which constructed the tangible perisprit which became a body adapted to your planet, and relatively similar to your own. This was almost material ; for Jesus constructed it of the surrounding fluids of which your own bodies are formed.

Do not forget that the spirit adapts its perisprit to the regions which it visits, and that your earth is one of the inferior worlds ; consequently, the tangible elements would unite so much the more easily in proportion to the greater power of the spirit.

Human science laughs at everything which it cannot understand ; but we assure you that the human perisprit, especially in its tangible condition, is semi-material. Has science discovered any means by which it can compare the fluids which surround you with those of other planets ? Has any scientific man succeeded in descending to the inferior planets, and felt the air which surrounds them suffocating him with its weight, blinding his eyes by its density, and looking like a dense fog resting upon everything around ? Has he ascended to the higher regions, and felt the dizziness which the rarity of the air would cause him ? Has he felt his sight expanded by the aid of superincumbent layers of air, and able to pierce to distances which he could not calculate, and to perceive objects on a scale which your telescopes could never unfold to him ? What is the cause of such differences ? Simply that the layers of fluids are

appropriate to your requirements. You say you know this, but you do not comprehend the causes, nor seek to understand the effects. The human perispit, which is tangible, is semi-material in comparison with you, just as steam is semi-liquid, and smoke is semi-ethereal.

As compared with your natures, the body of the inhabitants of the superior worlds resembles the human perispit of your planet. It is a fluidic body, but if you were able to see it, it would appear material to you.

The perispritic body of Jesus was incomparably more material than that of a superior spirit, but there was a still greater difference between his body and yours. In some respects it greatly resembled the body of man in the superior worlds, being composed of the same elements, but it was modified and solidified by means of the human or animalized fluids which were needed to make it visible and tangible to you, in accordance with the will of Jesus, and the necessities of his earthly mission. It thus presented all the outward appearance of a human body.

Let not man deny the possibility of these facts, because he cannot yet understand and explain what is beyond the material laws of his nature.

We will not say, like those who explain everything which they cannot understand, by one invariable formula, "Everything is possible with God;" but we say: What man ignorantly regards as a deviation from immutable law, is not even a derangement of the laws of the universe, but an application of them. When man has overcome the difficulties which prevent his raising himself in space; when he has succeeded in analyzing the superincumbent layers of air at the elevations to which he will one day attain; and when he understands the properties and effects of fluids, he will find that what is now mocked and ridiculed will become an established fact, which will be analyzed by science. Scientific men will then wonder that these mighty agencies have not always been subject to their control, just as they wonder now that electricity has not always been in use; although, while they admit its visible effects, they have not yet dis-

covered its causes ; for the labour of each day is sufficient for itself.

Supposed deviations from the immutable laws of nature are not even derangements, but rather applications of these laws. You must not believe that it is impossible to produce effects on your planet similar to those which occur in the superior planets, but these effects, though originating in the same principles, are nevertheless modified as regards the sphere in which they take place.

It is true that fluidic incarnations, identical with those which occur in Jupiter, and in many other superior worlds of greater or less elevation, would be a derangement of established laws which nothing ever modifies ; but a similar kind of incarnation, modified by the use of your fluids, would be a connecting link between two degrees of the scale. It would be an adaptation of law, and not a derangement.

We enter into these particulars to remove all lurking doubts respecting the possibility of what we assert. We do not blame the incredulity which such new ideas are likely to inspire in man, but we wish to reassure those whom our words might unsettle.

It follows that there was a modification of law. The fluids suited to incarnation or incorporation in the superior worlds, but invisible to you, were materialized, and rendered opaque to human sight by the addition of fluids adapted to the construction of your bodies, and thus the superior fluids were adapted to the inferior planet on which you dwell.

What is there that you can object to in this idea, when you admit the phenomena of temporary tangibility which have occurred at all periods of your planet, and have presented every appearance of the physical human body to your eyes, and, in some rare cases, have simulated human life and speech ?

When this fluidic combination can sometimes be effected by spirits of your own order, is it so incredible that it might be effected to a much greater extent by the powerful will of a superior spirit ?

Is the lapse of time which you find it so difficult to measure perceptible to us, and do we reckon myriads of eternities, as you reckon the seconds of your existence?

Do you think it impossible that a perfect spirit like Jesus should be able to materialize the perispritic fluids of the superior worlds, and add and adapt the earthly fluids of which your bodies are composed to produce a tangible perispritic body, suited to his earthly mission, which should apparently represent the faculties and phases of your humanity. Remember that he was thoroughly acquainted with the action of all the fluids in space, and with all their properties, effects, combinations, transformations and uses, as well as with all the secrets of universal life and harmony, both in the superior worlds (even the highest) and in the inferior worlds, including your own ; and with the formation, production, and characteristics of all their inhabitants.

This phenomenon is at present unique in the annals of your planet, but will be repeated when the time has come. It will then be better understood by men who have sufficiently advanced both in the knowledge of eternal truths, and in love, humility, and unselfishness. You will not stand alone in taking this view of the nature of Jesus ; for when this book is published, many who are too timid to promulgate a new idea, will rally round you, and confirm our statements by revelations which they have received themselves.

This was revealed, as it were, to children twenty centuries ago ; but can you suppose that you yourselves have yet arrived at years of discretion, O poor philosophers, whose wisdom consists in shaking to its foundation an edifice which you are powerless to replace, because it is insufficient for the needs of the age ?

Jesus was not born of man, and no perishable matter entered into the completeness of his perfection. Let those understand who have ears to hear, and let those who deny seek to comprehend. Jesus was a perfect spirit, who had never fallen, and belonged to the small minority who have worked steadily at their progress, without departing from the straight path pointed out to them by their guides, and have

thus attained to perfection. Thus, the origin of the perfection of Jesus is lost in the darkness of bygone eternities ; and he who watched over the formation and progress of your world as its protector and ruler, descended among you to set you an example of love, charity, and devotion.

But you must not forget that every one who is clothed in flesh, and subject to the law of material incarnation like yourselves, is fallible. Jesus was too pure to assume the garb of the guilty, and his spiritual nature was incompatible with a material incarnation, such as you undergo.

Jesus entered your world under a tangible spiritual appearance. The spirit assumed all the appearance of a body, and the perisprit which surrounded it was rendered more tangible, so as to create as complete an illusion as was necessary ; but Jesus, a pure spirit among the purest of those who work under his direction at the progress and the fulfilment of the destinies of your planet and its humanity, always remained a spirit. Observe that as he was elevated above all the laws relating to incarnate spirits, he had a perfect knowledge of his origin, and the certainty of his future ; which is alone sufficient to enable you, as Spiritists, to understand that he was not subject to the laws of incarnation in the same way as yourselves.

Jesus was not subject to any of the material necessities of human existence. But he conformed to them in appearance for the sake of example, as we shall explain in speaking of this emblematic figure of Jesus, and of the Temptation. The body which clothed him was only a premature example of the human organism, as it will exist in future ages in some parts of your planet, and as it now exists in the more advanced planets, except that the power of dispersing or reconstructing the tangible perisprit, or perispritic body at will, which Jesus possessed, belongs only to the pure spirits.

Let the materialists clothe Jesus with a robe of flesh like yours ; they would do well if they could equal him, but they will never succeed in this unhappy age. Let the Deists deny the divinity of Jesus, for thus they draw nearer to Spiritism. The time has now come to proclaim the truth, and lay the

foundations of a simple and rational faith. God is indeed the sole Creative Power who governs the whole universe. God is the one sole universal but undivided Principle ; He is the Creator, but He does not create by dividing his essence, for God is One. But you may and ought to call Jesus "his well-beloved son," and "our divine model;" for he is divine as being the direct agent of the Almighty. Jesus is the greatest essence after God, but he is not the only spiritual essence of the same degree, for every planet has a spirit attached to it who was its founder, and is its infallible protector and ruler, being constantly in direct communion with God, and receiving the divine inspiration immediately from him. He is also unfallen in a sense which we will explain presently.

None of you, and none of us, your spirit-guides, can say that we have never fallen ; but we may all hope to share in the purity and happiness of Jesus, by perseverance in well-doing, and by the constant study of eternal truths.

Our Father is just and good, and we are his prodigal children. Let us then return to the Father's house ; hasten, O hasten, dearly-loved brethren, for the Divine Model has rekindled his torch, which the malignant vapours of your world had dimmed, and it burns with a brighter radiance. Quicken your steps, for it is growing late, and your Father is standing on the threshold to welcome you with open arms.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN,

With the concurrence of the Apostles.

§ 16. What do you mean by saying, "this unhappy age?"

It will be long before any man can live the life of Jesus ; for it is still too far beyond your reach ; nevertheless, you may approach it. Know that the men of your planet, and all spirits whomsoever, whether they inhabit the inferior worlds for trials and expiations, or on a mission ; or whether they have attained to the superior worlds, should share in the purity and happiness of Jesus, but how can they do this ? They must attain to perfection by the constant practice of

love, which is the source and means of all progress in time and eternity, for it leads up to all knowledge, and even to God.

§ 16. Why do you say that God is indivisible, and that he does not create by dividing his essence?

In allusion to the doctrine of the Three Persons.

§ 17. Some have understood the words of the angel (v. 28) literally : "The Lord is with thee;" and have supposed that God incarnated Himself in the person of Jesus.

Human matter materializes whatever it touches. Do you not degrade the Divinity, when you draw such conclusions? The Lord was with Mary, and she was blessed among all women, simply because Mary was a very pure spirit on an earthly mission.

§ 18. What is the spiritual meaning of the words "You have found favour with God?" (v. 30.)

They signify, "God has granted you the mission which you desired."

§ 19. Why do the angel's words (v. 31), when interpreted literally, imply the reality of a miraculous conception?

It was not intended that men should lift the veil which concealed the secrets of the other world from them. It was necessary for them to believe in sensible and impressional matter, and in physical pain to understand the sacrifice. They were intended to believe in the divine origin of Jesus, to keep them under the yoke till his mission should be accepted, and his laws obeyed.

§ 20. Why did the angel say to Mary (v. 33), "The Lord God shall give him the throne of David his father, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever?"

It was needful that the promises of the Old Testament and the interpretations which they had received should be connected with the requirements of the present, and the promises of the future. Joseph was incarnated in the tribe of David rather than in another, that the apparent parentage of Jesus might agree with the prophecies. Everything is linked together in the designs of the Lord, and in the successive events which prepare and develop your progress and regeneration in each succeeding age.

§ 21. What is the real meaning of the expression (v. 33), "His kingdom shall have no end?"

It will have no end, because your protector will conduct you to perfection.

Is not this emblematic, and will not his kingdom be established eternally when you shall have attained to it?

§ 22. What is the meaning of the words, "The Holy Spirit shall rest upon thee?"

The superior spirit thus announced to Mary that her eyes would be opened, and that she would comprehend what then appeared to her as an impenetrable mystery. Afterwards, when the time had come, she reflected on the words of the angel to Joseph, "That which is born in her, has been formed by the Holy Spirit," and comprehended the special mission that Jesus came to fulfil. But nevertheless, like others, she attributed the fulfilment of the prediction to direct divine agency, as it was intended that she should.

§ 23. What is the meaning of the words, "The Power of the Most High shall overshadow thee?"

These words have been misunderstood. Mary was terrified at the stain upon her character which might result from the fulfilment of the prediction, and the spirit wished to reassure her.

Is this why her offspring should be called "the son of God?"

These words confirm what we have just told you.

"That which shall be born of you (by the operation of the Holy Spirit) will be called the Son of God." This title, in the true spiritual sense of the words, is only applied to Jesus on account of his purity, and you may all acquire it in the same sense.*

Humanly speaking, this title was intended to enhance the dignity of men in their own eyes, and to lead them to comprehend the love of God. How great (in human eyes) that God must be who could receive no sacrifice but his well-beloved, and (as regards you) his only son; and also

* This is what is prophesied and promised in Revelations, ch. xxii. v. 6 and 7.

how great, in his eyes, must be the worth of mankind to lead him to redeem them by such a sacrifice !

O men, do not forget that you are still but as little children, and that every age must be addressed in appropriate language which it can receive and understand.

Do not allow yourselves to be turned aside by those unphilosophical philosophers who do not understand the transitory but necessary means of progress by revelation, and deny the existence and object of spiritual manifestations. These manifestations are produced by the will of the Supreme Master to prepare for your regeneration, and will be continued in order to effect it. These philosophers are instruments who prepare the way, without knowing it, and often without wishing it. The path was blocked, and they are removing the obstacles. We shall erect a building that man will not attempt to destroy, for he will find peace, hope, and happiness within.

§ 23. What is meant by the words (v. 37), "Nothing shall be impossible to God ?"

Spiritually, these words relate to the manifestation and appearance of Jesus ; and from Mary's point of view they referred to what she regarded as a miracle ;—*i.e.*, an impossibility.

§ 24. What is the meaning of the same expression, as repeated by men?

God is the sole universal principle, and the sole creative power in the infinite regions of space, and he is immutable and eternal. He has foreseen, willed and directed everything from all eternity ; thus all things originate in his will, and nothing takes place without his permission. There is neither "chance" nor "miracle," but God everywhere.

The human expressions "chance" and "miracle" are nonsense in the sight of God. You must regard them as only expressing the ignorance of men respecting the true causes of phenomena and events, which nevertheless always take place either by the normal action of the immutable laws of nature, or by their application, under spirit action, in the various planets.

Such human expressions as "possible," and "impossible," are, like "space," "time," and "duration," nonsense as applied to God. They have no meaning except when applied to living creatures, in consequence of the ignorance and feebleness of incarnate spirits, which results from their small moral and intellectual elevation, and slight knowledge of universal laws, and of spiritual action as limited and influenced by these laws.

Nothing physical is uncertain under spirit influence. All effects are the same, and follow a definite course, for everything in nature is immutable; but you should remember that you cannot understand everything. You may sometimes observe phenomena which surprise you because they are novelties; but they take place within the order of nature, though you are not yet able to comprehend them. But there may be something uncertain as regards spiritual action, from the free agency of incarnate spirits, which is moral and intellectual, and always within the limits of their necessary expiatory trials; but neither the incarnate nor errant spirit can act except according to the laws of nature, which he adapts, if necessary, to his medium, or to the effects which he desires to produce.

It is only within the limits and control of these laws that apparent deviations occur; and these results, being produced by applications of laws unknown to men, are regarded as miracles, in consequence of your ignorance.

There is nothing supernatural, for everything proceeds, always and everywhere, from the immutable will of God, according to the universal and immutable laws of nature which he has established from all eternity, and which thus pertain to his very essence.

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 39-45.

Mary's visit to Elisabeth.

(39) And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Judah; (40) And went into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. (41) And it came to pass that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb;

and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ; (42) And she cried out in a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. (43) And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me ? (44) For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation was in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for exceeding joy ; (45) And blessed is she that believed that there should be an accomplishment of the things which were told her from the Lord.

§ 25. The spirit of Jesus was beside Mary in the house of Elisabeth, for he accompanied her like one of your angel guardians. The spirit of John had no need to witness the arrival of Jesus ; for he knew him, and was present there himself. He was free ; for the sufferings which usually precede incarnation did not exist in his case. He suffered no anxiety, and did not lose consciousness of himself and his origin till the moment of his birth. But though he had nothing to suffer, the connection between the body and spirit was fully established, and the spirit was consequently able to influence the body when an additional testimony was required.

The words addressed by Elisabeth to Mary were spoken under the influence of the spirits of the Lord. Elisabeth thus spoke as one "filled with the Holy Spirit." She addressed Mary in language which they could both understand, and expressed herself consistently with the belief that all were intended to share, in consequence of a revelation appropriate to the state of intelligence, and the necessities of the age. This belief was to last until the words addressed to Mary should be explained in spirit and in truth by the New Revelation.

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 46-56.

The Song of Mary.

(46) And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord ; (47) And my spirit hath rejoiced exceedingly in God my Saviour ; (48) Because he hath looked upon the lowliness of his handmaid, for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed ; (49) Because the Mighty One hath done great things for me, and blessed is his name ; (50) And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. (51) He hath put strength in his arm ; he hath scattered the arrogant in the intentions of their hearts ; (52) He hath pulled down the rulers from their thrones, and hath exalted the humble. (53) He hath

filled the hungry with good things, and hath sent the rich away destitute. (54) He hath aided Israel his servant, in remembrance of his mercy. (55) As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever. (56) And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

§ 26 (verses 46-48). No explanation is required here, but you would do well to imitate such an outburst of love and gratitude. (Verses 49, 50.) You may apply these verses to your own times, which behold the dawn of the regeneration of mankind. Praise the Lord, for he has sent you his good spirits, to whom he has entrusted the torch of Spiritism, and who wave it over the earth, shedding its soft pure light in all directions, and diffusing truth, charity and love among you. O praise the Lord, for he is doing great things for you, and checks the designs of the wicked. He arrests the corruption which threatens to destroy you, and gives you balm to heal your wounds; O bless and praise the Lord, for his love and mercy are boundless! (Verses 51-55.) The Lord still manifests his power to you, and employs very feeble instruments to overthrow the most powerful among men. Bless the Lord, for the dominion of pride has reached its end. Man is an instrument; and the Spiritist, and especially the medium, is the instrument which good spirits employ to humble pride, ambition, avarice and tyranny. (We make no special allusions here.)

Israel is a symbolic name which denotes all mankind. Men are one in the sight of God, for there are neither peoples nor nationalities in his sight. The Lord shows mercy to those who love him and keep his commandments, but his mighty arm destroys the proud who lift their haughty heads too high. The Lord gives bread to the little child, who asks it in the sincerity of his heart; but he despoils the proud man who trusts in his riches. Bless the Lord, then, for he is the support of the feeble, and the terror of the wicked.

§ 27. Does the hidden sense of v. 30 refer to the law of reincarnation, as the sublime and harmonious expression of the justice and infinite mercy of God?

Yes; and the words of the text also refer to the Second

Commandment (Exodus, ch. xx. v. 5 & 6) "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep my commandments."

The idea is the same, for the hand of God presses heavily upon man from generation to generation, by reincarnation, until he finally frees him from all impurities by expiation and reparation, and leads him to moral improvement and progress.

Man has been blind enough to suppose that God punishes the father in his children. This was the apparent meaning of the letter, and was well suited to the Hebrews, who needed to be led by terror ; but the knowledge of the God of Love showed that this was impossible. Man has not attempted to understand the distinction between goodness and vengeance. The letter was intended for primitive nations ; but it is for you to seek for the spirit.

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 57-66.

Birth of John.

(57) Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered, and she brought forth a son. (58) And her neighbours and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had showed great mercy upon her, and they rejoiced with her. (59) And it came to pass that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. (60) And his mother answered and said, Not so, but he shall be called John. (61) And they said to her, There is no one among thy relations who is called by this name. (62) And they made signs to his father what he would desire to have him called. (63) And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote saying, His name is John ; and they all wondered. (64) And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue ; and he spake, and praised God. (65) And fear came on all that dwelt round about them, and all these sayings were discussed throughout the hill-country of Judæa. (66) And all they who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What then shall this child be ? And the hand of the Lord was with him.

§ 28. These verses require no comment. Everything is linked together in the designs of the Lord ; and all these events were previously arranged to aid in the accomplishment of the work.

Elisabeth's reply to her friends and relations (v. 60) was not due to spiritual inspiration. Zacharias had already used writing-tablets to inform her of the words of the angel who had appeared to him in the temple.

As we have told you how Zacharias was rendered dumb, you will understand how he recovered his speech. The fluids which had burdened his tongue, and produced a kind of paralysis were thrown off by means of spiritual magnetism.

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 67—80.

Song of Zacharias.

(67) And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied saying, (68) Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, (69) And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (70) As he hath spoken through the mouth of his holy prophets from their time. (71) Deliverance from our enemies, and from the hand of all those who hate us (72) To perform mercy with our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; (73) The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, (74) That he would grant unto us that being delivered from the hand of all our enemies, we should serve him without fear (75) In holiness and righteousness in his presence all the days of our life. (76) And thou, child, shalt be called a Prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways (77) To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the forgiveness of their sins. (78) Through the tender mercies of our God, whereby the dawn from on high hath beamed upon us (79) To shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (80) And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts, until the day of his declaring himself to Israel.

§ 29. You also, like Zacharias, may praise the Lord for the mercy which he has shown you. After having first visited and redeemed his people by the coming of Jesus, he visits and redeems them again by the coming of the Truth.

The Hebrews expected that the promised Messiah would be a material deliverer. They looked at everything with reference to the present, and did not understand that their vices were the enemies from which they needed to be delivered. But you, Spiritists, ought to understand this, and exert all your efforts to contribute to your deliverance, as the disciples of Jesus are bound to do, after tearing away the lying masks with which men have concealed the truths which

he taught. The true disciples of Jesus are those who now walk in his steps, guided by the torch of Spiritism (that is, by the spirits of the Lord, who are the virtues of the heavens which are shaken); and thus guided, seek for truth in his words. The sun still shines for you, and the Lord enlightens you. Do not close your eyes, but prepare the way for him, so that he can advance to lead you to his kingdom, which is moral and intellectual perfection. Jesus spoke truth, but he himself declared that he did not reveal all the truth. He gave men only what they could bear, in such a manner that they were able to receive it. If men were contented with what they had received, the truth would not have to conquer its kingdom, which traditions, prejudices, and doctrines upheld by worldly motives have all combined to destroy.

The time has come for the revelation of the truth, freed from all the lies which veil it from human eyes, and plunge men in darkness notwithstanding its divine radiance.

God has not abandoned his children to lies, but has permitted them to follow the path which they had chosen, that it might develop their experience by showing them the futility of their efforts. At the present day you have advanced, and your eyes, wearied with searching in the dark, ask for light, and turn towards it. Light and truth go hand in hand, but everything must have a beginning. You have been told that the Spirit of Truth is to descend among you, and its advent will be the end of the world; by which you must understand the end of your weakness and ignorance; but its advent must be preceded by a preparatory period, upon which you are now entering.

John, the forerunner of Jesus, called men to repentance and the baptism of water, but Jesus came to teach them how to repent, and to baptize them with the Holy Spirit. That is, he caused the spirits of the Lord to descend upon them, and to develop medianimic faculties in them, which fitted them to receive inspiration.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit means communion with the exalted spirits who watch over you; but this communion

can still be only attained, as at the time of Jesus, by those who are pure, and filled with zeal, love and faith, like his faithful Apostles.

Spiritism summons you to the study of the truth, and teaches you to distinguish between truth and falsehood. It comes to stimulate and develop your experience, clearness of judgment, devotion, and intelligence, and to render you worthy of the aid of exalted spirits, who will lead you to all truth. In short, it comes as the harbinger of that state of perfection to which you ought to attain.

It is designed to prepare you for this state by gradually opening your eyes to the light, and by developing your intelligence till you are able to free yourselves at once and for ever from all the weakness of your humanity, that you may be ready to receive the "Spirit of Truth" when his reign shall commence; and to comprehend the whole extent of the truth.

In order to attain this end, you must labour unceasingly to destroy in yourselves all that belongs to the old man. You must struggle against your faults and weaknesses, and arm yourselves against your own flesh lest you should again yield to its temptations. You must labour constantly at your moral progress that you may be able to aid your brethren to advance, and thus help to prepare for the advent of the Spirit of Truth.

Thus the object of Spiritism is human perfection, and the three methods of attaining it are love, study, and charity. In urging you thus to arm yourselves against your own flesh, we do not desire to advise you to imitate your fathers in material mortifications, or to abstain from any human appetites which the laws of your nature require: far from that. You cannot conquer the flesh by wearing a hair shirt, nor can you do so by refusing what is just and necessary for the requirements of your body; but by keeping yourselves constantly on guard against abuse and excess.

Do not forget the Master's words, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" against temptation. Therefore be on your guard, and concede to your bodily instincts whatever

is needful for matter ; but never exceed the limits of a wise sobriety.

Do not make yourselves martyrs with the object of pleasing God. On the contrary, you should endeavour to preserve your bodies in that state of equilibrium needful to strengthen you to meet your trials. Nor should you abandon yourselves to sloth, but watch and pray without ceasing ; or rather, O men whose intelligence is weak, because of the weakness of your faith, never forget that you are under your Father's eye, and that he judges not only your most secret actions, but the most hidden thoughts of your heart. Look, therefore, that your thoughts and actions might always be fully laid open not only before your Father's eye, but also before all your brethren. Pray that your actions may always correspond with your thoughts. The prayer which pleases God is work, either of the mind or body, and each should therefore work at the task assigned him, and thus pray without ceasing. Work, for work is prayer ; and watch, for this protects you by the vigilance which you constantly exert over yourselves, and you will then fear temptation no more. Watch and pray, brethren, for the Master reckons upon your faithful service.

The Spirit of Truth will come to reveal everything which still remains hidden, and will teach you to look upon the holy light without being dazzled. The promised Spirit of Truth is not a corporeal or fluidic being ; but the whole knowledge of the Truth. You can only acquire this knowledge by perfection, and your perfection can only be effected by the spirits of the Lord (either in the errant state, or incarnated on a mission) under the direction of your protector.

This is why Jesus assumed the title of Christ, or Messenger ; and of " the Spirit of Truth " as the completion and sanctification of the Truth.

The truth personified in Jesus, can only descend among you when you are worthy to receive it ; and you cannot become worthy of it without the aid of the errant and incarnate missionaries.

Thus you must understand the Spirit of Truth to be a

complex and symbolical expression. It includes the exalted spirits who aid Jesus in his mission as his forerunners, and lead you gradually by his directions, through the new and preparatory era of Spiritism, towards the full knowledge of the truth ; and Jesus himself will finally come to give men this perfect knowledge, when they are ready to receive it, and worthy and able to sustain it.

MATTHEW, CHAP. I.—VERSES 18-25.

Appearance of the angel to Joseph in a dream.

(18) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was thus : His mother Mary having been betrothed to Joseph, it was found that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit before they had been together. (19) And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wishing to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her secretly. (20) And while he was thinking over these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take to thyself Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. (21) And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. (22) And all this was done that the word spoken by the Lord through the prophet should be fulfilled, saying (23) Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, the translation of which is, God with us. (24) And Joseph having awaked from his sleep, acted as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took to himself his wife ; (25) And knew her not until she had brought forth her firstborn son, and he called his name Jesus.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSES 1-7.

" Birth " of Jesus through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

(1) And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Cæsar Augustus that the whole civilized world should be registered ; (2) And this registration was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. (3) And all went to be registered, each in his own city. (4) And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth to Judæa, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David ; (5) To be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was pregnant. (6) And so it was that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered ; (7) And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him down in the manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

§ 30. Joseph did not, like Jesus, remember his origin, or perceive his destiny, for he was subject to the laws of human

incarnation, notwithstanding the superiority of his spirit. He was a just man, but he was a man ; and being influenced by human prejudices, he intended at first to divorce Mary secretly.

The revelation made to him by the angel in a dream partly removed the veil from his intelligence. He was a lofty-spirited man, and understood the sanctity of his mission. He therefore joyfully accepted the part in the work assigned to him, which was the human charge of the Lord.

Do not be surprised that the Evangelist openly published the secret resolution formed by Joseph, and the secret revelation which set it aside. It was necessary for all to understand, in due time, that Jesus was not born like other men ; and the words of the angel, "That which is born in her has been formed by the Holy Spirit," were useful in their literal sense, while the spiritual meaning was reserved to form the basis of the new revelation of the future.

You should understand how the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, although this manifestation has sometimes been criticised or ridiculed. It is always better to suspend your judgment than to deny or ridicule what you do not understand.

During sleep, the spirit is often sufficiently freed from matter to commune with the friendly spirits around it. When this disengagement is complete, the spirit rises and mingles with the heavenly hosts, if it is itself sufficiently elevated, though without ever leaving the zone of your planet. If the disengagement is incomplete, sympathizing spirits descend towards you.

This communion takes place, whatever may be your moral state, but generally with spirits of your own degree. Sometimes, however, higher spirits descend, to instruct you during these brief intervals of freedom, to remind you of your engagements, and to show you the difficulties with which you will have to contend.

All communication which takes place during sleep may be classed among dreams, but whereas ordinary dreams are

complex and symbolical expression. It includes the exalted spirits who aid Jesus in his mission as his forerunners, and lead you gradually by his directions, through the new and preparatory era of Spiritism, towards the full knowledge of the truth ; and Jesus himself will finally come to give men this perfect knowledge, when they are ready to receive it, and worthy and able to sustain it.

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This communion takes place, whatever may be your moral state, but generally with spirits of your own degree. Sometimes, however, higher spirits descend, to instruct you during these brief intervals of freedom, to remind you of your engagements, and to show you the difficulties with which you will have to contend.

All communication which takes place during sleep may be classed among dreams, but whereas ordinary dreams are

generally the result of recollections, or of the struggle between matter and spirit, dreams like that of Joseph are revelations. But do not, on this account, try to discover the meaning of all your dreams, any more than you would expect to find a connected meaning in the prattle of a child.

There was communion of spirit with spirit in the case of Joseph, and just as you often remember your dreams, however trivial, when the spirit is imperfectly disengaged, so Joseph remembered what had passed when he awoke.

When the spirit is completely disengaged, it only retains this recollection in exceptional cases, when the impression has been renewed on waking by spiritual influence. Many of your human recollections are due to a similar influence, which recalls past events when they may be useful to you in the future.

§ 31. Throughout the whole of his earthly mission, Jesus was looked upon as a man, the son of Mary and Joseph.

Subsequently to the "ascension," when the annunciation to Mary and the dream of Joseph were first made public, Jesus was regarded as a man, and at the same time as an incarnate God, "miraculously" born, through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

The common belief regarding the "birth" of Jesus, was due to a spiritual revelation suited to the necessities and intelligence of the age, and was needful to prepare mankind to understand spiritual life. It was consequently shared by the evangelists, the apostles, the disciples, and the multitude; for if the evangelists had known the spiritual origin of Jesus, they would have been impostors, who represented him as subject to the conditions of your humanity, and at the same time as a divine incarnation.

The evangelists, like the apostles and disciples, were simple-minded in their incarnate state, and were as little children in humility and intelligence. They received the spiritual revelation made to Mary and Joseph, as sent from God himself. They faithfully recorded this revelation and the events which followed, and each of them accomplished his appointed task by medianimic influence and inspiration.

This was necessary (compare § 14) because men required a striking example. The idealization of matter has prepared you to understand the spiritual life; and time and successive reincarnations have continued your expiation, reparation, and progress for nearly twenty centuries. You have now been led on to the new era of Spiritism, for which the progress which you have slowly and laboriously acquired since the Master descended among you, has prepared the way.

The letter has borne its fruits, and is no longer suited to the needs of your age, and to the condition and progress of your intelligence. Now that it kills, it must be superseded by the Spirit which giveth life. The time has come to explain to you how the birth of Jesus was effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the will of God, and the eternally immutable laws of nature. It was the result of spiritual and magnetic action, by means of appropriate fluids.

Magnetism is the universal agent which moves everything, and pervades all the kingdoms of nature. Is it not magnetic attraction which attracts the male to the female even in the most desolate parts of the earth, although they may be widely separated? Is it not magnetic attraction which attracts the fertilizing principle from one flower to another, and which draws together the substances needful to form minerals in the bowels of the earth, and leads the waters to flow towards dry countries which require irrigation?

Everything in the universe is due to magnetic attraction; it is the great law which governs all things. When man shall be sufficiently enlightened to understand its full extent, the world will be subject to his control, for he will be able to direct its material action; but he cannot attain this power without a long and profound study of causes, or until he is filled with love and reverence for Him who has entrusted him with such great powers. When man is guided by this love and reverence, and filled with heartfelt humility and unselfishness, study and labour will finally enable him to acquire a knowledge of the various natures, properties and effects of all fluids, and of their

various combinations and transformations. He will then possess the secret of universal life, and of the formation of all things in all the kingdoms of nature, through combined spiritual and magnetic action, according to the immutable laws of God.

The magnetic fluids link together all the worlds in the universe, and unite all spirits, whether incarnate or not. It is a universal bond that God has given us, to surround us like a single being, and to aid us to ascend towards him by the union of our strength. The fluids are united by magnetic action ; and everything in nature is attraction depending on this universal agent.

In addition to animal, vegetable, and universal magnetism, human and spiritual magnetism also exist on your planet.

Human magnetism is the concentration of the fluids contained in man, and in the surrounding atmosphere, by the power of the human will. It can act by means of these fluids at some distance between man and man ; or on objects.

Spirit-magnetism results from the concentration of the will of spirits, which draws around them whatever fluids may be contained in man, or scattered through space. They use these fluids to act on men or things, and to effect their objects.

The birth of Jesus was the work of the Holy Spirit, for it was the work of the Spirits of the Lord, and was effected by spiritual magnetism. You can judge of the power of well-directed human fluids, by the effects of spiritual magnetism on man.

The spirits appointed to prepare for the appearance of the Messiah upon earth, drew around Mary the fluids needed to produce an illusion, and the annunciation made to her by the angel, thus appeared to her to be literally fulfilled.

We may remind you that those who are supposed to be insane, but are only the sport of obsessing spirits, sometimes experience similar illusions ; but in such cases, the illusion is confined to themselves alone, and does not extend to those around them.

The subsequent "birth" of the child was also the work of

the Holy Spirit, for it was effected by the Spirits of the Lord. It was simply apparent, for, at the appointed period, the surrounding spirits placed Mary under a magnetic-spiritual influence, and caused her to believe that a real birth had taken place.

You know that a human magnetizer can cause his subject to experience all sensations and impressions in the somnambulic state by the power of his will, and of well-directed human fluids. He can make him see and believe whatever he wishes, and can impress him with a fiction as if it were a reality, and make him apparently experience, and even endure, suffering, and then free him from it. If you had studied all the phases of human magnetism you would have seen subjects who are easily affected influenced without being in the magnetic sleep, or at least without exhibiting any of its recognized symptoms. In such cases, magnetic action has influenced the spirit without affecting the body.

There are some subjects who enjoy a development of their faculties above ordinary humanity. These exceptional subjects are not only gifted with more than human faculties, like all free spirits, but they enjoy faculties superior to those of your best clairvoyants, and are sometimes even capable of solving problems that an incarnate spirit dare not and cannot propound ; questions which man dare not propose to science, not from humility, or a wise estimate of his powers, but because he believes it to be incapable of solving them. These subjects are still rare, but will become more numerous by the employment of the power which is entrusted to you. They will conduce vastly to the improvement of the arts and sciences on your planet. These instruments are more perfect than others, but are also more easily injured, for when medianimic faculties are ill-directed, they wear out more rapidly. On this account, but few have been hitherto revealed to you, for you must first increase your experience of magnetism.

You are also aware that forgetfulness on waking is the rule in somnambulism, but in exceptional cases the magnetizer can, by the power of his will, and by an express command,

enable the somnambulist to retain the memory of something which has occurred in his trance, after he awakes.

Everything which the human magnetizer can perform on his subject by human magnetism, can also be effected by spirits through spirit-magnetism. They act with more discernment and knowledge than man acts on man, according to the conditions necessary to produce the results which they wish to attain. They can (as spiritual science teaches you) cause you to feel blows, or pain arising and ceasing at the will of those who act upon you without your being able to perceive it. You also know by many examples in all ages, as well as in your own, how the blow, or pain, is felt.

We will explain the action of magnetism on the spirit of the magnetized subject. This explanation applies both to human and to spirit-magnetism ; only the causes and results of the action of spirit-magnetism are purer. Nevertheless, the result of both cases is the same ; the incarnate spirit is disengaged under more or less favourable conditions, in proportion to the elevation of the magnetizer, whether man or spirit.

You must understand that magnetism effects the disengagement of the spirit, and therefore cannot work illusions upon it. When the spirit is thus released from the bonds of the flesh, it becomes the willing agent of its magnetizer, whether the magnetic action proceeds from a free or from an incarnate spirit. Recollection on awaking results from the compliance of the magnetized subject, who consents to the wishes of his magnetizer, either from sympathy, weakness, or subordination, according to the relations existing between them. He thus preserves the recollection of the words or actions which he has voluntarily agreed upon during sleep, under the influence of material sensations and impressions, which retain the influence of the engagement he has undertaken ; and, upon awaking, he remembers them as if they had actually taken place. If the spirits of the magnetizer and the subject are in sympathy, the recollection is due to the understanding which exists between them ; if the subject is weaker than the magnetizer, and the latter imposes the

recollection by his arbitrary will, the free spirit sometimes consents ; but if the spirit of the subject is inferior to that of the magnetizer, it obeys from deference and respect.

It was needful for Mary to believe in a real birth, and to remember circumstances which she could attest as if they had really happened. The spirits appointed to prepare for the appearance of the Messiah on your earth placed Mary under the influence of spirit magnetism, and in this somnambulic condition they caused her to perceive and to experience whatever was necessary. Mary was then in the same condition as the subjects of whom we have just spoken, who are met with, though rarely, at the present day. It therefore appeared to Mary as if a birth had actually taken place, and in due time she fulfilled the formalities prescribed for purification by the law of Moses.

As Mary was in sympathy with the high spirits who acted on her, she undertook to retain in her material memory the circumstances which it was necessary for her to remember, and thus to obey the will which was imposed on her in the name of the Lord.

The magnetic-spiritual influence ceased at the moment when Jesus appeared as if by ordinary "birth," under the form of a new-born infant, and Mary took the infant in her arms, believing that it was born from her through the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Mary was almost a child in years, and very inexperienced in human affairs, having always lived in adoration and contemplation. She took the infant and blessed God.

The spirits who surround you, and who have reached a certain degree of elevation, can act on the fluids by their will-power, and attract those which are necessary. By combining these, they can impress the bodily eyes of men with whatever pictures they desire them to see.

These methods are only employed in important cases, and man ought not to imagine that he is always subject to these spiritual hallucinations ; but they are employed whenever they are necessary to attain a result useful to mankind. By "spiritual hallucinations" we mean those spiritual effects

which represent something to human eyes which has no actual material or spiritual existence, but which is only an illusion produced by spirit influence, by means of a simple combination of fluids. The phenomenon called "the multiplication of the loaves and fishes," which we shall explain in its place, was simply due to spirit action, and the combination of fluids necessary to produce the required result.

By similar methods, guilty spirits in the errant state are brought face to face with their victims, or with the crimes which they have committed, and either see the bloody panorama of the past or the fearful sufferings of the future unrolled before them. The fluids used by the ministering spirits produce living pictures or the appearance of objects to the eyes of the guilty, and form a complete illusion in either case.

If necessary, the illusion might have been extended to those around Mary; but the mysterious prestige which was to attach to this "birth" forbade it. Mary was alone at the time, and it was therefore easy to produce an illusion which did not require to be carried very far in the case of one whose material life had scarcely unfolded; for the contemplative life of Mary had shielded her from all material aspirations and sensations.

We have told you that Mary was a very pure spirit, whose mission was to aid in a work which was about to be accomplished. She did not seek, like you, to understand the means by which unusual occurrences might be effected. The angel had assured her that she would have a son (to human eyes); whose essence should be different from hers, or from the human essence of your planet. She obeyed, and fulfilled the task which she had accepted, with faith, submission, and love. The angel had informed her that she was only an instrument, and she received the child which she believed to be her own, and of which the human charge was assigned to her, as the work of the Holy Spirit, without seeking for a natural solution to the problem.

Let not those who are always finding fault say that this was only a vain show.

It is not so, for your nature is subject to many mysteries which you do not understand, and which arise solely from the combination of these fluids, which we make use of for your benefit and progress. We never act capriciously, but always in accordance with the will of the Lord.

All that occurred was necessary to commence the new transitory era on which humanity was then about to enter, and to prepare for the advent of the present era of Spiritism and the New Revelation.

The progressive revelation of each era is appropriate to the needs of the age, and to the state of intelligence of the time. It is veiled by the letter when necessary, always teaching you more and more truth in proportion as you are able to receive and bear it, and gradually lifting part of the veil which conceals it from your gaze.

The Apostles said well that Jesus had a body similar to yours. Had not his body the appearance of yours? Were not his bodily requirements apparently the same? Yes: Jesus had a body similar to yours, but not of the same nature.

The birth of Jesus was the work of the Holy Spirit, for all its preceding and attending circumstances were the work of the spirits of the Lord (compare § 14).

The appearance of Jesus was his own act. It was necessary for him to undertake this mission, firstly, because he was entrusted with the progress of man; and, secondly, because he was the only spirit labouring at the progress of your planet, and of its humanity, whose power over the superior regions enabled him to appropriate the elements which enter into the formation of bodies in the fluidic worlds to the fluids of your planet, and thus to produce a body of a mixed nature, but almost material, simulating to human eyes the body of man in your world. No other body could have answered the required conditions. Jesus is in truth a perfect spirit, pure among the purest of those who labour under his direction at your progress, regeneration, and physical, moral and intellectual transformation, to lead you to perfection. Jesus was not subject to incarnation upon any planet whatever; but was thoroughly acquainted from the first with all

the fluids fitted for incorporation, or incarnation on all the material or fluidic worlds, and with the application of all the immutable and universal laws of nature. He alone possessed sufficient knowledge and power to construct this perispritic envelope resembling the human body, fitted for long tangibility, and intended to serve for the accomplishment of his earthly mission. He alone had the power to abandon it, or to resume it at any moment, by holding its constituent atoms always ready to separate or to combine under the influence of his powerful will.

But his elevation was so great as to be incompatible with your essence, and he could not be bound to material human incarnation. He could no more endure the contact of matter than you can endure a foul odour.

Matter oppresses spirit in proportion to its density, and even if a superior spirit assumes a material body to accomplish a mission among you, he is more or less fallible, and does not pass an absolutely unsullied life. Yet you have even now among you missionary spirits who endure the burden of the flesh.

Jesus could not, and ought not, on account of his spiritual nature and position to endure this slavery. During the period that the necessities of his mission required him to appear among men, he retained full knowledge of his origin, and the certainty of his future. He still was and continued to be the protector and ruler of the world, ruling over life and universal harmony in all the kingdoms of nature. He was still in constant communion with God, and gave his commands through his messengers to the whole hierarchy of spirits who guide your planet and its humanity.

We have already told you (§ 14) that Jesus appeared on earth by incorporation. It is the only instance which has hitherto happened in your world, but will be repeated in due course, and when it occurs again, you will know that the hour of the regeneration foretold by Christ, and so long prepared and hoped for, has at length arrived.

Let those hear who have ears to hear, and let them not proudly deny what they cannot yet explain ; for they are

ignorant of the natural laws which God has established. They know nothing of the properties and effects of the fluids ; nor do they understand how their combinations and adaptations can produce beings *d priori* in the material or fluidic worlds scattered throughout space either by incarnation or by incorporation, but always in accordance with immutable law. The birth of Jesus was simply an appearance, effected by the spirits of the Lord, according to the divine will, and appropriate to the intelligence of the age. The appearance of Jesus was thus that of a materialized spirit, similar to those which have appeared at all ages, and which you may meet with at the present day ; but with this difference only, that the perisprit was humanized by the powerful will of the Master acting on the surrounding fluids, and while presenting all the appearances of human life, was fitted for long tangibility, which was maintained or laid aside at the powerful will of Jesus, according to the necessities of his earthly mission.

It was reserved for the New Revelation to explain to you what mankind could not receive when the Christ descended among you, but which was hidden beneath the words spoken by the angel to Mary at the Annunciation, and to Joseph in a dream. It was left till then to raise the veil, to replace the letter by the spirit ; and also to explain the error perpetuated by the letter, and by the ignorance of former ages ; and to teach you the truth which the progress of intelligence enables you to receive.

Jesus did not assume a material human form contrary to the natural laws of your planet, and of other material worlds. The immutable will of God never departs from the laws which he has established from all eternity. Nor did Jesus assume a material human body like yours, according to the laws of your planet, through the act of Mary and Joseph. This would contradict the words of the angel, and blaspheme God himself by rejecting the word of his messenger as an absolute lie. The New Revelation explains the true spiritual significance of those words of the angel which have been wrongly interpreted, because they have been taken

literally, in ignorance of their true meaning : “ That which is born in her is formed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will watch over thee, and the power of the Most High will overshadow thee.” It replaces error by truth, and teaches men that the birth of Jesus was simply apparent, and that his appearance was wholly spiritual, and independent of the laws of human incarnation.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN,

With the concurrence of the Apostles.

§ 32. Had Joseph and Mary friends or relatives in Bethlehem, and if so, why was Mary obliged to take shelter in a stable, and to lay the “child” in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn?

The great influx of travellers set limits to hospitality, even in the inn. The Hebrews, especially those belonging to the lower classes, did not build princely hotels.

Joseph had a brother living at Bethlehem, but he could not accommodate him, because he had had no previous notice of his arrival, and his house was already crowded with other guests.

Joseph was not expected ; his brother had invited him, but he would not part from Mary. He had therefore declined the invitation for himself and his wife, supposing that the “child” (which he knew by revelation would be a boy) would probably be born about that time.

It was not supposed that Mary would have ventured to undertake the journey, and therefore no one expected her ; but “driven by the Spirit,” to use a Scriptural phrase, (that is to say, under the inspiration of her guardian angel,) she resolved to do so at the last moment. It was needful that Jesus should be “born” thus, in a miserable place, far from men or from human assistance, to set a greater example of humility, and also to simplify the manner of his “birth” (compare § 31).

Mary was received into the house of Joseph’s brother as soon as the departure of visitors had left room for her.

The news was spread that the “child” was “born ;” but the

report travelled slowly, and Zacharias and Elisabeth did not hear it from common rumour, but from Joseph himself, who went to convey the good news to them. They went to adore "the little child," but as their words and actions were of no importance to the Gospel narratives, they were passed over in silence ; and when their mission was fulfilled, they retired into obscurity, for there was no further need to mention them. It was the same with all the incarnate spirits who had asked to share in the accomplishment of the work which was to make the earthly mission of Jesus a reality.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSES 8—20.

The Shepherds.

(8) And there were in the same country shepherds, abiding in the field, and keeping watch over their flock by night ; (9) And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were seized with great fear. (10) And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. (11) For a Saviour is born to you to-day, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. (12) And this shall be the sign to you : Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in the manger. (13) And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, (14) Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men. (15) And it came to pass, that when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go as far as Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath revealed to us. (16) And they came with haste, and they found Mary and Joseph ; and the babe lying in the manger. (17) And when they had seen it, they inquired about the saying which had been told them respecting the child. (18) And all who heard it wondered at what was told them by the shepherds. (19) And Mary heard all these sayings, and kept them in her heart. (20) And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, as it was told to them.

§ 33. The spirit manifestation, and the appearance of the angel of the Lord to the shepherds, is easily explained by their being clairvoyant and clairsentient mediums.

The eyes of their spirits were opened under the influence of spirit magnetism. They were in a state of ecstasy caused by their spirits being completely liberated, and a bright light shone round them, which greatly alarmed them. They saw the surrounding fluids as we ourselves see them, for they

emit a bright light to our eyes, though they are invisible to you. This brightness is proportioned to the degree of elevation or advancement of the spirit, and never ceases to be visible to him, whatever may be his inferiority (even though he be a wicked or suffering spirit) except when he is condemned to darkness.

As the shepherds did not understand the simple cause of this brightness, which is only visible to human eyes under similarly exceptional circumstances, they regarded it a divine light manifested by God himself; and the appearance was afterwards called "the glory of God."

Your science has already ascertained the luminosity of the magnetic and electric fluids in their latent state. Somnambulists who were sufficiently impressionable and clairvoyant, while under the influence of human magnetism, have seen the luminous vapour flowing from the human body, as well as from wood, metal, and other objects.*

In future ages science will employ human magnetism and somnambulism to place subjects in conditions similar to the shepherds; and will thus substantiate the luminous condition of the surrounding fluids. These radiate a great brightness, which is permanent to the eyes of errant spirits, who are consequently subject neither to night, obscurity, or opacity. Their spiritual sight never encounters any obstacles or barriers in space.

The multitude of the heavenly host consisted of a number of good spirits, who concurred in this manifestation. The shepherds in their clairvoyant and clairaudient condition saw them, and heard the words which you call the song of the angels, and which have been handed down from age to age, and will be remembered for ages yet to come. "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, goodwill among men."

There is a lesson to be drawn from what happened to the

* This is confirmed by Dr. Charpignon, in a work entitled "*Physiologie, Médecine, Métaphysique du Magnétisme*," published in Paris in 1848 (Ed.) Reichenbach's *Researches on Electricity and Magnetism*, translated by Dr. Ashburner, are more accessible and better known to the English student.—(Trns.)

shepherds, in connection with what subsequently occurred in the case of the Magi. Man should never boast of the position which he occupies in your world ; for in the eyes of the Lord, the humblest is sometimes the greatest.

Who were the first who received the announcement of this "birth" ? Humble shepherds, living in solitude, without education, and without pride, face to face with Nature, and learning the secrets of the Divinity from that vast book. They were ignorant, but they had faith ; and they loved and hoped, and this was enough for them to be deemed worthy to be the first to whom the glad tidings were announced.

But extremes meet. After the shepherds, the revelation was received by the learned and powerful Magi. It was to permeate all classes, and as it commenced at the lowest point of the scale, it was needful for it to ascend until the opposite pole was reached. The Magi were also believers, but their faith was not so pure. They were more anxious to verify a doubtful fact, than reliant on the words of the angel ; but notwithstanding this, they also came to prostrate themselves before the infant, and brought the offerings which they offered to him as to the Lord ; for without understanding it, they felt that the infant, if he existed, must be of an essence superior to their own, to be the occasion of such great events.

§ 24. Do your words respecting the shepherds and the Magi apply to the present time, and was what happened at the time of Jesus a foreshadowing of what would happen at the period of the new era of the spiritual revelation ?

This is both a lesson and example to you. You ought, above all things, to bring the good news to the outcasts of society, for they need it most ; but you should not neglect the higher classes for that reason.

Observe : the angel made his announcement to the shepherds, and then withdrew, and watched over them invisibly ; knowing that their hearts were simple and upright ; but he led the Magi, constantly showing them the star which guided them on their road. He conducted them because he knew that mundane splendours might have distracted their atten-

tion, and it was necessary to keep them constantly on the alert. Let the angel who made the announcement be your example, and imitate him.

Give your first care and most ardent love to those who are lowest in the world, but do not therefore neglect the prosperous; for it may be said of these, according to the true sense of words which human interpretations have falsified: "Many are called, but few are chosen."

Very few know how to avail themselves of the means which the Divine goodness has put into their hands, that they might advance themselves and their brothers.

Worldly prosperity is doubtless a more pleasant experience than poverty and disappointment; but it is also much more difficult to turn to good account.

Oh you who are blessed with worldly prosperity, it is not on your own account that riches have been entrusted to you, or that the events of your life always fall out in accordance with your wishes! No, they were not given to be used for material objects of pride and selfishness; and the only benefit which you should seek from them is a future moral benefit. The good things of the earth have been given you to use as an instrument and means of love and charity towards your brethren, and moral and intellectual progress for them and for you, and that you may learn to make a wise and generous use of them. You ought not to use them in providing yourselves with the luxuries of existence, but in alleviating the sufferings of the unhappy. They should not be used to help you to live in ignorance and idleness, but to acquire the knowledge which you may procure from study, which is always costly; and then to disperse it freely and abundantly to those who are deprived of your resources; or if your intelligence is insufficient for this, to cause necessary instruction to be imparted to the people, and to be imparted abundantly. It is not for your own sake that you enjoy inward satisfaction, and you ought not to confine yourself to saying, "I have had good luck, and was born under a prosperous star, for everything smiles on me." You ought first to bless and thank Him who has granted you such a

destiny, and you should think next of those who are less happy than you, and who have sometimes very heavy trials to endure. Console, strengthen, and advise them ; put yourself in the place of those who suffer, and help them to bear the weight of their misfortunes ; not superficially with the lips, but with heartfelt love and sympathy. Practise justice, love and charity towards all and for all, both materially, morally, and intellectually ; and then, O then, we shall no longer say, " Many are called, but few are chosen," for the Lord will look down in approbation on you from the height of his throne ; and as the loadstone attracts iron, he will lead you all to his feet, bound in the bonds of universal affection and brotherhood, to receive the crown of the Elect.

§ 35. You said that the Magi " were more curious to verify a doubtful fact than reliant on the word of the angel." Does this mean that they had received a spiritual revelation ?

Yes ; we shall explain it when we come to speak of their visit to Bethlehem.

§ 36. What is the exact meaning of the words, " Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace ; goodwill amongst men ? "

" In the highest," expresses the unequalled elevation of the Most High.

" Goodwill amongst men " refers to those who devote themselves to the service of the Lord, not by retiring from the world to perform penances, but by devoting their intellect, strength, and time to the good of their brethren, thus glorifying the Lord by work, the prayer of the heart ; and by love and charity.

§ 37. Are we to understand (v. 15) " when the angels had gone away from them into heaven," to mean, after the good spirits had retired into space, and had ceased to be visible to the shepherds ?

Yes ; but there is a more exact explanation : After the ecstasy into which the shepherds had fallen had ceased, and they again suffered the restraints of the flesh, they ceased to be clairvoyant.

§ 38. What are we to understand by the expression, " Heaven," in reference to God ?

Beloved ones, seek not to find in a word which man has abused, any reference to a definite place containing the Lord.

How mean is the mind of man, which has suffered the Infinite to confine his presence to "heaven," like a monarch in his palace !

How can we explain the attributes and the greatness of God to you, who cannot form an idea of infinite space ?

Not being able to define such an idea, some men, whose ideas were beyond those of the vulgar, have imagined God to be so vast that they have annihilated his personality.

Others have imagined a God as narrow as themselves, and have made him so small that their churches are too vast to hold him.

There is only one medium between these two hypotheses. God dwells in the vastness of infinite space, a spirit so pure and ethereal that very few spirits can see him ; and so omnipresent that he shines in all places without ever dividing himself, and thus preserves his individuality.

The only material comparison by which we can represent God to limited intelligences like yours, is the sun which illuminates you, and is the one centre of your world, which is a point in comparison, and radiates light, heat and fertility, whether it appears to your eyes in its full glory, or is hidden by the dark vapours which rise from the earth.

The Lord is the central and individual point in space, around whom all worlds move. He sheds his light and heat on all, but very few enjoy the sight of his shining rays.

The earthly vapours ascending from your guilty souls form a dense atmosphere between yourselves and him, which is occasionally penetrated by a few rays from time to time, after a storm, to remind you that as soon as these clouds shall be dissipated, his radiance will shine above you in all its purity.

How can your human word "God" express the ideal, the vast, the infinite, the eternal ?

Heaven denotes boundless space, in which every being moves towards the central attraction, God, to whose feet everything which is perfect is attracted.

We will give you such further explanations as you are able to receive concerning God when the time has come.*

§ 39. What is the meaning of verses 18 and 19 in connection with v. 17?

The angel and the heavenly host appeared to the shepherds to enlighten men further, and to lead Mary to meditate still more earnestly on the importance of her mission, and to convince all who heard that this infant whom God had entrusted to her, and of whom she believed herself to be the mother by divine intervention, was really the Christ ; or, in other words, the promised Messiah, whom the prophets of the old law had foretold.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSES 21–24.

The Circumcision and Purification.

(21) And when the eight days were accomplished to circumcise the child, his name also was called Jesus, as he was named by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. (22) And when the days of their purification were accomplished, according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ; (23) (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord ;) (24) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.

§ 40. These words convey a lesson to those who rebel against the yoke imposed on them by religion, because they would desire to destroy the law rather than to fulfil it, when a new era opens before mankind at the appointed period.

Observe that the “parents” of Jesus conformed to the established regulations, and submitted the “little child” to them.

Never give cause for scandal ; that is, do not scandalize your brothers by too hastily casting off the yoke which they bear.

When you reconstruct an edifice with the materials of one which is on the point of falling, you do not explode a mine, for the broken materials would be blown away, and might cause serious mischief ; but you take down every stone

* Compare the Gospel of John, § 41.

carefully, and lay it aside (throwing away those which are decayed) ready for use in the new building, and when you have made your selection, you commence the new work, replacing the stones which have crumbled away from lapse of time, by new and solid ones, strong enough to support the superincumbent weight.

It is the same with moral renovation. You should not overturn beliefs and trample them under foot inconsiderately, for the remains would injure you. You should displace them one by one, carefully preserving the true stones, which are needful to support the edifice, and rejecting all the false ones, which only tend to destroy it.

The true stones which must be preserved are faith in God and submission to his law, in whatever language it is written, and under whatever form it is presented. If the religion under which you were born has taught you the love of God, no matter under what name, and has taught you to practise love and charity, the stones are true, and you should preserve them.

But reject gradually, without fear or hesitation, everything which goes beyond the divine law. This is wholly and solely contained in the two commandments which include all the law and the prophets; the love of God above all things, and of the neighbour as yourself. To love the neighbour in all ways, and under all forms and circumstances, according to the material, moral, and intellectual order—whether he be known or unknown, friend or enemy—implies, according to these commandments, that every one must be, and will be, rewarded according to his works.

The clergy of every religion are strongly attached to it, and are interested in upholding it, and consequently those of every sect will cry "Anathema" against this profession of faith which proceeds from Christ, and which undermines the sects; for the time is not far distant when men, notwithstanding the external religions which still keep them divided, will obey this divine law, and march forward as friends and brothers, upholding a banner inscribed with the motto, "Love and Charity."

But let the clergy talk and anathematize, for what can their dogmas, traditions, and ceremonies effect against the will of the Lord, and the progressive work of his Christ?

Do they speak to the soul? Judging by the majority, and not speaking of any in particular, we may say that in general they do not; for men leave their respective churches as bad as when they entered them.

Consequently, they only appeal to the senses, but the senses grow wearied and blunted; and what remains then? In general (still speaking of the majority of cases, and not specially applying our words to any in particular) their hearers become automata, kneeling, praying, and singing at stated intervals. There are men and children without faith, and old men without hope, who leave the churches, taking with them all the vices which they brought with them when they entered; vices springing from pride or selfishness, whether avarice, idleness, anger, intemperance, sensuality, luxury, slander, calumny, incredulity, materialism, intolerance, or fanaticism.

These are the false stones which must be rejected, for the building crumbles down upon all the lies which uphold it.

The only true corner-stones are faith in God and the practice of charity; let these be sound and lasting.

What is the exact meaning of the words (v. 21), "Before he was conceived in the womb?"

Before he was committed to the care of Mary, whom men regarded as his mother.

The expressions in v. 21 resulted from the beliefs which (as we have explained in § 14) were intended to be temporarily received. In the eyes of men Jesus was considered, during his earthly mission, to be the son of Mary and Joseph; but after the completion of his mission he was regarded as miraculously born of the Virgin Mary, through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSES 25-35.

Song of Simeon.

(25) And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. (26) And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. (27) And he came by the Spirit unto the Temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the law, (28) He took him in his arms, and blessed God, and said, (29) Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, (30) For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, (31) Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: (32) A light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. (33) And Joseph and his mother wondered at those things which were spoken concerning him. (34) And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother, Behold, this child is preordained for the calamity and awakening of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (35) And a sword shall pierce through thy own soul; that the designs of many hearts may be revealed.

§ 41. Simeon was a just and God-fearing man, and lived in expectation of the advent of the promised Messiah.

You are aware that such expressions as "the Holy Spirit was in him," it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, "driven by the Spirit," &c., are Hebrew modes of expression, as we have already explained (§ 9).

The guardian angel of Simeon inspired him (or, as you would say, instilled a presentiment into his mind) that he would not die till he had seen the Lord's Christ; and this inspiration caused him to feel an intuitive conviction of its truth.

He was also inspired by his guardian angel to visit the Temple, and while still under the same influence he took the child Jesus in his arms, proclaiming him to be the expected Saviour, and then pronounced the words recorded in the text.

Have not the prophetic words of Simeon been accomplished, and are they not still in course of fulfilment?

Since Jesus was exposed on the cross, both for the present and for the future, until the accomplishment of the ages, in sight of all nations, has he not enlightened them, and will he not still continue to do so? Has he not been exposed

to the view of all nations, through his apostles and disciples, until your own days? Will he not continue to be brought before all men more and more, by the Spirit of Truth during the new era which is now commencing, until the light of which he is the personification, shall shine over all?

The words "Glory of Israel," when interpreted in their real sense, refer to the pride of the Jews in having been the nation among whom the Christ was sent.

This portion of the song refers to future ages; not merely to a period later than that when they were spoken, but later than your own. This is easily intelligible; for, when the whole earth shall be enlightened, the Jews will be happy in having been the first with whom the light was deposited; and although they began by putting it under a bushel, they will nevertheless experience a lively feeling of gratitude. The time will come, but we must wait.

The words, "This child is preordained for the calamity and awakening of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against," also allude, in their hidden spiritual sense, to the religious quarrels respecting the origin and nature and spiritual position of Jesus, as well as to his power and authority, and especially to the opposition to his teaching exhibited by most of the principal men in Israel. These religious quarrels began at that period; they have lasted until your own age, and will not cease for some time longer. Jesus has been a cause of calamity to many others besides the people of Israel; and he will continue to be so for a time. All those who reject his true law, and his true word which is contained in the widest extension of the two commandments, "Love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourself," will find him to be the stumbling-block against which they dash themselves.

Those who reject the true law of Jesus because they have misunderstood it, and frequently because they have not been properly instructed in it, cannot be adjudged so guilty as those who understood its real sense, but misrepresented it to others in order to keep them under their yoke.

But Jesus will ever be a cause of awakening for those

who walk in darkness, and turn joyfully towards the light. They are awakened, because they no longer remain in the state of degradation which alienates them from the "heaven" to which you aspire, but have entered on a path of progress which will lead them rapidly towards it. They might before have been called "dead," for their existence had no other goal but the grave; but they are now "awakened," and have burst the gates of the tomb to speed towards their Creator with all the energies of their love, faith, and perseverance.

The words of Simeon to Mary, "a sword shall pierce through thy own soul; that the designs of many hearts may be revealed," refer to the "death" of Jesus, which was, humanly speaking, a great grief to Mary. It also gave rise to the profession of the faith of some of his disciples, and to the desertion of others.

Although Mary was convinced of the brilliant future of "the Son of God," the "Saviour of the World;" she suffered humanly on account of the belief which she held respecting the "death" of the "Son" whom she had nursed in her arms, and followed in his progress, and whose actions she had admired and revered.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSES 36-40.

Anna the Prophetess.

(36) And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity. (37) And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, and she departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and prayers night and day. (38) And she standing up at that instant gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of him to all those who were waiting for redemption at Jerusalem. (39) And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. (40) And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

§ 42. Anna was a speaking and hearing medium. She was called a prophetess, because she was enabled to predict certain events, under the influence of the Spirits of the Lord. She was an exalted spirit, with highly developed

medianimic powers, like the prophets who appeared in Israel.

The prophets were regarded by the people as inspired by the Most High himself; but in truth, they were mediums. The words of Anna were similar to those of Simeon.

Verse 40 should be left in the place where it stands, although it has no relation to the foregoing prophecies, but refers to the period subsequent to the presentation in the Temple.

Jesus, being different from your humanity, had no childhood like yours. His body was only an almost material perisprit, which assumed a human appearance to the eyes of men; but as its nature was purely perispritic, the spirit which it enclosed was always free, and the body consequently obeyed its influence in a manner which was always superior to anything that could be hoped for in the most highly developed child.

You are told that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." That is a human commentary upon the narrative. The body of Jesus being always apparently human, appeared to men to grow, and his intelligence to develop, though more rapidly than in other children. But in the eyes of God he always remained the same; a devoted spirit labouring to accomplish his mission.

You may trace the progress and development of man in little children. Do not some, even at a very early age, appear to be stronger and more intelligent than the others? Would you not have it so with him who was only a child in appearance; and is it not intelligible that his first steps on earth should be marked with a peculiar seal, like the rest of his life?

"And the grace of God was upon him;" because in him everything was pure and holy, and he was, therefore, equally pure and holy in his words and actions. His early "childhood" (in human eyes) was, as you may well suppose, free from the faults and weaknesses of your infancy. He was perfect from his origin; and this naturally excited astonishment and admiration.

MATTHEW, CHAP. II.—VERSES 1-12.

The Magi.

(1) Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Herod the King, behold Magi came from Eastern countries to Jerusalem. (2) Saying, where is He that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to do homage to him. (3) When Herod the King had heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. (4) And he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people, and demanded of them where the Christ should be born. (5) And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa; for it is written thus through the prophet, (6) And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not at all the least among the leaders of Judah, for a leader shall come forth from thee, who shall tend my people Israel. (7) Then Herod called the wise men secretly, and inquired of them the exact time of the appearance of the star. (8) And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I also may go and do homage to him. (9) When they had heard the king, they departed, and lo, the star which they had seen in the east, went before them, till it came and stood above where the young child was. (10) And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. (11) And when they went into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and they fell down, and did homage to him, and when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to him, gold and frankincense and myrrh. (12) And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back into their own country by another way.

§ 43. The Magi did not visit the stable at Bethlehem, nor did they do homage to the "child" when he was laid in the manger. Their visit did not take place before the circumcision and purification, but some time afterwards, as you may perceive by the command to destroy the children up to two years of age; for Herod issued this mandate in accordance with the time that he had carefully inquired of the Magi.

Mary was to remain at Bethlehem till the Magi had visited and done homage to the "child." All these events were prearranged, and were accomplished by spiritual influence and agency.

You call such meetings and coincidences accidental, because you do not know their causes; but they frequently take place among you in a similar manner.

Joseph and Mary often visited Matthias, Joseph's brother, at Bethlehem.

Their guardian spirits inspired them with the idea of going there when it was necessary for the Magi to find them, and the Magi came to the house of Matthias to do homage to the "child" Jesus, and to offer him their gifts.

But how were the Magi led to come from the East to Jerusalem, to ask where he who was born "King of the Jews" was to be found; and how did they know that the star which they had seen related to his birth? How were they led to follow the star to do homage to him, and what was this star?

The Magi received a revelation from their guardian spirits in a dream that a messenger of the Great Being had descended on earth to be "King of the Jews," and to redeem the human race. They were also informed that they would be led to the "child" by his star, which they would see in the sky, and that, if they followed the "star," it would conduct them to the divine messenger. Every one receives a revelation in such terms as are most suitable to him.

The Magi thought that every human existence was governed by a planet; and consequently supposed that this "star" was a planet created to control the destiny of Jesus, and expressly sent to announce the event, and to guide them; whereas they believed that other men were born and died under the influence of already existing planets, each of which might rule the destinies of thousands of individuals.

You know that the ancients believed that every one was born under a good or evil star, for this notion has lasted a long time. The learned men of the period based this idea upon the belief that the planet under whose influence a man was born, radiated fluids which were either favourable to genius, wealth, happiness, and prosperity, or the contrary, according as its influence was good or evil. If you open any old book on alchemy, necromancy, or astrology, you will see the important influence attributed, sometimes in perfect sincerity, to the planets, which move on their ascending path towards progress, like everything else, for every created object is perfectible.

Do not wonder that the Magi should have formed such

an idea of the "star" which was to guide them, for they supposed it to be a planet guiding them intelligently to a special locality.* Their confidence in the powerful will of the Lord predominated over their reason ; and they supposed that the star obeyed a given order, as the servant obeys his master. But we do not say that this was really so, and we will now explain the nature of the light which they supposed to be a star.

Some sceptics, who proudly claim to know everything and yet are very ignorant, deny spiritual and medianimic phenomena, and maintain that this "star" was an astrological fable. Those who only understand mathematical results, and estimate everything by what they can weigh and measure, must speak thus.

The light which appeared to the Magi like a star had nothing in common with the stars which are scattered through space. Cannot a guardian angel appear to man under any luminous form which he deems fitting? Is the dim eye of matter even able to distinguish the light flowing from a fluidic source from the light surrounding the worlds which revolve in space?

Spiritists should understand how the perisprit of a superior spirit might be made luminous to human eyes by the concentration and modification of fluids, under the form of a star. It was not a star which the Magi beheld, for everything in space obeys the laws of universal harmony. A star is a world, and could not remove from its fixed centre of gravity to travel in space like a torch in the hand of a guide.

You know that every effect manifesting intelligence must proceed from an intelligent cause. The Magi were guided by a superior spirit, who was appointed to lead them to pay homage to the Saviour of mankind. He manifested himself by a luminous fluidic appearance like a star, as the Magi called it.

The star shone in their eyes, but their eyes were of flesh. Do you not allow for optical effects? Do you see the

* Plato attributed a spherical form to the Gods. (Transl.)

worlds that surround you as they really are, at the distance at which they are placed? Would not the distance and the shining light of the form and size of a star moving through the surrounding air, be sufficient to deceive the eyes of men who, though learned as regards their own age, were yet very far from your present knowledge, and possessed none of these instruments which have now reached such great perfection, and will yet be vastly improved?

Some sceptics have jestingly remarked that the Magi could only travel at night, because the stars do not shine in broad daylight. Not so; the Magi travelled by day, for they rested at night like you, and passed the necessary time in sleep.

Do not those learned men who have invented and who use telescopes by day, know that, under certain optical conditions, it is just as easy to see the stars in the sunlight as at night?

We ask these objectors whether it would not be easy to modify the sight of the Magi so that they could perceive a pale luminosity notwithstanding the brightness of day? Do not equally extraordinary phenomena, which you admit without well understanding them, cause human eyes to fulfil the functions of the microscope?

But let us return to the main point. The star which led the Magi was not one of those which stud the firmament, but a concentration of luminous fluids, under the form of a twinkling star, and changing its lustre so that the Magi, who were seeing mediums, could distinguish the light. An optical effect caused this travelling light to appear to twinkle like the stars on a clear night.

We come to help you to explain what is called a mystery in human language, but only to help to explain what you are really incapable of understanding. Use your science and reason to discover what they can.

The Magi were first led to Jerusalem that they might follow the course which the Lord had appointed.

Herod was to be informed of the "birth" of the "King of the Jews," that he might call an assembly of the chief

priests and scribes of the people, who consulted the prophets, and fixed Bethlehem of Judah as the exact place where the "child" whom the Magi sought should be born; the Christ, who was foretold as the leader of the people of Israel.

Nothing takes place without a reason. "The "birth" of the "child" Jesus in a humble station was to be remembered to prepare for his appearance among men, and this was effected by the events consequent upon the journey of the Magi to Jerusalem, and their visit to Bethlehem.

We will now explain what we meant by saying (§§ 33 and 35) that the Magi were more anxious to verify a doubtful event than confident in the word of the angel.

The Magi believed in the existence and manifestation of spirits, and communicated with them by medianimic methods, like yourselves. But the teachings they received were proportioned to the development of their intelligence, and to the needs of the age. Medianimity existed among them as among you, and so much was revealed to each as his organization or his degree of advancement, study, and experience fitted him to receive.

They were acquainted with magnetism and somnambulism, with the disengagement of the soul in the somnambule state, and during sleep, and with its power of communicating with spirits in this free state, either under magnetic influence, or in a dream during sleep.

When they remembered the dream on awaking, they were in doubt whether it was a vision (or spiritual revelation of events which were foretold to them, as about to be accomplished), or only a dream, or lying vision.

This doubt was not dispelled till they saw the "star" beginning to move before them, when they followed it to Jerusalem, where it stopped.

They still doubted, when the chief priests and scribes asserted that Bethlehem was the place where this celestial messenger of the Great Being, who was to tend the "people of Israel," and was born "King of the Jews," should be sought for.

After receiving Herod's orders, they felt great joy when they saw the "star" appear, and begin to move before them again.

But their faith was not fully established until the "star" stopped above the house, and having found the "child" with Mary, they prostrated themselves before him, and did homage to him as the messenger of the Great Being, who had descended upon earth to regenerate the human race; after which they opened their treasures, and offered him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh.

§ 44. What are the bodies called "shooting stars?"

This is beyond the limits of the work which we have caused you to undertake. Shooting stars are not worlds with a fixed centre of gravity, but condensed and incandescent fluids seeking the centre of attraction, where they must unite to complete their combination, and form a planet. Our previous remarks related to organized worlds, occupying their own centre of gravity. Again, our words are not inconsistent with the displacement of each planet (as we shall explain afterwards in speaking of the ascending course of your own towards perfection) during its progressive wanderings, because ages may effect, in accordance with natural law, what could not take place during the limited period of a human journey without disturbance. Thirdly, the "shooting stars," or masses of incandescent fluids, move with the speed of thought in seeking their goal, while the "star" of the Magi moved before them with the slow and regular progress of men on a journey, and thus acted intelligently as their guide.

MATTHEW, CHAP. II.—VERSES 13-18.

Flight into Egypt—Slaughter of the Innocents.

(13) And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be there until I bring thee word, for Herod is about to seek for the young child, to destroy him. (14) And when he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt. (15) And was there until the death of Herod, that the word of the Lord, through the prophet, might be

fulfilled saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. (16) Then Herod, perceiving that he was mocked by the Magi, was exceedingly angry, and sent forth and slew all the children in Bethlehem, and throughout the neighbourhood, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had accurately inquired of the Magi. (17) Then was fulfilled the word of Jeremiah the prophet, saying, (18) A voice was heard in Rama, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

§ 45. If you examine into events, you will always perceive the finger of God directing them, and providing for the future of the righteous. The Magi had informed Herod that they supposed that the child might be about two years old, according to the time when they received the spiritual revelation, the period fixed for their setting out, and the time which they spent on the journey.

Herod ordered all the children of two years and under to be destroyed, including even new-born infants, because he did not see the Magi again, and feared there might be some mistake, and preferred rather to sacrifice a greater number of victims than to miss the child whom he wished to destroy. As the calculation of the Magi was only approximate, they could not give him positive information. This uncertainty prepared for the events which followed.

After the Magi had left Bethlehem, the angel of the Lord warned Joseph in a dream, and sent him into Egypt, with Mary and the "child."

The children sacrificed by the cruelty of Herod were not lost victims. The Lord, in his benevolent foresight, had allowed this incarnation of nearly purified spirits, that their premature death might complete their experiences on earth, in place of expiation.

The parents, whom you regard as innocent, were not forgotten, for the grief which they suffered was a trial which they needed. Everything is always foreseen and provided for by the infinite wisdom of God.

MATTHEW, CHAP. II.—VERSES 19–23.

The Return from Egypt.

(19) But when Herod was dead, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, (20) Arise and take the young child and his mother, and take them into the land of Israel, for they who sought the young child's life are dead. (21) And he rose up, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. (22) But when he heard that Archelaus reigned in Judæa in the place of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither, and being warned in a dream, he turned aside to the parts of Galilee. (23) And came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that the word spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled: He shall be called a Nazarene.

§ 46. When Joseph received the first announcement from the angel, he intended to settle in Jerusalem or the neighbourhood, but the fear of attracting attention to the "child" prevented him. The angel again appeared to him in a dream, and as he was advised, he withdrew to Nazareth, in Galilee.

We call your special attention to this, that you may plainly understand that nothing takes places without the will of the Lord, although human means are always employed to attain a human end. Joseph might have been sent straight to Nazareth, but the mind of man would not have been satisfied with this fact. God, therefore, in order to fulfil a prophecy, first sent Joseph far from his home, and then turned him aside from his proposed route, and sent him to Nazareth. It was God who inspired Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, with fear for the safety of the "child;" and it is ever God who guides those who are chosen to point the path to the heavens to mankind.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSES 41–52.

Jesus in the Temple with the Teachers. His apparent human Life explained up to the time of the commencement of his Ministry.

(41) And his parents went to Jerusalem every year, to the feast of the Passover, (42) And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. (43) And when they had fulfilled the days, when they returned, the boy Jesus remained be-

hind in Jerusalem, and Joseph and his mother knew it not. (44) But they, supposing him to be in the company, went a day's journey, and sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances. (45) And as they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem in search of him. (46) And it came to pass that after three days, they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions. (47) And all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and answers. (48) And when they saw him, they were amazed, and his mother said to him, Son, why hast thou treated us thus? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. (49) And he said to them, Why did ye seek me? did ye not know that I must be about my Father's business? (50) And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. (51) And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them, and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. (52) And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

§ 47. The facts speak for themselves. The existence of Jesus was to be divided into three distinct periods. The first period extended from his "birth," including all the preceding and subsequent events, up to the time of his appearance in the Temple among the teachers. This period includes the promises of redemption, according to the current interpretation of the prophecies of the ancient Law. The second period was that of his appearance in the Temple, as a boy of twelve years old, on the day of the celebration of the Passover, when large crowds had assembled in Jerusalem. This prepared for the announcement of the divine mission of Jesus, when the time had come. The third period was that of the preaching of Jesus, guiding men to the course of life which they should follow.

It was necessary that the life of Jesus should thus be divided, in reference to the past, present, and future, and Jesus therefore remained at Jerusalem, to fulfil the second phase of his existence.

Those who know nothing, and admit that they know nothing of the "childhood" of Jesus, criticize these events as being morally improbable, although they do not understand them, and cannot explain either the motive or the object of the great preparatory work of human regeneration. Those who have attempted to explain the retired and unnoticed life of Jesus, by humanizing his actions, have not explained how he could so far withdraw himself, exposed as


he was to public observation, that so very few human actions are recorded of him. The only ones which remain are those recorded by each of the Evangelists, according to his share of the narrative as an historical medium, for the instruction of the present and the future. Each represented these events under medianimic influence in a manner appropriate to the age and to the state of intelligence of the time.

You are aware that the state of intelligence and the necessities of the period did not allow the real origin of the "child" to be known. That period was preparatory to the present new era of Spiritism, and this knowledge was reserved for the New Revelation, which we bring you at the appointed time in the name of the Spirit of Truth, and by command of the Lord.

You also know that Jesus was first to be regarded as clothed with humanity like one of the old prophets; and subsequently, when his earthly mission was ended, and the revelations of the angel had been published, as a God "miraculously" incarnated. This was due to the human interpretations of the angelic revelation, which prepared the way for the reign of the letter, temporarily required as a means and condition of progress. Jesus was then regarded as corporeally a man like yourselves, and spiritually a God; a God-man.

The spiritual origin of Jesus is revealed to you now that the time has come for the letter which killeth to be succeeded by the Spirit which giveth life. Now that what has remained secret ought to be known, we are commissioned to tell you the nature of the apparent human life of Jesus from the time that he appeared on your planet, until the period when he entered upon his public mission on the banks of the Jordan, as a man of thirty years of age.

Everything in the life of Jesus was simply apparent. His life was "human" in the eyes of men, but under illusory conditions, because all, like Mary and Joseph, were to believe in his "humanity." Although he had clothed himself with a tangible perispit, it was a purely perispitric body, inaccessible to the necessities of your material existence.



When Jesus appeared to be an infant at the breast of Mary, the superior spirits who surrounded him turned the course of the milk by a very simple fluidic action, and as the "infant," had no need of it, it was returned directly to the system of the mother.

There is nothing in this which need surprise you. Do you not know that a chemist can combine or decompose at will a compound fluid, by restoring its proper nature to each heterogeneous element? Can you not admit that the fluidic action of superior spirits, who know all the secrets of your human life and organization, might thus decompose milk, and restore each of its constituent elements to their source? Although sceptics may shrug their shoulders in derision, it does not alter the facts. Does not the knowledge which chemists have acquired of synthesis and analysis suffice to explain a fact to you that will be confirmed by the experience of the properties of fluids, which you will shortly acquire?

If a magnetizer wishes to stay the flow of milk for the good of his patient, is not the flow arrested? And can you imagine that the influence of spirits on man is less than your own? *

Nor need you wonder that Mary's breast should have yielded milk, for this secretion may result from various causes which we need not here enumerate. There are many instances of this, both in human beings and animals; independently of maternity. This need be no difficulty in the face of well-known facts; and in Mary's case, the blood was lactefied by spiritual magnetism and fluidic agency.

At that period, the mother suckled the infant as long as she could, often until the child was two or three years old, and had long been able to run alone, for the habits of the people of that age and country were very different from yours, and they lived much more outside than inside their houses. As soon as the children were able to walk,

* Mr. Braid's experiments will be found in any good treatise on physiology. (Transl.)

they ran about alone or in company as they pleased, often supporting themselves to a large extent on wild fruits and honey. During this period of the life of Jesus, everything took place under the easiest conditions conformable with the perispritic nature of his visible body. Jesus was reared like other children of his age. He was precocious, and spoke and walked sooner than others ; but he was regarded by all as the son of Mary and Joseph. He was in the habit of wandering in the fields at a very early period, either alone or with other children. At a later period, he wandered about alone, avoiding observation ; and never asked for food when he returned to his home. He was supposed to have fed on fruit and wild honey like his little companions, and as Mary felt no uneasiness about what it was needful for her to provide for the child, no one else offered him food. Without knowing why, Mary did not feel that it was necessary for her to watch over her son like an ordinary mother, for she instinctively felt that he had no need of her solicitude. Yet this does not imply that she was a careless or indifferent mother, but only that she abstained from useless cares and anxieties under the guidance of friendly guardian spirits. Consequently Jesus was often absent from his human home, even when quite a little child. He sometimes disappeared just when Mary was preparing a meal, and let the time pass by, and when Mary and Joseph looked for him, or waited for him, he said to them, " You have no need to be uneasy, or to look for me." When they entreated him to share the meal with them, he would say, " I have no need of anything ;" and it was always supposed that he had fed on wild fruits and honey.

Thus it happened that Jesus began to absent himself as much as the customs of the country permitted a child who was extremely advanced for his age. These periods of absence gradually became longer and longer, both to accustom his " parents" to them, and to prevent their feeling any anxiety about his sustenance.

We have already said that Mary's guardian spirits disposed her to sympathize with the habits of Jesus. Joseph was

also subject to the same influences, and they both felt that he had other aspirations and tendencies than those around him; though this did not lead them to think that he was different from what he appeared to be.

They did not regard the habits of Jesus as more than singular to human eyes. He loved solitude, and did not care to associate with children of his own age.

His "parents" considered that he lived frugally. They thought that he preferred to live on wild fruits and honey, like many shepherds, and his health did not seem to suffer from it. They supposed that the few opportunities which he had of thus procuring food were sufficient for him. We do not say that Jesus obtained food thus, but only that his parents supposed so; and even when he appeared to them to take food, he did not partake of a regular meal; for his absences did not take place at fixed intervals.

Mary was not surprised at her son's mode of life, when she recollected what she and Joseph both regarded as his miraculous origin.

Their minds were both so impressionable, their faith was so strong, and their moral elevation so high, that they were very easily influenced by the inspirations of the superior spirits, who impressed them with the desire of not attempting to oppose or to interfere with his mode of life.

For some years before Jesus visited Jerusalem, he had thus absented himself from home for one, or several days together, saying, "I am going to pray." Sometimes he remained at home for several days, but without appearing to take any food; for his perispritic, though apparently human body required no human nourishment, like yours.

The Hebrews saw nothing surprising in a man abstaining from food for one or several days. The most zealous among them sometimes abstained from all food for three days together.

The medium is inclined to deny what she cannot understand; but if she reflects she will remember an instance in her own family of what may take place even in your own days, when good living and luxurious habits have weakened the

vital powers.* Could not strong and sober men, inured and accustomed to it from their youth, fast if they so desired? Remember the customs of the modern Arabs, as well as those of the ancient Hebrews.

We will now, having regard to the perispritic nature of the apparently human body of Jesus (compare §§ 14 and 32), explain the appearance of Jesus in the Temple among the teachers, and tell you what became of him during the three days that he remained at Jerusalem.

Joseph and his brother brought Jesus to the Temple as one of the descendants of David, according to his genealogy and the descent of his tribe.

When the Passover was over, Joseph and Mary set out on their return journey, and you are told that Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem without their knowing it, for they thought that he was with the rest of the company. They travelled on for a day, and sought for him among their kinsfolk and friends, and as they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him.

Is it reasonable to regard these events as morally improbable, and to say that it is incredible that when Mary and Joseph arrived at the capital at a time when it was crowded with strangers, they should have lost sight of Jesus, whom they considered to be a boy of twelve years old; and that they should then have set out on their return, and travelled for a whole day before they discovered that he was not with them?

The apparent moral impossibility only arises from ignorance.

We have told you that Jesus had already led a life at variance with your customs and habits, for some years.

His parents were accustomed to his contemplative and

* During the epidemic of Asiatic cholera in Paris in 1832, M. Bréard, the father of the medium, abstained from all food for four days, fearing lest it might bring on an attack; and, nevertheless, he was very well and attended to his business all the time.

The ascetics among the early Christians frequently abstained from food altogether for several days.

According to Sophronius (ch. cxlvii.) the Pope, St. Leo, prayed and fasted for four days at the tomb of the Apostle Peter.

somewhat outlandish life, and consequently did not watch over him with the strict supervision that you exercise towards your children.

Why are parents so watchful of their children? Surely on account of the weakness, heedlessness, and ignorance of the young creatures who are entrusted to their care ; and if the children should once exhibit sufficient reason, intellect, and moral development to secure them from the dangers to which they are exposed by their youth, the parents would desist from an unnecessary and troublesome supervision.

You are told that Joseph and Mary believed that Jesus was with some of their relations and friends. There was a large company wandering about in the open country, for you must not suppose that they followed a beaten track, like your high roads ; it was only when they had asked one friend after another about Jesus, and found that no one had seen him, that they began to search for him ; and as there had been no halt during the day for refreshment, they did not ascertain positively that no one had seen him, until the evening. Most of the company (and Joseph and Mary among them) subsisted principally on the wild fruit of the trees and hedges during their journey.

When Joseph and Mary returned to Jerusalem, they found Jesus seated among the teachers in the Temple, listening to them, and asking them questions. But Mary did not say, "My son, how could you live alone in a town where you were an unknown stranger? Who has entertained you, and where did you rest and sleep?" Instead of this, she merely expressed the uneasiness that his absence had caused herself and Joseph, because he remained alone at Jerusalem, when he ought to have returned to Nazareth with them.

Mary did not refrain from asking "her son" what had become of him during these three days because she knew that his nature was different from her own, but because she knew that his mode of existence was different from those of other children, as the experience of several years had taught her. She had known him abstain altogether from food for

one or several days, when he was at home, or to be absent at irregular intervals for several days together.

Those who know nothing of the spiritual origin of Jesus, and the perispritic nature of his body, may ask, "What became of Jesus during those three days? Where did this child of twelve years old pass the night? for he cannot have wandered about alone."

Such questions naturally occur to those who take Jesus for a man like themselves; although those who have studied Oriental languages and habits know that men, women, and children, often sleep out of doors, wrapped only in a mantle.

After what we have told you of the origin of Christ, and the perispritic nature of his fluidic body, you can understand that the boy had no occasion to trouble himself about seeking for a lodging.

Those who ask these questions should do so with a full consciousness of their own ignorance and with a desire for instruction, and not with that short-sighted incredulity which denies both spirit-manifestations, the Gospel revelation, and the new revelation which reveals the secrets of the other world, the connection between the visible and invisible, and the means of intellectual and moral progress, through knowledge, charity, and love.

During those three days, Jesus entered the court of the Temple with the crowd, and left it with them when it was closed. As soon as he had left the Temple, and was out of sight of men, he laid aside his tangible fluidic body and the clothes which covered it, which were entrusted to spirits who placed them beyond human ken. He then returned to the superior regions where he watched over your planet as its protecting and governing spirit, from the height of celestial splendours, as he does at present.

When the Temple was opened, he reappeared among men, resuming his tangible perisprit and dress, which made him appear human to their eyes.

Mary and Joseph did not understand the answer of Jesus, because they thought, for the moment, that he spoke

of his reputed father Joseph, and not of the Heavenly Father whose reign he came to prepare.

Those who object that the meaning of the words, "Did ye not know that I must be about my Father's business" must have been obvious to Mary and Joseph, because the angel had announced that Jesus was the "son of God," forget that they were clothed in flesh, and that their perceptions were necessarily obscured by the imperfection of their human faculties. As the habits of Jesus did not appear to be more than singular, nothing indicated his origin as extra-human. The impression made by the revelation and the succeeding events had gradually worn away. The expression "father," which they supposed to refer to Joseph, was the only thing which struck them for the moment, and they did not understand it; for everything is obscured by the flesh. Although the mode of existence of Jesus did not surprise Mary as much as Joseph, when she thought of the origin of her son, she often forgot it, especially as the nature of the child which had been announced to her was not to be made known at present.

It is not surprising that Mary and Joseph thought that Jesus referred to Joseph as his father, or that Mary should have said to Jesus, "My son, behold, thy *father* and I have sought thee sorrowing." Mary believed herself to be the mother of Jesus by an incarnation which was at once human and divine, or miraculous; and, consequently, Jesus called her his mother. Joseph was regarded by men as the father of Jesus, who had hitherto called him so. As the angel had directed Joseph to take Mary as his wife, Joseph knew that men were to regard him as the father of the child; indeed, the husband would be regarded as the father, in such a case, from the moment that he accepted the mother as his wife.

Joseph did not know how long this belief was intended to last; but Jesus had always addressed Joseph as his father; and consequently Mary thought that he spoke of him in the present instance.

This answer was the first allusion made by Jesus to his

mission, and he pronounced the words with reference both to the present and to the future.

You are told that Jesus was sitting amongst the teachers in the Temple, listening to them, and asking them questions ; and that all who heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers.

Children of the age of twelve years (as Jesus then appeared to be) studied reading and tradition, and began to study the commentaries of the learned. They submitted their difficulties to their teachers ; but it is incorrect to say that they never argued with the teachers in public. This sometimes happened, and the child was led into a public discussion, when he showed a great aptitude which might do honour to his master.

This took place in the case of Jesus ; for although he was a stranger in Jerusalem, and not under the tuition of any master, he was not unknown when he sat among the teachers in the Temple ; for Joseph and his brother had introduced him as a descendant of David.

He was permitted to speak in the Temple at a time when Joseph and his brother were no longer with him, although they had introduced him. He was first urged to reply to the teachers, who were ready to question him themselves ; and afterwards he sat down and joined in the discussion, instructing them in his turn.

Does it not sometimes happen that although you do not usually listen to children, you listen attentively to those who seem to be more intelligent and advanced than usual at their age ? And do you not think that when the people were amazed at the first replies of Jesus to the questions asked him, and at the first questions propounded by himself, he would have been urged to speak by the very persons who had entered into discussion with him ?

The teachers knew that he was one of the descendants of David, but it is not unnecessary to add that even if they had suspected his identity with the child whom the Magi had announced, it would have been difficult for them to establish it, for they did not know exactly in what family of

the tribe he was born, and the massacre of the infants had put an end to their present expectation of the Messiah.

After the public discussion in the Temple, and his reply to Mary, Jesus returned to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph, and dwelt there until he commenced his public mission on the banks of the Jordan, when he appeared to be a man of thirty years of age. Joseph died some time after their return to Nazareth, for his mission was ended. During these eighteen years, the apparent human life of Jesus passed in manual labour, and in the practice of love ; that is, in exercising goodness and charity towards all around him.

He was thought to lead a retired life, and to love solitude ; but he fulfilled all the ostensible duties of man in reference to his relations and neighbours, by conforming (to human eyes) to the law of labour. He lived under this as the greatest and justest law among men, although so many of you revolt under the burden.

Jesus lived the exemplary life which he came to preach, but his outward life was not like yours. His apparent taste for solitude prevented his being obliged to submit to all the requirements of ordinary life ; and Mary understood and encouraged this tendency, under the influence of her guardian spirits. Jesus fulfilled all the apparent duties of mankind, by practising manual labour, and exercising goodness and charity ; but he “absented” himself at other times, and was supposed by Mary and others to divide his time between his human duties and prayer ; and he never appeared to take any refreshment either at home or elsewhere. All that we have said of his life previous to his attaining the apparent age of twelve years, likewise applies to the subsequent period until the commencement of his public mission. When Jesus was believed to be absent or in retirement, he disappeared and returned to the superior regions where he watches over your earth as its protecting and governing spirit.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN,
With the concurrence of the Apostles.

§ 48. How do you explain the anxiety which Mary and Joseph felt when they found that Jesus had not accompanied them on their return from Jerusalem?

§ 48. As Mary and Joseph were clothed in flesh, their human faculties were necessarily imperfect. They thought that Jesus lived an ordinary life, because his actions merely appeared singular as compared with those of others. Nothing specially stamped his nature as superhuman; and the first impression produced by the revelation and the subsequent events gradually wore away; and though his mode of life did not surprise Mary, when she thought of his origin, her intelligence was often at fault.

Jesus appeared to Mary and Joseph to be clothed in a body as exposed to accident or death as their own, and that the angel had directed Joseph to carry the young child to Egypt to save him from his enemies. When they found that the boy was missing, and had stayed at Jerusalem instead of returning with them, they remembered that revelation, and the accompanying events; and it is not surprising if this very recollection made them uneasy.

Mary and Joseph supposed that the flight into Egypt was a precaution necessary to preserve the life of the child. But after what we have told you of the origin of Christ, you can perceive that no act of man could have affected his life, on account of the perispritic nature of his body. But even had any real danger existed, God could (humanly speaking) have adopted other means for his preservation; and the real object of the journey was to remove Jesus, that his existence might be forgotten, in order that his mission could be carried out in the desired manner. Previous to the commencement of his public mission, Jesus was only intended to appear among men at certain intervals; for if he had always lived in public, his teaching would not have produced a sufficiently profound impression on his hearers.

§ 49. How could Jesus appear to men as a new-born infant, and grow up like any other child, thus apparently passing through the ordinary stages of human life?

§ 49. Why should it seem incredible to you that the perispritic body of Jesus should exhibit the same apparent pro-

perties as your bodies, to human eyes, and that the fluids composing it should develop in a similar manner?

We could not give you further explanations on this point without going into details as to the nature of fluids, which it is at present impossible to enter upon.

But you know that even an inferior spirit of your own order can cause the perisprit which constitutes his life and individuality to assume all appearances, and even tangible forms instantaneously, provided only that he is able to avail himself of the animalized fluids requisite for the purpose. Admit that this condition is unnecessary in the case of a superior spirit, who is able to assimilate the animalized fluids diffused through the atmosphere, and you cannot then see any difficulty in his being able at will to expand the fluids of the perisprit which he has formed and rendered tangible, so as to cause it to pass through human phases of development in the eyes of men. Jesus is a perfect and pre-eminently pure spirit, and his powerful will drew around him the materials required for the proper accomplishment of his mission.

We have explained to you in § 14 that Jesus formed a perisprit for himself fitted to retain a lengthened tangibility, and humanized by the aid of the surrounding fluids which enter into the composition of your own bodies. He could quit and re-assume this perisprit at will, and it was so far humanized that he could cause it to assume the appearance of the successive stages of human life ; but in the eyes of God, Jesus was always a devoted spirit, working at the task assigned him.

§ 50. What is the meaning of v. 51—" His mother kept all these things in her heart " ?

Mary received more and more confirmations of the mission of Jesus, addressed to her mind and intelligence.

The most striking events in the life of Jesus previous to the commencement of his public mission, took place during his visit to Jerusalem. The answer which he gave to Mary prepared her to understand that his parents' care was un-

necessary. Jesus likewise wished to remind them of his origin, which they considered as "divine" and "miraculous," and to lead them to understand the character and object of his mission.

MATTHEW, CHAP. III.—VERSES 1–6. MARK, CHAP. I.
VERSES 1–5. LUKE, CHAP. III.—VERSES 1–6.

Preaching of John—Baptism.

Matt. iii. (1) And in those days, came John the Baptist, preaching in the desert of Judæa. (2) And saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand. (3) For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, A voice of one crying in the desert, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (4) And he, John, had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his food was locusts and wild honey. (5) Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judæa, and all the region about Jordan. (6) And they were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

Mark i. (1) The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (2) As it is written in the prophets, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. (3) A voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (4) John was baptizing in the desert, and proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. (5) And all the country of Judæa, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem went out to him, and were all baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

Luke iii. (1) Now, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judæa; Herod, Tetrarch of Galilee; his brother Philip Tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis; and Lysanius the Tetrarch of Abilene; (2) Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the desert. (3) And he came into all the country round Jordan, proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. (4) As it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, saying, A voice of one crying in the desert, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (5) Every valley shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places into smooth roads. (6) And all flesh shall behold the salvation of God.

§ 51. Men make use of expressions which they understand and apply as well as they can. The word of God means the same thing as divine inspiration.

God does not communicate directly with men; for however pure an incarnated spirit may be, his fleshly covering forms an insuperable barrier between himself and the Divinity; but the Lord sends great spirits who are inspired

directly by himself, who communicate his wishes to men, as his agents.

God did not speak directly to John, any more than to the prophets, some of whom were clairvoyant and clair-audient mediums, while others were inspired in proportion to their elevation.

John received his inspiration in the desert, when the time fixed for the commencement of his mission had arrived. He was inspired by superior spirits, and came into all the country around Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance, and baptising in the river all who came to him, and confessed their sins.

John was a superior spirit, commissioned, as he said himself, to open up and to prepare the way for the light to shine more easily.

His semi-barbarous appearance, and unusual habits, drew all eyes upon him. His rough stern words led men to look seriously into their own hearts; and he prepared the paths of the Lord by preparing those of his Christ.

He was the leader of the flock, walking in front and ringing his bell, that all the lost sheep might know in what direction to turn for safety.

At that period, as well as in the early days of Christianity, confession was made publicly, and in a loud voice, before all men. It thus led to profound humility, for it needed great self-abnegation to dare to confess in public all the faults and errors, and basenesses which might spring up in the human heart. It also prevented relapses, for a man who knew that others were aware of his most secret thoughts and evil propensities, would always struggle to avoid the suspicion with which his least fault would be regarded. Such confessions were made publicly, in a loud voice; and God heard them *then*.

The words of Luke iii. v. 5, apply to the moral revolution which the doctrine of Jesus would effect, and will still accomplish, with the aid of Spiritism, and by the mission of the Spirit of Truth. The valleys shall be filled up, and

raised ; and the mountains whose haughty heads would stay the march of progress, will be overturned, and the levelling influence will pass over all nature, raising the small and humbling the great, and giving each the share which is justly due to him ; and “ all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” That is, every man who shall practise the law taught by Jesus, and his sublime morality, shall arrive at the goal.

§ 52. Herod was dead at this time. Why does Luke call his successor Herod too ?

The name of Herod had a family application among the Jews at this period. It is here applied to Antipater, or Antipas.

MATTHEW, CHAP. III.—VERSES 7-12. MARK, CHAP. I.
VERSES 6-8. LUKE, CHAP. III.—VERSES 7-18.

Accusations against the Pharisees.—Advice to the people, the taxgatherers, and the soldiers.—Testimony borne to Jesus Christ.

Matt. iii. (7) But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ? (8) Therefore produce fruits fitting for repentance. (9) And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father, for I say unto you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. (10) And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees, therefore every tree which does not produce good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. (11) I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I ; I am not worthy to carry his sandals ; he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire. (12) Whose winnowing-fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor, and gather his corn into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Mark i. (6) And John was clothed in camel's hair, and wore a leathern girdle about his loins, and his food was locusts and wild honey. (7) And he preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me ; I am not worthy to stoop down and loosen the strap of his sandals. (8) I indeed have baptized you in the water ; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

Luke iii. (7) He then said to the crowds who came forth to be baptized by him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ? (8) Therefore produce fruits fitting for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham as our father ;

for I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. (9) And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees ; therefore every tree which does not yield good fruit is hewn down and cast down into the fire. (10) And the crowds asked him saying, What shall we do then ? (11) And he answering, saith unto them, Let him that hath two coats give to him who hath none, and let him who hath food, do likewise. (12) And tax-gatherers also came to be baptized, and said to him, Teacher, what shall we do ? (13) And he said to them, Exact no more than what is appointed for you. (14) And the soldiers likewise demanded of him saying, And what shall we do ? And he said to them, Oppress no one, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your allowance. (15) And as the people were in expectation, and all men considered in their hearts about John, whether he were the Christ or not, (16) John answered, saying to them all, I indeed baptize you in water, but one mightier than I cometh, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to loosen ; he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire. (17) His winnowing-fan is in his hand, and he shall thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor, and will gather the corn into his barn, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. (18) And encouraging the people, he preached many other things to them.

§ 53. John proclaimed himself to be the forerunner of the Truth. Although he neither knew nor acknowledged anything of a previous incarnation, when he was questioned by the priests and Levites whom the Jews had sent from Jerusalem (John i. v. 15-28), it was only because matter limits spiritual intelligence. John was a superior spirit on a mission, like Joseph and Mary, but in accordance with the established laws of human incarnation, he had lost his memory, and lived in complete oblivion of his previous existence as the prophet Elijah. It was necessary that he should know nothing of these mysteries of the other world ; he was well acquainted with the law of Moses ; but his aspirations could not rise beyond the mission which he was appointed to fulfil.

He was in medianimic sympathy with the superior spirits, of whom he had himself been one. They aided and inspired him ; and he possessed the intuition which guided him in all things, and the humility which all on earth should feel. He had the knowledge of what awaits the spirit on returning to its country, and the consciousness of his mission.

His mission was to prepare men for repentance by means of a symbol which should lead them to understand the purification which they needed. He washed their bodies to lead them to cleanse their hearts. He purified the outside to lead

them to purify their spirits ; and in reply to their questions, he exhorted them to practise justice, love, and charity.

His mission was preparatory, and was to be completed by Christ. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, until he had assembled the people together to listen to the preaching of the truth.

The words of Matthew iii. v. 9-10, refer to all ages ; to the period when John pronounced them, as well as to your own, and to the future.

The Hebrews recognized none as children of God except those who were subject to the law of Moses, just as many of the churches deny salvation to all who do not strictly obey their commands. The Hebrews regarded Abraham as the head of the family which was to inherit the kingdom of the heavens.

God designed these inspired words of his messenger to be distinctly understood to mean that all who come to him are equally his children. He says, "The children of Abraham will not enter into my kingdom if they are ungrateful, and misunderstand and pervert my precepts, for if they do so now, they will do the same in the future. But whoever hearkens to my voice, and enters into the straight path, and uproots the evil tree which brings forth evil fruit in his heart, leaving only the good seed which should make it fruitful ; in short, whoever treads in my paths, is mine. The children of Abraham are not those who cry to me, Lord, Lord ! but only those who do my will, whoever they are. All those whose hearts are pure are my children, and none but they shall enter into my kingdom."

You, Spiritists, know the hidden sense of those symbolical expressions, which were appropriate to the intelligence of the period, and were designed to impress it strongly : "Every tree which does not bear good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

The tree which does not bear good fruit is the incarnate spirit which has failed in its experiences, and which, after death, will be thrown into the fire. That is, it will be removed to the spiritual world, where it must first expiate its

offences by moral sufferings, appropriate and proportioned to the faults or crimes which it may have committed ; and it will then be doomed to reincarnation, which will open to it the paths of expiation and reparation, being the appointed means both of purification and progress.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit means the assistance and inspiration of purified spirits, which is granted by Christ in the name of the Lord to those men who receive this inspiration medianimically, or even communicate with the purified spirits according to the conditions and degree of the medianimity which has been given them. Such assistance, inspiration, and communion, is only granted to earnest men to uphold and direct them in their experiences, or in their mission, to aid them to purify their spirits, and to advance in the path of moral and intellectual progress.

When Jesus sent down the Holy Spirit upon his disciples, he caused exalted spirits to approach them who could aid and uphold them in their hard and dangerous task. These manifested themselves by their luminous perispirt, under the appearance of "tongues of fire."

You are still under this influence at the present day, when you renounce your human passions, and live the life of God, and surrender yourselves wholly into his hands by practising work, humility, love and charity. You then attract to yourselves the protecting spirits of humanity ; but beware of pride, for it is easy for even the most elevated to fall, and evil thoughts easily arise in the incarnate mind. You should therefore receive the spiritual light which is granted you to shed abundantly on those who wish to be enlightened ; but always with a profound feeling of humility and gratitude, giving thanks to the source from whence flows all that is great and good, and everything that is true and eternal.

Spiritism is the completion of that law of love which you have trodden under foot so long.

Your hearts bring forth evil fruit, and you are consequently bad trees ; but the Lord in His mercy digs up the tree which yields no fruit, or only bad fruit, to permit the free growth of the divine tree of Faith which Christ has planted with his

own hands ; but men have not cultivated it, and the evil plants around it have choked it. Consequently, the Divine gardener is still obliged to work at his vine, to clear it of the parasites which smother it. This is the tree which refreshes the weary, and invites the wayworn traveller to repose. It will grow up and spread its blessed branches throughout the universe ; and you will come from all parts, whatever may have been the outward religion in which you have been re-incarnated ; and all who have laboured at the work of regeneration by the apostleship of word and example, will say with joy, when you return to the Lord, "I have fulfilled my task well."

You who are Spiritists will also understand the hidden sense of the inspired words spoken of the Christ by the Forerunner : "His winnowing-fan is in his hand, and he shall thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor, and will gather the corn into his barn, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

The Lord, speaking through his messenger, made use of an expression which would strongly impress material men, and strike them with fear.

Be well assured that God has never abandoned man since his first appearance on your planet. His laws are as immutable and eternal as himself, and one of these is the law of progress, which is physical for the planet, and physical, moral, and intellectual for humanity, and for all creatures in all the kingdoms of nature, for every created thing is capable of being perfected.

Incarnation and reincarnation are also laws of God, and are the appointed instruments and means of reparation and progress. In all ages a guardian angel or protecting spirit has ever been allotted to man as his guide, who is chosen to protect him, and lead him in the way of progress.

In all ages, missionary spirits have descended among men to urge them onward in this path by revealing to them, or reminding them of the law of nature, which is the law of God ; according to the circumstances, state of intelligence, and necessities of each period.

In all ages man has been invested with free will, and surrounded by unseen influences, some good, and others evil. He has received sufficient intelligence to distinguish between good and evil, in proportion to his moral and intellectual development, and when his free will has failed to lead him aright, he has been doomed to expiate his faults or crimes by appropriate moral sufferings after death, and has then been subjected to reincarnation, that he may repair his errors, and continue his course of progress upon your earth, which is one of the lower worlds of trials and expiations.

Reincarnation, combined with preliminary expiation in the errant state, is at once hell, purgatory, reparation, and progress. It is the holy ladder which all men must climb, and the steps are the phases of the different existences which must be passed through before arriving at the summit; for God has said through the mouth of his Christ, that none can attain to him, without being born, dying, and being re-born until the spirit has attained the limits of perfection.

Moses, and the prophets of the old law, had prepared the way for the coming era of human regeneration. Jesus is our Saviour, and our Master; he is the protecting and governing spirit of your planet (at the formation of which he presided), and of its humanity, and he will lead you to perfection. He descended among you to inaugurate this era, and to lay the foundations of your regeneration.

“His winnowing fan is in his hand;” for the work of regeneration began with the earliest days of Christianity.

He is still separating the darnel and the good seed; the chaff and the corn, as he has done in the past and will continue to do in the future.

The corn that he gathers into his barn represents the purified spirits who have finished their experiences in your world (such as it is at present, an inferior world of expiation), and who have become his devoted and intelligent missionaries, and labour at your moral and intellectual advancement either in the errant state, or incarnated on a mission.

The chaff that Jesus burns represents the guilty and

rebellious spirits who have failed in their trials, and whom he subjects first to expiation and then to reincarnation, under such conditions that their new experiences shall serve as a means of expiation, reparation, and progress, if they make a good use of them.

The fire in which the chaff is consumed, or, in other words, that in which the guilty and rebellious spirit expiates his offences in the errant state, is the guilty conscience. This awakens remorse and develops terrible or painful visions, according to the nature and degree of the offender's guilt. These, as we shall afterwards explain, are brought before the eyes of the spirit, who vainly attempts to fly from the view of his faults or crimes, and the moral sufferings which are always appropriate and proportioned to them.

This fire never is or will be extinguished. It is eternal, because God creates throughout all eternity; and thus there will always be spirits who commence their course from their original state of simplicity and ignorance to the limits of perfection, and fail. Having proved guilty and rebellious, they will be compelled to expiate and repair their offences; but the fire of the eternal Gehenna is extinguished in the case of every guilty spirit as soon as the chaff is burned; that is, as soon as he repents and humbles himself to ask for pardon under the influence of a sincere and profound repentance, and the ardent desire to repair his faults. He is then aided by good spirits to advance, and to prepare himself for fresh experiences. But remorse always pursues the guilty until he enters upon a new course, and as there will always be rebellious spirits, the fire of the eternal Gehenna cannot be extinguished, for it resembles an inheritance transmitted from one to another.

Jesus "will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor." The work of regeneration commenced with the first days of the era which Christ inaugurated, but it must now be completed; and Spiritism, the third and last exponent of the goodness of God to men, has come to complete it, and to shed light on all. Jesus has said that the wilfully blind will be thrown

into outer darkness, where, he adds, there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. But could Christ, a pure spirit and the type of love and charity, condemn guilty spirits to wailing and gnashing of teeth? Doubtless; but spirits are insensible to physical tortures. These words will serve to illustrate the hidden and allegorical character of all the teachings of Jesus. Weeping and gnashing of teeth typify the remorse arising from a guilty conscience.

Jesus "will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor." At the time decreed by God, when the regeneration shall be accomplished, when Spiritism shall have enlightened all men, and your earth is fitted to be the abode of good spirits only, those spirits who have previously been permitted to re-incarnate themselves on your earth and have remained guilty, will be cast into outer darkness. That is, they will be removed gradually, according to their degrees of guilt, to the lower worlds of trial and expiation, where they will have to expiate for long ages their persistence and obstinacy in evil, and their wilful blindness.

MATTHEW, CHAP. III.—VERSES 13-17. MARK, CHAP. I.
VERSES 9-11. LUKE, CHAP. III.—VERSES, 21, 22.

Baptism of Jesus.

Matth. iii. (13) Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him; (14) And John checked him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and dost thou come to me? (15) And Jesus answered and said unto him, Permit it now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he permitted him. (16) And when Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water immediately, and, behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and coming upon him. (17) And lo, a voice from the heavens, saying, This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

Mark i. (9) And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. (10) And straightway going up out of the water, he saw the heavens cleft asunder, and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; (11) And there was a voice from the heavens: Thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.

Luke iii. (21) And while all the people were being baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and as he was praying, the heaven was opened.

(22) And the Holy Spirit descended upon him in a bodily shape like a dove, and there was a voice from heaven saying, Thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.

§ 54. Jesus was a pre-eminently pure spirit, and had no need to be baptized by John in the water, or to receive a baptism of penitence for the remission of any sin, for he had none to confess, and he confessed none. He had no occasion to wash an earthly body like yours, nor did his perfectly pure and immaculate spirit need the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire. On the contrary, it was his mission to administer these baptisms first to his apostles, who were chosen to preach his sublime morality among men by teaching and example ; and then to confer this spiritual baptism on all who show themselves worthy of it, by practising and teaching his law of love like the apostles.

Why did Jesus come to receive the baptism of water from John in the Jordan, like every one else, and in sight of all ?

To preach by example, from the commencement of his public mission, and to receive the confirmation of his origin, power and mission from God himself, in the sight of all, in accordance with the words which John had spoken before his arrival, in which he proclaimed him to be the Redeemer, Saviour and Perfecter of mankind.

Jesus descended among you to set you an example in all things, and his earthly mission left among men a model which they ought to copy, and they must of necessity walk in his steps before they can attain to perfection.

During his earthly mission men were to consider him a man like themselves, enduring all the trials of your humanity, and triumphing over them. He set the example of practising work, justice, charity and love, in which he gave instruction and laws ; and he manifested light and truth, veiled by the letter and shrouded in parable, lest the eyes of the men of that age should be dazzled and blinded by their splendour.

After the completion of his earthly mission, men regarded him who had come to give them the type and model of

human perfection, as God himself. This was due to human interpretations, according to the state of intelligence and the needs of the age, and was preparatory to the future.

If you trace the course of the apparently human life of Jesus from his arrival on the banks of the Jordan to its termination on the cross, you will always and invariably see him teaching by example.

At the commencement of the public life of Jesus, he allowed himself to receive the baptism of water, which was intended to lead to penitence, from John, like all others who came to him. But before Jesus arrived on the banks of the Jordan, John had already spoken to the people, the Pharisees, the taxgatherers and soldiers, who had all come to him, thinking that he was the Christ, in the words recorded in Matthew, chap. vii. verses 11 and 12.

This will explain why John at first objected to baptize Jesus, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" And why he no longer refused when Jesus answered, "Permit it now, for thus it befits us to fulfil all righteousness;" meaning that we should always teach by example. John thus set the first example of submission and obedience to the Master.

John's previous words respecting Jesus were confirmed by the manifestation designed to enlighten men respecting his origin and mission, which took place after his baptism. This confirmation was in accordance with Hebrew traditions, and the state of intelligence of the period.

You are told that when Jesus had been baptized, he came out of the water immediately, and while he was praying, heaven opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in a bodily shape like a dove, and a voice was heard from heaven, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The Lord thus manifested his power by sending an apparently material sign, visible to the human eye. The sign, like the accompanying voice, was only a spirit manifestation, intended to strike the attention of men, and to lead them to understand that the Spirit foretold by the

prophets had at last descended upon earth. You know that the spirit can assume all forms and appearances by means of its perisprit.

The ancients regarded the dove as the emblem of purity, and it was one of the animals which were sacrificed on the altar for the redemption of the children of Israel. The superior spirit who was entrusted with this manifestation chose the form which would attract most attention, both at the time of its occurrence, and after the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus. You will understand this if you reflect on his spiritual origin and his apparently human life and death.

The voice which came from heaven was not the voice of Almighty God. God never manifests himself or communicates directly with men, for however pure an incarnate spirit may be, its corporeal envelope forms an insuperable barrier between itself and the Divinity ; but the Lord transmits his wishes through the pure spirits, who receive his direct inspirations, to the superior spirits, and to the good spirits according to the hierarchical scale ; and these become his messengers.

It was a superior spirit who pronounced the words, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." All the people who had come to John on the banks of the Jordan, thought that God himself had spoken, just as the Hebrews believed that God had spoken to the prophets of the old Law. They thought that the Holy Spirit was the intelligence of God, who thus inspired men, and communicated with them directly ; and therefore they supposed that it was God himself who took the form of a dove, and that it was also God who spoke at the same time from a different direction. But you now know that the figurative expression "Holy Spirit" denotes the spirits of the Lord, who are the ministers of his inspiration and the organs of his wishes ; and you can understand that there were two distinct spirit manifestations.

These manifestations took place while Jesus was praying. The first lesson and the first example which he gave men was to show them that prayer, not of the lips but of the

heart, draws down the blessings of the Lord and the evidences of his love by causing his divine influence to descend upon them through the guardian spirits of humanity.

The water baptism which John administered, and which Jesus received in order to preach by example, thus showing that his baptism was only a figure, was both material and symbolical. It was material so far as the ablution of the body was concerned, and symbolical by the repentance and humility thus manifested; which each proclaimed by the public confession of his sins, which he made in a loud voice in the presence of all, when he acknowledged his faults and all the baseness which springs up in the human heart.

This water baptism was consequently a preparation for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire, which is sent from God, and which Christ vouchsafes to those who are worthy of it by sending them the aid and companionship of purified spirits.

It is good to remind men of this baptism of God, for it reminds them of the great events which have happened, and the obligations which are laid upon them.

The material part was a necessity of the time, and was intended to produce a profound impression upon material men by a material event; but the symbolical part alone is important to you. The only true baptism is that which proceeds from the Lord. It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire which must purify souls, and not bodies.

The baptism of water has been made the symbol of Christianity. Man has been too apt to forget the divine essence, and to think only of matter, and to attribute everything to the latter. His short-sighted spirit, enclosed within these narrow limits, has ended by almost entirely forgetting that, as he is sprung from a spiritual essence, he should pay attention to the spirit rather than the letter. Therefore purify yourselves, that you may receive new life.

The Churches have perverted water baptism from its object and intention by pouring water on the head of a newborn child, on pretence of delivering the child from "original sin;" that is, from a fault which was not committed by the

child, but by some one else ; even while they pretend that the child's soul was created by God expressly for the body which it inhabits ; and since nothing impure can proceed from the hands of God, this implies that the child must be personally pure and immaculate.

The Churches would not have perverted water baptism in this manner, if they had understood the words in which Christ proclaimed to Nicodemus that re-incarnation is a reality and not an allegory. It is a reality, and an immutable law which God has established from all eternity, as the means of purification and progress for the guilty spirit. It is the only means by which man can enter into the kingdom of God, or arrive at perfection, which alone permits him to approach the Fire of Omnipotence.

O Christians of all parties—Catholics, Protestants and Greeks ! cease to think only of matter, and quit the letter which killeth for the spirit which giveth life. Retain the spirit of the baptism of water on the banks of the Jordan, and practise the symbolical part, which is repentance and humility. Prepare yourselves thus for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire, which purifies souls, and which Christ will give you if you show yourselves worthy of it by practising work, heartfelt humility, justice, love and charity. He will then send you purified spirits to inspire and sustain you, and to aid you to advance in the path of moral and intellectual progress.

MATTHEW, CHAP. I.—VERSES 1-17. LUKE, CHAP. III.
VERSES 23-38.

Human Genealogy of Jesus.

Matth. i. (1) The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. (2) Abraham begat Isaac ; and Isaac begat Jacob ; and Jacob begat Judah and his brethren ; (3) And Judah begat Phares and Zara of Thamar ; and Phares begat Esrom, and Esrom begat Aram ; (4) And Aram begat Aminadab, and Aminadab begat Naasson, and Naasson begat Salmon ; (5) And Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab, and Boaz begat Obed of Ruth ; and Obed begat Jesse ; (6) And Jesse begat David the King ; and King David begat Solomon of the wife of Uriah ; (7) And Solomon begat Rehoboam, and Rehoboam begat Abia, and Abia begat Asa ; (8) And Asa begat Jehosaphat, and

Jehosaphat begat Jehoram, and Jehoram begat Ozias, and Ozias begat Jontham; (9) And Jontham begat Ahaz, and Ahaz begat Hezekiah, (10) And Hezekiah begat Manasseh, and Manasseh begat Aman; (11) And Aman begat Josiah, and Josiah begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time of their being carried away to Babylon. (12) And after their removal to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel, and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; (13) And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim, and Eliakim begat Azor; (14) Azor begat Sadok, and Sadok begat Achim, and Achim begat Eliud; (15) And Eliud begat Eleazar, and Eleazar begat Matthan, and Matthan begat Jacob; (16) And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. (17) Therefore all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, and from David to the carrying away to Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the carrying away to Babylon to Christ are fourteen generations.

Luke iii. (23) And Jesus himself was about thirty years of age, being regarded as the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, (24) The son of Matthan, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Janna, the son of Joseph, (25) The son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Naum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggi, (26) The son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semei, the son of Joseph, the son of Judah, (27) The son of Joannas, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zorobabel, the son of Salathiel, the son of Meri, (28) The son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Kosam, the son of Elmodam, the son of Er, (29) The son of Joses, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, (30) The son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonan, the son of Eliakim, (31) The son of Melea, the son of Mainan, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, (32) The son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Naasson, (33) The son of Aminadab, the son of Aram, the son of Esrom, the son of Phares, the son of Judah, (34) The son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nachor, (35) The son of Saruch, the son of Rhagan, the son of Phalek, the son of Heber, the son of Sala, (36) The son of Canaan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, (37) The son of Methusaleh, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahaleel, the son of Canaan, (38) The son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, who was the son of God.

§ 35. You have already been instructed that Jesus is a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, whose origin is lost in the darkness of bygone eternities. He is the protector and ruler of your planet, and watched over its formation. Consequently he is both superior and anterior to the generations of men who have successively inhabited it. He appeared on your earth with a visible and tangible fluidic body, resembling a human body in appearance, but of a perispritic nature, incorporated by an adaptation of the laws of the superior worlds to the surrounding fluids which form your beings. You also know that this secret of the other

world was not intended to be revealed until the opening of the new era of Spiritism in your own days, when the progress which you have made has enabled you to receive this revelation.

Do not be surprised that Jesus of Nazareth was regarded by the Hebrews as of the same nature as his ancestors according to the flesh. If you examine into his spiritual genealogy, it will lead you back to God, the immediate and only Creator of everything which is pure and perfect.

The human genealogy attributed to Jesus is of no interest or importance in connection with the labours of his mission, or with its fulfilment in the regeneration of mankind.

If you consider the necessity of materializing all facts to render them intelligible to man, you will perceive the necessity of using expressions which could be understood and listened to conformably with circumstances which had been prearranged for many ages.

According to Hebrew traditions and the current interpretations of the writings of the prophets, it was expected that the Christ would be born at Bethlehem, among the descendants of David. The needful preparations for the great work of redemption began in very early times, though men were not aware of it ; and these were carried on under conditions appropriate to the state of intelligence at different periods.

In order to accomplish this great work, Mary and Joseph, who were perfect spirits, were both incarnated on a mission to aid Jesus in his earthly mission. Joseph was less elevated than Mary, and they were both spirits who had not remained pure, but had been purified, and who were consequently inferior to Jesus. But their regained purity could not be sullied by impure surroundings, and they each selected a family which had been prepared for them beforehand, and which was likewise composed of superior spirits, though less elevated than themselves. But as you trace their ancestors back from generation to generation you meet with men animated with every brutish instinct.

You know that during the whole earthly mission of Jesus,

men regarded Mary as his mother and Joseph as his father ; and by descent from Joseph, Jesus was the son of David.

Man cannot understand anything without fixing his attention on some starting-point from whence he can proceed in a direct line. The genealogies were written for Hebrews under the yoke of the Mosaic law, who were influenced by traditions handed down from age to age, the origin of which was lost in the obscurity of the past. It was therefore needful to direct their intelligence according to their accustomed manner of thought.

The root of the genealogy attributed to Jesus is "Adam," materially the first man created by the hand of God.

Intelligence has become developed and science has advanced in the course of ages. You now know that the creation of man from the dust of the ground, in a terrestrial paradise, in the midst of which stood the trees of life and of the knowledge of good and evil, is an allegory required to enable human intelligence to appropriate the lessons which it embodies. Even now, how few among you are able to comprehend eternal existence, without either beginning or end !

The genealogy of Jesus ascends to Adam by a figure, as the creation of the body of dust ascends to God.

The literal interpretation of Genesis could not have been contradicted, then, without offending the masses, alarming the feeble, and impeding the progress of the work of regeneration.

According to both Matthew and Luke, Jesus is the son of David through Joseph, his human father, who is himself shown to be a descendant of David.

The genealogy was recorded by both evangelists for the purpose of connecting the birth of Jesus with David, and they made researches accordingly ; but much is lost in the obscurity of time, and many names were substituted for those which were unknown, and which they supposed ought to exist ; but names are of little consequence, and genealogical relations were established by family relationships. The discrepancies between the two genealogies need not be

discussed. The root is the same, and the names sometimes belong to the same individuals, owing to confusion between the children of two brothers, and similar errors. Does it not sometimes happen that you yourselves bear additional names, or even change your names from human vanity, and will not those who look back upon your lives in future ages use sometimes one name and sometimes another, and yet they will denote the same individual? One writer followed one line of ancestors, and the other another; but the source was the same. The two genealogies both agree in Joseph's descent from David, which was the only essential point in the eyes of the Hebrews.

It is not surprising that the descent of Mary was not recorded likewise. Daughters were not included in the genealogies of the Israelites, even as they do not perpetuate a name among your noble families. It was only important to know that Mary belonged to the same tribe.

We have said that it is necessary to employ human means, which are always imperfect, to attain any desired spiritual end. The Apostle Paul thus alludes to the controversies on the human genealogy attributed to Jesus:—"Neither pay any attention to fables and endless genealogies, which are the cause of disputes rather than the government of God in faith. Now the end of the commandment is love from a pure heart, and good conscience, and heartfelt faith" (1 Tim. i. 4, 5.) Leave such disputes to the so-called wise men of your own time, who exert all their strength to move or overturn the small stumbling-blocks in their way. Remember that you must reserve your own strength to remove a mountain which stands in the way of the one straight path which it is yours to map out. Remember the words of the angel to Mary (Luke i. 32), those in the song of Zacharias (Luke i. 68-70), and what Jesus said to the Pharisees: "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" "David's," answered they. "Why, then," replied Jesus, "does he say in the Psalms, 'My Lord,' through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in the words, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand till I have made thy enemies thy

footstool.' If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matt. xxii. 41-43; Luke xx. 41-44.) Thus Jesus during his earthly ministry prepared men to understand that this human genealogy is inapplicable to him, that they might afterwards be more ready to accept the revelation of his extra-human origin and nature.

§ 56. What is the actual truth respecting the creation of the spirit and body of man? And what is the spiritual genealogy of Jesus?

You have asked two distinct questions, one referring to man, and the other to Jesus. It must be answered from a general point of view in relation to the origin of the soul, its phases, its progress, and its destinies, from the moment of its origin till the period when it attains to perfection.

Everything in Creation, literally everything, has a common origin, and rises from the infinitely little to the infinitely great; even unto God, who is at once the origin and goal of all things.

Never forget that everything proceeds from God, and returns to him: God, the uncreated Creator, the Father of each and all—God, the great Creator of all that exists; the immovable pillar which supports the myriads of worlds which are scattered through space like atoms in the air.

The universal fluid surrounding and proceeding from God is the instrument and means of action of the Supreme Intelligence. His omnipotence and will regulates its properties, combinations, modifications and transformations in infinity and eternity. Thus he effects all the spiritual, material and fluidic creations resulting in life and universal harmony; and thus he creates all worlds, and everything which lives and moves and has its being in all the kingdoms of nature.

The Apostle Paul felt the creative power of the Lord when he said—"For in Him we live and more and are" (Acts xvii. 28); "For of him and through him and in him are all things" (Romans xi. 36).

The spirit is a spiritual essence, and is the principle of intelligence from the moment of its formation. It springs from the universal Whole; that is, from the fluids diffused

through space, which are the source of everything which exists, either in a spiritual, fluidic, or material condition.

The spirit at its origin as a spiritual essence is an intelligent principle formed of the quintessence of these fluids. It is so ethereal that no language could convey any idea of it, especially to your limited intelligence. The will of the Lord God Almighty, the one sole essence of life in infinity and eternity, animates these fluids to give them being by means of a subtle combination, the essence of which is only found in the divine radiance. Thus he converts them into spiritual essences, which are the primitive principles destined for the formation of the germinating spirit.

Life thus exists everywhere throughout nature in these eternal germs, which God animates by his will alone, according to the necessities of the universal harmony of all worlds, kingdoms and creatures, whether in the material or in the fluidic state.

When the material worlds are formed, they are composed of all the constituent principles of the different kingdoms of nature which the ages will evolve in the spiritual, material, and fluidic order.

The intelligent principle is developed at the same time as matter, and progresses with it, passing from inertia to life. God watches over the commencement of all things, and his paternal eye follows the phases of each step in advance, and he attracts to himself everything which has attained to perfection.

These multitudinous latent principles remain inert till the Sovereign Master assigns them to the appropriate end which they were intended to fulfil (according to the immutable and eternal laws of nature which he has established) under the influence of such surroundings as are fitted to unfold them.

They then passively undergo the transformations requisite for their development through ages which might appear eternal, under the direction and guidance of spirits entrusted with their care, and pass successively through the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, and through the inter-

mediate forms and species which connect each of these kingdoms together.

By following this continual progression they arrive at length at the period which is preparatory to formed spirit; that is, the intermediate state between animal incarnation and the conscious spiritual state. After passing through this preparatory period they attain to the condition of a creature in possession of free will, with concentrated and independent intelligence, and responsible for its actions. They thus become fitted for intelligence, knowledge and greatness.

When the spiritual essence originates as a principle of intelligence, or a spirit in course of formation, it passes first into the mineral kingdom, and animates the mineral, if we may be allowed thus to express ourselves, by using the only expressions appropriate to your limited intelligence which human language permits us.

We say it *animates* the mineral, for everything has a real existence in nature, since everything dies; and everything which dies has possessed the principle of life, and was thus animated by *relative* intelligence.

You may wonder using the word intelligence in speaking of an inert object. Certainly it possesses neither thought nor action, and the spiritual essence is unconscious of its being. In this stage it *exists*—nothing more.

The spiritual essence is then in the condition of a simple essence of life, and is wholly unconscious of its existence. It builds up the rock and the mineral by attracting and combining the appropriate fluids through the action of magnetic attraction directed by the controlling spirits.

The action of these spirits is more direct and constant in proportion to the unconsciousness of the evolving spirit.

In order to avoid repetition, we wish you to observe specially that nothing exists in any of the kingdoms of Nature, whether mineral, vegetable, animal, or human, without the supervision of the spirits of the Lord. All have a task to fulfil and something to watch over; but spirits

are not appointed to regulate the formation of individual minerals, plants, or beings. Their action is general, being exerted through immutable natural laws, which it is not yet allowable or possible for you to understand; and their operation is exerted over the mass.

The mineral dies when it is removed from the surroundings in which the Author of Nature has placed it. When the stone is taken from the quarry, or the mineral is dug from the mine, they lose their natural life, like a plant uprooted from the soil.

The spiritual essence which existed in the pores of the mineral is withdrawn from it by magnetic action directed by the guardian spirits, and is transferred to another point; while the body of the mineral, from which the spirit has departed, is applied to the use for which man designs it.

It need not surprise you that the mineral should frequently preserve its coherence for ages after the spiritual essence which was necessary for its formation has departed. Every substance has its relative properties, according to laws which you cannot yet understand.

Does not the human body preserve the cohesion of all its material parts under certain circumstances, although the spirit has left it?

Do you not notice cases of material duration among plants? And do not some plants preserve the appearance of life, both the freshness of colour and the firmness of the stem, for a long time after they have been separated from the earth in which they grew, and consequently from the latent principle of intelligence which existed in them? Everything in nature is linked together with a view to the advantage and usefulness of the spirit which has arrived at the conscious stage of being.

Dead bodies, whether stone, plant, animal, or man, aid in the universal harmony by fulfilling the functions which are assigned to them.

The spiritual essence which animates the mineral is not an individual. It forms a whole, which is personified and divided when the mass is divided, and it thus attains to in-

dividuality. This happens also in the case of the principles animating the polype and certain plants; while in the mineral kingdom, the spiritual essence undergoes the successive materializations which are needful to prepare it to pass through the connecting links which participate in the nature of the mineral and of the plant. We say *materializations*, for we cannot say *incarnations* at the commencement of a being.

After having thus passed through these intermediate forms, which are connected together by continual progression, and after the double magnetic action which produces life and death in the phases of existence through which it has already passed, it is prepared to undergo the experience of sensation which awaits it in the plant. The spiritual essence, or spirit in the state of formation, then passes into the vegetable kingdom.

This is a step in advance, but there is still no consciousness of existence. Material existence is then both shorter and more rapid; but there is neither consciousness nor suffering—only sensation.

Thus, when a living branch is cut from a tree there is a kind of echo of the wound which has been made. There is no suffering, only a sort of vibration from one point to another; just as when a plant is violently uprooted before it has arrived at maturity. A magnetic vibration is perceived, which prepares the spiritual essence to develop its being.

After the death of the plant the spiritual essence is transferred to another point; and after undergoing successive and necessary and always progressive materializations, it passes on to the intermediate forms which participate in the vegetable and the animal. In these last stages of existence, when the developing spirit begins to feel an exterior action, though without knowledge of its causes or effects, the sensation of pain commences.

Thus, the spirit which is being developed under the care and supervision of attendant spirits, effects its development relatively to the matter which envelopes it, by con-

tinuous progression, until it attains to the consciousness of its existence.

When it is prepared for active, exterior and relative life, the developing spirit passes into the animal kingdom.

It becomes an intelligent principle, and possesses the kind of intelligence which you call instinct. It possesses will and faculties, limited to its necessities and the preservation of its material life, to its allotted functions and to the object which it is intended to fulfil in nature, according to the measure in which it is to contribute to the universal life and harmony.

The spirit is still in course of formation, for it is still without free will, or independent rational knowledge of its faculties and actions. It then passes on in the animal kingdom, by a continuous progressive advance, in proportion to the progress already made, and to that which is still necessary. It passes through all the successive phases of existence which are required to develop it, and to conduct it to the limit of the intermediate forms which participate both in the animal and in man. These intermediate stages gradually bring it nearer and nearer to the human kingdom by insensible gradations; for although spirit animates matter, matter likewise aids in the development of spirit.

After having undergone all the transfigurations of matter, and passed through all the stages of development requisite to acquire a certain degree of intelligence, the spirit arrives at a point preparatory to the conscious spiritual state. This is the moment which your wise men, who know so little of the mysteries of Nature, are unable to determine; the point where instinct ceases and reason begins.

You were told that the spirit was created simple and ignorant, in allusion to the phase of existence preparatory to humanity. It is still somewhat too soon to reveal the origin of the spirit, but you may nevertheless publish what we tell you; for when your work shall be openly given to the world, incarnate spirits will be better prepared to accept what they would formerly have taken, and would even

now* take, for a monstrous assertion or a ridiculous absurdity.

When the spirits have arrived at the point which is preparatory to humanity, they are trained for a conscious, independent and free spiritual life in worlds suited for the purpose. At this moment the spirit passes into the state of innocence and ignorance. The will of the Sovereign Master gives it the knowledge of its faculties, and consequently of its actions ; and this knowledge leads to free will, independent and reasonable intelligence, and moral responsibility.

When the spirit has reached this stage, it is ready to be humanized if it should fail. It is then in a state of complete innocence, having put off the instincts which were needed by the requirements of animality alone, with its last animal coverings.

The statue has finally received shape. The formed spirit then clothes itself with the fluids needful for it, under the supervision of guiding spirits, and thus composes what you call the perisprit. This fluidic body then becomes the means and instrument of its constant and sustained progress from the starting-point of innocence and ignorance, until it has attained to moral perfection, when it is no longer liable to any fall. But if, on the other hand, the perisprit becomes the cause of its fall, it also becomes the means of its progress, by raising it through successive incarnations and re-incarnations, which are expiatory at first, and ultimately glorious, until it has attained to moral perfection.

We have already told you (§ 31) that magnetism is the universal agent. It is the great law which governs all things ; and the magnetic fluids form the connecting links between all worlds, and unite all spirits, whether incarnate or not. It is the universal bond which God has given us to surround

* April, 1863 (Ed.) This book was published in France in 1866. The rapid development of theories of Evolution since the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species" in 1859, and their present almost universal acceptance, notwithstanding the ridicule which such theories met with during the first sixty years of the present century, form an admirable commentary on this passage (Transl.)

us like a single being, and to help us to ascend to him by our united efforts.

When the spirit rises from the intermediate state which precedes the life of self-consciousness, and enters into possession of free will, it accretes the fluidic covering which you call the perispit, which forms its constitution, if we may thus employ an expression which you can understand. But there is this difference : whereas the human constitution appears to you to be independent of the spirit which inhabits the body, the fluidic constitution is the result of the tendencies of the spirit.

Fluids mutually attract each other, and the influence of similar sympathetic fluids forms the link between spirits who are animated by the same tastes and feelings, and draws them together, even if they are not of the same order. Spirits thus attract others who are similar to themselves, and sympathize with their tastes and sentiments, whether good or bad.

When spirits have acquired the prerogative of free will, and are at liberty to choose for themselves, they are subject to spirits who are appointed to develop their faculties. It is then that their free will leads them to choose one path rather than another. They are more or less obedient to those who are entrusted with their guidance and development, and it is then that they are led to choose a course which may be good or evil. They may fail, or may faithfully and gradually pursue the course which is pointed out to them.

Many fail, but some resist the temptations of pride and envy ; and the fall of all spirits is due to pride springing from presumption and envy.

A proud man is envious because he cannot bear any one to be superior to him ; he is selfish because he looks at everything as it affects himself ; and he is presumptuous on account of his misplaced confidence in his own strength and intelligence.

Do you not see little children manifesting signs of pride, presumption, selfishness and envy, which are the causes of the first fall ? These are spirits who have already passed through ages of successive expiations and reincarnations, and are

not yet purified. They try to do everything which they see you attempt, and pretend that they can do it as well as you, being misled by their misplaced confidence in themselves ; and they often rebel against the wisdom of their father, who forbids them to attempt actions beyond their strength, and which might result in serious consequences.

The spirits who fail are intractable, and rebel against the authority and advice of those who are entrusted with their guidance and development. Their evil tendencies and desires attract evil spirits, who sympathize with them ; but you should clearly understand that the fall is due to the act of the spirit itself, and not to its being led astray. Spirits are free to choose one course of action rather than another, and therefore act according to their own free will, and the sympathy they experience for inferior spirits, and which leads them astray, proceeds from their own disposition ; and it is only after their own fall that they enter into similar conditions with the others.

On the other hand, those who are obedient to their guides faithfully and gradually follow the path which is pointed out for their progress. They then attract good spirits, who sympathize with their good tendencies.

Whether the spirit remains pure until it has arrived at perfection, or whether it fails, and subsequently arrives at perfection also, the fluids of the perisprit vary continually under the attractive influence of the surrounding fluids, according to the progress and tendencies of the spirit whom they clothe, and who assimilates those fluids which are most in sympathy with his intelligence and spiritual necessities. The fluids of the perisprit are dense and opaque in proportion to the inferiority of the spirit, and the nature of the perisprit is more or less pure and fluidic in proportion to his elevation. To the spirit the perisprit is matter. In the case of a fallen spirit, as of one who has remained pure, the perisprit is necessarily modified according to the phases of his existence and experiences.

It is only when the spirit has attained to perfection that he is able to modify his perisprit at will, according to the

needs of the moment, and to assimilate it to the regions through which he passes, and the missions with which he is entrusted by the Lord, although the purified essence of the perispit remains unchanged.

Some of the spirits who fall misuse their free will in the course of their development; others do so almost at the outset, and are obstinately proud, presumptuous, envious, disobedient and rebellious to their guides; in short, they revolt against them.

When these presumptuous and rebellious spirits have fallen as low as the most material conditions of humanity, they are humanized or incarnated on the primitive worlds, to be subdued, and to progress under the restraints of the flesh. These are worlds where man has not yet appeared, but which have been prepared for his advent. Such spirits are incarnated in human substances rather than in bodies. The elements of these substances are diffused through space, and are afterwards gathered together in the planet where the incarnation is to take place, and are combined by the action of the spirits who are prepared for them. Here they are obliged to develop themselves and to progress in the course of successive ages and generations.

The spirit clothed with its perispit, acting under the supervision of the controlling spirits, attracts the elements which are needed to form its material envelope, as the load-stone attracts iron. This still results from magnetic attraction, in accordance with natural law.

After its fall, and before its incarnation, the spirit constructs its perispit according to its natural tendencies. The fluids which it has assimilated retain their influence; but these fluids change their nature during incarnation, but always correspond with the progress or the faults of the spirit. Every incarnation which results in moral improvement also leads to an improvement in the fluids which compose the perispit. We may compare this to a peasant maiden throwing aside her coarse garments to assume the light and elegant costume of a bride.

The matter with which the human spirit is burdened, aids

in its development, as in the case of the spiritual essence in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms.

Some spirits only fall after they have been obedient for ages to those who are entrusted with their guidance and development, and after they have faithfully and gradually followed the path which had been pointed out for their progress until they have attained to a greater or less degree of moral and intellectual development. They are then incorporated on more or less inferior or elevated planets, according to their degree of culpability, to undergo a more or less material or fluidic incarnation under conditions appropriate and proportioned to their fault, and to the necessities of progress corresponding to the elevation of the spirit.

God continually creates worlds in infinite space and eternity appropriate to the incarnations of spirits who have fallen, as he creates the spiritual essences, or spirits themselves. The primitive material and fluidic worlds are more or less inferior or superior to one another, until you arrive at the purest fluidic planets, which you may call celestial or divine worlds, where none but pure spirits may dwell.

Those spirits who are obedient to their guides faithfully pursue the course marked out for them, and continue their progress in fluidic spheres, which become gradually more and more elevated, where everything is in harmony with the spirits who inhabit them. If they remain obedient to their guides, they pass from eternity to eternity, after having undergone every phase of existence and experience requisite to lead them to perfection. When they have reached it, the influence of matter upon them has become reduced to nothing ; we say *matter*, for the fluids of the perispit, and those which it assimilates, are matter to the spirit.

They were pure in the state of innocence and instruction, and always remain pure in the path of progress ; but in order to attain to perfection they must traverse all worlds under the tutelage of the spirits commissioned to guide and develop them, in proportion to and in accordance with the conditions of their elevation ; but always in the spiritual state, for they study from the great book of the universe in space. They

thus visit all the spheres—the primitive, inferior and superior worlds of all degrees, which are the innumerable dwelling-places of spirits who have fallen, and are undergoing successive incarnations and reincarnations, at first material, and then less and less material, or fluidic, and more and more fluidic, until the influence of matter upon them has become obliterated, and they also become pure spirits.

The spirits who have fallen are also obliged, before arriving at perfection, and in proportion to and in accordance with the conditions of their elevation, to traverse all the worlds inhabited by spirits who have remained pure, as well as by incarnated spirits, at every stage of the spiritual scale. Their human studies suffice for the worlds which they themselves have inhabited as incarnate spirits. They study others in the errant state, between each incarnation, when they traverse all the layers of air and the worlds suspended in space, learning on the one hand and teaching on the other, but always rising towards higher regions.

Jesus is one of those spirits who were pure in the state of innocence and ignorance, or of infancy and instruction. He was always obedient to the spirits who were entrusted with his guidance and development, and faithfully and gradually followed the course pointed out to him for his progress. He has thus remained pure, and having never fallen, has arrived at sidereal perfection, and become a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity.

Although Jesus is the greatest spiritual essence next to God, he is not the only one. He is one of those spirits who may be called, in human language, the guard of honour of the King of Heaven. God has appointed him to be the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet. He watched over its formation and rules over it from the height of celestial splendours. He is a spirit of primitive purity, perfect and immaculate, unfallen, and (because in direct communion with God) infallible. He is your Master and ours, and directs the holy phalanx of the innumerable spirits who labour at the progress of your planet and its humanity ; and he will ultimately lead you to perfection.

You now understand what we implied by saying that the creation of the first man, and the genealogy of Jesus, leading back to Adam, were figurative, and that if you traced back the spiritual genealogy of Jesus, it would lead you up to God. Everything has a common origin, and proceeds from the infinitely small to the infinitely great, up to God, the point of departure and of reunion. Everything proceeds from and returns to God.

Behold how everything is linked together in the vast system of the universe which the Lord has unrolled before your eyes! Behold the intermediate forms in all kingdoms of Nature, linking every species together, some participating in the mineral and the vegetable, the stone and the plant; others in the plant and the animal, and others, again, in the animal and man. These are precious links which bind together and connect everything. By means of these the developing spirit passes successively through all the kingdoms and intermediate species, and thus rises from the original spiritual essence by a successive and continuous development to the stage of formed spirit, possessed of conscious, free and responsible life, having risen from the creature to man. These precious links bind everything together, that man may more easily comprehend the unity of this vast creation—so vast that human intelligence is unable to grasp it, and often refuses to acknowledge its mysteries because its mole's eyes are incapable of discovering them.

We do not speak of those proud men who may feel degraded by such a revelation. Does man, the lord of the creation, really spring from such a source, and is this his origin? The first hints of this, which have already provoked much mockery and criticism, were mingled with truth and error, that the good seed might have time to sprout; for there is always time to burn the chaff. Let not idle objectors alarm those whom the Master has commissioned us to enlighten, by saying that this would lead a man to despise the spirit which might animate the body of his son or his father.

It requires a very long period—so long that you could not

calculate it, before the spiritual essence which has attained to the comparative state of intelligence of an animal, can acquire the necessary development in the animal kingdom to pass to the intermediate state, and through the intermediate species, which partake of the nature of the animal and of man. After having passed through these, it again remains for a long lapse of time, which you are equally unable to estimate, in the stage preparatory to humanity, from whence the spirit arises, fully developed, by the will of the Lord, and by means of a complete transformation. Then only it receives the gift of independent, free and responsible intelligence.

Everything in the vast unity of Creation and of all the kingdoms of Nature is linked together by natural, immutable and eternal laws. There is a reciprocal and centralizing action, affecting preservation, reproduction and destruction alike; for everything conduces to the development and progress of all creatures. Everything which exists, and lives and dies, in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, and all the beings which live and die in the animal and human kingdoms, from the microscopic animalcule up to man, have each and all some work, use and function, leading to the development of each species, and conducing to universal life and harmony. The swarms of microscopic animalculæ which are invisible to the naked eye, and which can only be rendered visible by the most powerful microscope, are diffused throughout air, water, liquids and solids. They aid in the development and maintenance of animal and human existence; for example, those which live among the grass contribute to the sustenance of the sheep and goats which crop it. No such thought troubles these creatures, any more than the sheep thinks of being slaughtered for your support. But the knife which puts an end to the life of the animal, releases the relative intelligence, or developing spirit, and allows it to be employed under more favourable conditions. It is by this spirit passing through all the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, and through the intermediate forms and species which connect them, in

the course of eternities of ages, that it is developed by continual progression ; until at length thought and moral existence commence.

But you would fall into a grievous error if you were to suppose that you must destroy what exists around you to assist in its development. Everything must live for its own and the general good. Therefore destroy no more than what is absolutely necessary for your existence, and let the wisdom of the Lord alone provide for the rest. When man comprehends the links which bind everything in creation together, his heart will be softened, and he will understand the necessity of using everything without abusing it. Everything in this vast unity of creation exists, is born, lives, moves, dies, and is re-born, according to the universal spiritual action which is guided by the will of God, under the action of the immutable laws of Nature which he has established from all eternity.

Be well assured that there is nothing *spontaneous* in Nature, for the origin of everything is prepared beforehand. Man can only comprehend phenomena which appeal to his senses ; and it seems to him that everything which appears suddenly, without his foreseeing the cause, is a new and spontaneous creation ; but the germs existed previously. Man perceives only matter ; but the intelligence fitted to inhabit it is placed there as soon as the matter is fitted to contain it ; and life appears at once to the eyes of man, under forms appropriate to the medium and the surrounding influences, under the secret direction and supervision of watchful spirits, and according to general laws of nature which man cannot yet understand or explain.

O men ! whom we love so much, we desire your welfare, and we would destroy the "demon" which possesses you—Pride, which is your deadliest enemy. Let not pride lead you to reject this revelation of your humble origin without examination. Say not that it degrades you, but rather that it exalts you, by aiding you better to comprehend the grandeur of your Creator. We also, like yourselves, and all but He who was from all eternity, and will exist to all eternity, have

originally commenced our existence as a spiritual essence or principle of intelligence, and our developing spirits have passed through all these metamorphoses and transfigurations of matter before arriving at the state of formed spirit, gifted with the knowledge of its desires, faculties and actions, and thus rendered an independent, free and responsible creature by the possession of free will. We do not teach you metempsychosis, but simply reveal the natural law of equality before God of all that exists, and of everything which your senses can perceive.

God is a Father who is uniformly tender to his children, and has no favourites ; all are his creatures, and none will be disinherited. Oh, that you could understand the height and depth of this endless chain which binds all Nature into one whole ! Would that this might awaken the love of man by showing him the infinite love of his God ! Let not sceptics and sophists find fault, and let not would-be philosophers without philosophy deny, but let them examine our words with unprejudiced minds. If you are filled with love and reverence for your Creator, and love and charity towards all your fellow-men, and towards all the creatures of the Lord, fortify your hearts with the love of knowledge and the desire for progress, and seek to understand with heartfelt humility and disinterestedness, and you will understand. Seek for light, and you shall receive light. God sends good spirits to the aid of those who labour patiently, and they will aid you to perceive and know ; for there is nothing hidden which shall not be revealed, and nothing unknown which shall not be known. The studies of one man will be useful to aid another to advance in knowledge and love. Moreover, you will be helping yourselves, for reincarnation opens the way to man to resume his incomplete and unfinished labours. And when the light has shone upon you, then you will raise yourselves towards your Creator in a transport of holy rapture, exclaiming "Praise to God !"

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN,

With the concurrence of the Apostles.

§ 57. How is the spirit which has arrived at the preparatory period to humanity led to the state of formed spirit, or of intelligent, free and responsible individuality? And how do pride and envy cause its fall, after it has once been gifted with free-will, the knowledge of its faculties, and freedom of action?

When the spirit has passed through animal matter, and has attained to a certain degree of development, it needs to remain in an intermediate state before commencing its spiritual life. It cannot enter upon an active, conscious and independent existence until it has freed itself entirely from its forced contact with the flesh. It must forget and cleanse itself from its relations to matter; and it is at this period that the transformation from instinct to conscious intelligence is effected.

When the spirit is sufficiently developed in the animal state, it is restored, in a manner, to the universal whole, but under special conditions. It is led to worlds in course of formation; preparatory regions, where it must find the medium in which the constituent principles of the perispit are formed. It is then like a feeble ray of light in the midst of dense masses of vapour which encompass it on all sides. The spirit loses consciousness of its existence, for the influence of matter upon it must be destroyed during this state of stagnation. It falls into a condition which we may call lethargy, to make it intelligible to you; and during this period the perispit which is intended to receive the spiritual principle, is developed around this spark of true life. Its form is undefined at first, but it gradually attains to perfection, like the germ in its mother's womb, and passes through all the various stages of development; and the spirit awakes from its stupor when its envelope is prepared for it, and utters its first cry of admiration at the glorious universe around. In this stage the perispit of the spirit is completely fluidic even to our eyes, and the flame within it, the spiritual essence of life, is so pale that it is difficult for our senses, acute as they are, to distinguish it.

This is the state of spiritual infancy. After this the great

spirits who watch over the education of spirits in the stage of simplicity, ignorance and innocence, lead them towards the fluidic sphere where they must dwell during their moral and intellectual development until they have acquired the full use of their powers, and are thus enabled to choose their own course. The spirit passes through the phases of infancy, and its protecting guardians teach it the meaning of the free will which God has entrusted to it. They explain the use which it can make of it, and warn it against the dangers which it may encounter. The first lesson which they teach it is the love and gratitude which it owes to the Great Being. It is then gradually led on to study the fluids which surround it, and the spheres which it is able to perceive. Its experienced guides lead it towards the regions where worlds are in course of formation, that it may study their mysteries, and at length it descends towards the inferior regions to learn to direct the organic principles of all that exists in the various kingdoms of nature. From these it passes on to higher spheres, where it learns to direct the atmospheric and telluric phenomena which you perceive without comprehending them ; and it thus passes from study to study, and from progress to progress, until it attains to that infinite knowledge which enables it to approach its Sovereign Master.

But spirits are at liberty to make either a good or bad use of their free will when it has attained its full development. They may follow their own course either at the starting-point, or at a more or less advanced stage of their experience, and are then given over to their own devices, like yourselves ; that is, they refuse to submit to the friendly influence of their guides who surround them, like the affectionate relatives of a youth who would save him from the dangers of life, and they must then suffer a terrible apprenticeship of free will.

Everything is so beautiful in the superior regions, and such magnificent objects are revealed to the gaze of the spirit, that it is dazzled and blinded. Then its instincts

awake, and pride or envy nearly always attends the noble ambition of learning and succeeding.

At this stage the spirit feels the paternal influence of the God whose existence is revealed to it, but cannot see him. Nothing but what is perfect can approach perfection ; and although the spirit is free and independent, it is still ignorant, and has not yet made trial of its own powers. Spirits in the state of infancy are entrusted to masters who labour at the mental and moral development of their pupils both by precept and example. If the pupils laboriously follow the path of spiritual progress, and work ardently at their development, in obedience to their guides, they grow in wisdom, purity and knowledge ; and thus, without having fallen, arrive at a point where the central light is veiled from them no longer. Or else they trust in their own powers, neglect the advice which is given them, and are overwhelmed at the sight of the splendour surrounding the great spirits, and yield to pride or envy. Pride overcomes them because they already wield great power over the inferior regions, which they are learning to govern. Under the direction of the spirits entrusted with their education, and the special protector of the planet, they learn to direct the revolutions of the seasons and the fertility of the soil, and guide the incarnate spirits by their secret influence ; but if they believe that the authority which they possess is due to their own merits, they disregard the advice of their guides, and fall. Envy misleads them, because they do not always understand the powerful action of God ; they refuse to admit that there is a spiritual hierarchy, and they charge their Creator with injustice. You must always remember that God alone *creates*.

These poor blind ones in the midst of light sometimes even fall into atheism, incredible as it may appear. In this case especially, atheism is the offspring of pride ; for as they cannot see Him who has originated all things, they deny his existence, and regard themselves as both the base and summit of the edifice. It is then that their chastisement is

most severe, for they are doomed to primitive human incarnation ; and it is absolutely necessary for their own good that these guilty ones should suffer heavily from the Hand whose existence they have denied. Pride, envy, or atheism thus cause their fall, and they are cast into the dark places of human incarnation, according to their degree of culpability, under circumstances corresponding to their need of expiation and progress.

Do not misunderstand what we have told you of the action of these spirits who are progressing without having yet failed, and who assemble in the inferior regions to guide the incarnate spirits by influencing them as friendly guardians. The guardian angels of spirits incarnated on the inferior worlds are spirits of your own order, but, as you may suppose, purer than those whom they protect ; and these likewise have their guides and protectors, to whom they pay good heed, for everything is connected together from the base to the summit in a hierarchy of love and union.

§ 58. You say that those spirits who are about to be humanized, and have fallen sufficiently low, are cast down to the primitive worlds, where man has not yet appeared, but which are already prepared for his advent, and that they are there incarnated in human substances, rather than bodies. In what conditions do these human substances exist ?

They are rudimentary bodies. Man arrives on earth in a rudimentary condition, like everything which is formed on the primitive worlds. The male and female are neither strong nor developed nor intelligent, and can scarcely drag about their gross and shapeless bodies. They live, like animals, on whatever they find suitable for them on the ground. The trees and soil bring forth abundance for the food of every species, and the carnivorous animals do not attack them, for the providence of God watches over the preservation of all. They have no instincts but hunger and the necessity of reproduction ; but succeeding generations gradually become more developed ; their form improves, and they are placed in a dwelling which answers to their increasing requirements. But we need not now detail the history of Creation to you. !

The spirit comes to inhabit bodies formed of substances contained in the materials of which the planet is composed ; but these elements are so arranged that the spirit can use and appropriate them. We might better compare them to fleshy fungi ; and you may form an idea of the human creation by studying the shapeless larvæ which live on various plants. Their body forms a nearly inert mass, composed of materials which are still soft and imperfectly combined, and they crawl or rather glide along, for even their limbs are almost rudimentary.

O men ! this is your origin and starting-point, when pride, envy, or even atheism in the midst of light, followed by disobedience and revolt, have led you to fall into conditions which degrade you to primitive human incarnation ! Do not turn away your eyes with horror, but rather bless the Lord who permits you to look up to him, and to behold the image of perfection in the radiant spirits who shine around him.

But these primitive human incarnations, or their causes, are not to be regarded as arising from the fierce vengeance of an insulted Deity. God does not avenge himself ; why should he ? But his wise providence places the proud spirit who believes himself to be the moving power of the universe in a position where he can experience his own weakness. He is like a parent who has permitted his presumptuous child to try to lift the weight that he sees his father carry, and then allows him to exert his strength little by little, to teach him the use of it.

Horrible as these incarnations may appear, they are nevertheless of immense benefit to the fallen spirit, who is thus forced to pass through the phases and under the yoke of the very matter of which he supposed himself to be the master. Thus he learns fully to realize his own weakness, and acquires the strength, skill and experience in which he was deficient, through exercise and conflict. But the punishment of the spirit is the means of his regeneration, for he would remain vicious were he not subjected to this terrible experience ; and if he still retained his power, he

would exert it contrary to the universal harmony, which is impossible. It is therefore only paternal providence which condemns the spirit to suffer these incarnations solely with a view to the advancement which he may deserve ; and they may be indefinitely shortened and lightened by his zeal, repentance, and docility.

The providence of the Lord watches over the preservation of all beings. The species which are incapable of defending themselves are not attacked in a positive manner. They have enemies, it is true, but their enemies are as weak as themselves, and are not species which could destroy them utterly, without their having any means of defence or flight. Every species seeks the nourishment which is suitable for it, and avoids that for which it feels no appetite.

Man has no enemies to fear in the state of primitive and rudimentary incarnation, any more than the fungus, which is only devoured by insects when it has reached the limit of its material existence. No carnivorous or herbivorous animal, nor any kind of bird or fish, will feed upon him. The carnivorous animals do not begin to attack man until he is no longer defenceless, or without means of escape ; and as regards herbivorous animals, they would not attack the hunter unless they themselves attracted his pursuit.

Matter follows a regular course of development, but spirits need not traverse all its phases, if they rise above them. There will always be classes of spirits corresponding to the different degrees of incarnation.

The transition from the state of primitive incarnation to the human form is effected by the development of the unique type in the germ. The type is one, but is modified by its surroundings ; and hence you may deduce conclusions regarding the formation of the spirit in the various kingdoms of nature. Just as the origin of the human type arises from plastic and fecundated slime, so is it likewise with the principle of the first plants and animals. Microscopic plants are developed, which grow and spread on, or under the soil. They produce seeds which are carried to different places,

and are modified by the various influences of the surrounding soil, water, heat, and fluids. Then the animal types are born, which pass through similar transformations, and follow a similar course of development, brought about by similar causes.

You should understand why and how man is enabled to acquire the direction and supremacy over the planet, although when he is first incarnated, the animal races have attained a degree of material development superior to that of the humanized spirit. The progress of man has not been hastened, but retarded. As a physical retrogression has taken place, his intelligence must be roused afresh, whereas in animals it requires to be developed. You must clearly understand that when a new planet is created, its inherent principle of intelligence, or latent spiritual principle, requires to be elaborated, developed, individualized, and regulated. The latent principle must pass through an innumerable series of transformations before attaining this end ; but the incarnate spirit, on the contrary, is cast back into matter to undergo its constraint, and to accustom it to conquer matter, and to control itself ; and when the intelligent spirit has already passed through a certain series of stages, it can, if it desires, rapidly reascend to the regions from which it has been banished, and to the lofty spheres to which it ought to attain. In such a case there is no longer the slow and almost insensible progress of creating, as it were, a new spiritual being, but the acquisition of an intelligent lesson, the first principles of which are already learned, and which it is only necessary to apply.

We may compare the spirit which has already been trained in the various inferior kingdoms (mineral, vegetable, and animal) to a child who is developed, born, and gradually trained up to youth ; but at this point he is seized with a dreadful illness, which prevents him from remembering anything when he recovers. His limbs will no longer support his tottering frame ; he cannot move from one spot to another ; he utters inarticulate sounds, unintelligible to those around him, and his favourite authors, his talents, and his re-

collections are dead to him. But little by little his strength returns, and his patient mother guides the steps of her child, aids his utterance, shows him the words in books which he has forgotten, and leads him back to his former studies. His intelligence quickly expands anew, and everything which he learns is a recollection. He believes he knows it, and gradually remembers it, and the progress which he makes is rapid in proportion to the improvement in his health.

Thus it is with the fallen spirit. His spiritual progress is proportioned to the attention which he pays to his moral health, and this allows him to make rapid advances in the remembrance of his past acquisitions, which he believes to be fresh studies, until he has arrived at a point when the past can be unrolled before his eyes without inconvenience. He can make no fresh progress, which will then be really a new study, until he has arrived at the point which he quitted when he fell into the dark places of human incarnation.

§ 59. What are we to think of the theory which asserts that the incarnation of the formed spirit on the primitive and other earths until it has attained perfection, is not the punishment of a fault, but a necessity, as in the case of a spirit in course of development in the inferior kingdoms?

Human incarnation is not a necessity, but a punishment, and the punishment cannot precede the fault. We have also explained to you that the spirit is only humanized when its previous faults have rendered it liable to human incarnation; and it is then fitted for it, and is compelled to suffer the consequences.

This theory has been stated as follows: According to a theory which appears plausible at first sight, spirits have not been created for material incarnation, and their human materialization results from their own fault. This alone is enough to condemn the system; for if no spirit had fallen, there would be no men in this world, or in any other; and as the presence of man is needful for the material improvement of worlds, since he aids the general work by his intelligence and activity, and is consequently one of the indispensable adjuncts of Creation, God could not make the completion of his work dependent upon the eventual fall of his creatures; unless, indeed, he depended on there being a sufficient number of guilty spirits to people the worlds which have been and will be created; and such an idea is repugnant to common sense.

You may omit the last clause of the sentence. Common sense, on the contrary, would teach you that the omniscience

of God enables him to foresee that among the number of those whom he has created weak, simple, ignorant, but possessed of free will, there will always be some who will allow themselves to be seduced by the pride which springs from ignorance, and which leads to presumption, selfishness, and envy, and who will fall because they abuse their free will.

Is it more reasonable to suppose that God, who is represented to you as the type of all perfection, and the paragon of justice through all eternity, should have created feeble creatures expressly that they might gain strength by painful experience, and that he has created innocent beings in order to teach them to practise innocence by murder, outrage, and all the vices of the primitive human incarnations—vices which would then be inherent in the creature when it issued from the hands of the Creator, so that the thousands of ages which have passed have not been able to perfect it? The impetuous torrent of Time has rolled unceasingly over these rough and rugged boulders without being able to polish the surface, since so many outrages still afflict humanity, even at the present day.

God would then have given arbitrary freedom to the spirit on condition that its freedom should be subject to the uniform law of sin, and would thus inflict the same punishment of human incarnation upon the spirit who remained obedient to those entrusted with his guidance and development in the state of innocence and ignorance, and has followed the course marked out for his progress steadily and obediently, as upon the disobedient, proud, presumptuous, selfish, or envious spirit, who became guilty and rebellious, and fell, by the abuse of his free will.

Not so; God is great, just, good, and paternal. He has willed that his children should be born in simplicity of heart, and he has granted them freedom of action which they nearly always misuse. Then God, still leaving the spirit the use of its free will, withdraws himself from it to some extent, and abandons it to its own impressions. It then chooses its own course; and it is then, and then only,

that it suffers the consequences of its choice. All will come in time, and this truth will become plain like those of re-incarnation and the pre-existence of the soul. Everything prepares the way ; one generation sows the seed, another reaps, and the third gathers in the harvest.

The omniscience of God enables him to foresee (the past, present, and future being always unrolled before him) that nothing shall ever be wanting to the universal life and harmony, and that there will always be a sufficient number of guilty spirits to dwell upon the worlds which he creates for their habitation, where they must expiate their offences, advance, and contribute to the material improvement of these worlds. The omniscience of God also enables him to foresee from all eternity that there will always be a sufficient number of spirits who were pure in the state of innocence and ignorance, and who obey their guides, and remain pure in the path of progress which is pointed out to them, without falling, to people all the fluidic worlds which he creates, and which are appropriate for the intelligences who are destined to dwell there, and to continue their progress in the fluidic state.

The author we have quoted continues : " Human incarnation is a necessity to the spirit, who accomplishes his providential mission, and works at his own advancement with the activity and intelligence which are necessary for his life and well-being ; but human incarnation becomes a punishment when the spirit has neglected its duty, and is forced to begin its task afresh, and to multiply its corporeal existences, which have become painful to it by its own fault. A scholar can only obtain his degree after passing through all the preliminary examinations ; and these examinations are not a punishment but a necessity. But he is punished, if his idleness compels him to repeat them, although the ability to pass them is a reward. It is therefore true that terrestrial incarnation is a punishment to many of its inhabitants, because they might have avoided it, whereas they have perhaps doubled, tripled, or quadrupled it by their own fault, and have thus retarded their entrance into better worlds. But it is false, in principle, to admit that human incarnation is a punishment."

On the contrary, it is false to assert that human incarnation is necessary for the fully developed spirit, in the stage of innocence and ignorance, and gifted with free will which he has never abused. If he has never fallen, and remained obedient to his guides, it is unnecessary ; whereas it is

a necessity to the disobedient, guilty, and rebellious spirit, who has abused his free will and fallen. It is, therefore, false to assert that human incarnation is not, in principle, a punishment, being rendered necessary in consequence of a fault.

Those who drew up this erroneous proposition were either not sufficiently instructed, or have not reflected sufficiently on the nature and object of the worlds which are inhabited by incarnate spirits as worlds of expiation and progress, and on the origin of the spirit, its different stages of formation, and especially on the two well-marked conditions which must be very carefully distinguished from each other. In the one case the spirit is in course of formation, and advances continually, until it becomes a fully developed spirit possessed of independent intelligence, free will, the knowledge of its wishes and powers, and the realization of the liberty and consequent responsibility of its acts. In the other case the spirit is fully developed in the state of innocence and ignorance, and able either to use its free will to follow the path of progress with simplicity of heart, or to abuse it under the influence of pride, presumption, and envy, and consequently to be disobedient, guilty, and rebellious. It is thus free to stand or fall. Incarnation is necessary to spirit in course of formation. It is indispensable to its progress and development, to awaken and gradually develop the knowledge of its existence, which can only be effected through contact with matter. Intellectual development is due to the union of these two principles. Incarnation is a necessity until the spirit arrives at the point of intellectual development, and is ready to receive the precious but dangerous gift of free will.

We will now recapitulate what we have told you already (§ 56).

All spirits originally start from the same point. They are primarily formed of the essence of fluids which are so ethereal that no words could convey any idea of it to your limited intelligence. This is animated by the will of God to give it being, and constitutes the spiritual essence or

intelligent principle, destined to progress until it becomes a fully developed spirit, gifted with free will, and possessed of knowledge of its wishes, powers, and actions.

Incarnation or rather materialization of this spiritual essence in dead matter takes place, first in the mineral kingdom and in the intermediate species partaking of the nature of the mineral and the plant, and then in the vegetable kingdom, and in the intermediate species which partake of the nature of the plant and the animal. It thus follows a continuously progressive course, and attains a development which leads it on to the borders of the knowledge of life.

It is then incarnated in the animal kingdom, and subsequently in the species which are intermediate between the animal and man, so far as the material envelope is concerned. This continuous progress leads to the knowledge of active external life and its surroundings; and this intellectual development leads the spirit in course of formation to the preparatory period which precedes the attainment of that moral, independent, and responsible life which constitutes free thought.

When the spirits have arrived at the point of intellectual development, and receive the precious but dangerous gift of free will, they are all equally in the state of innocence and ignorance, and are clothed with a perisprit which covers the independent intelligence. They all undergo the fluidic incarnation which is constituted by this perisprit, and which may be called an envelope, from your material point of view.

They are all pure in the state of innocence and ignorance, and are subject to spirits who are entrusted with their guidance and development. They have freedom of action, and may consequently advance in the fluidic state, so as to pass from the stage of infancy and instruction to perfection by means of successive and continuous progress, like the student who is always obedient and attentive to the authority, advice, and lessons of his master, and passes all his examinations until he takes his degree. They may, on the contrary, commit some fault, and thus bring upon themselves

the punishment due to the guilty, but to the guilty alone, like the scholar who is disobedient and rebellious, and thus by his own fault brings on himself the punishment of expulsion, and is placed in a reformatory where he must pass his examinations among different conditions and surroundings until he also has taken his degree.

Many spirits fail, for nearly all abuse their free will ; but some are obedient to those who are appointed to guide and develop them, and follow the path marked out for their progress. Those who fail suffer a punishment which they might have avoided. As soon as they are prepared to suffer the consequences of their fault by being humanized, they are subjected to human incarnation according to their degree of culpability, and under conditions suitable to their need of expiation and progress, either on the primitive worlds or on other worlds inhabited by spirits who have failed.

Human incarnation, in principle, is the punishment of the first fault which has led to a fall. Reincarnation is the punishment of backsliding, or a fresh fall, for all your existences are connected together, and every reincarnated spirit carries with him the secret penalty of his preceding incarnation.

Spirits who are obedient to those who are entrusted with their guidance and development do not fall, but continue their progress in the fluidic state. Both those who have fallen, and those who have remained pure, work at their own advancement by their activity and intelligence, and accomplish their providential mission in the great unity of Creation. Everything is reciprocal, and all spirits are linked together that they may raise themselves to God by wisdom, knowledge, and love, according to the general laws of progress.

The spirits who have fallen display their activity and intelligence in the state of incarnation, by preserving their life and well-being, and ultimately by the material improvement of the worlds which they inhabit. This is the material side ; but they also labour at their moral and intellectual advancement, and at the moral and intellectual development of the human races which people these worlds.

Material incarnation is a punishment necessary for expiation and progress, and is succeeded by less and less material incarnations in more and more elevated worlds ; for matter follows the progress of the spirit. The incarnations then become more and more fluidic, until the spirit has purified itself from all contact with the flesh, and returns to the superior regions, passing through the layers of air and worlds, learning on the one hand, and teaching on the other.

The spirits who remain pure also employ their activity and intelligence, to progress from the state of innocence and ignorance, infancy and instruction, to perfection. They are obliged to make great spiritual efforts to progress without falling, in the fluidic state ; for the perispit is matter to them, and renders their labour great, constant, and difficult ; for although the perispit is the means and instrument of their progress, it may also be the cause of their fall at any moment. It is actually so in the case of a spirit who has failed, and may be the cause of a fresh fall at any time ; although it is the means and instrument of his progress in the human incarnations. Unfallen spirits exercise their activity and intelligence in proportion to the elevation which they have acquired by study and labour, in the maintenance of universal life and harmony, but always in the spiritual state, in worlds inhabited by incarnate spirits who have failed, and in worlds inhabited by spirits in the errant state, everywhere in space. The worlds are infinitely numerous. Their number and multiplication would astound you ; and nothing could enable you, in the limited state of your intelligence, to understand their extent ; but spirits are far more numerous.

When spirits have arrived at a certain degree of moral and intellectual development, both those who have hitherto remained unfallen, and those who have already fallen, are required to study the principles and organization of worlds. They commence these studies under the direction of perfectly pure spirits, whose origin is lost in the darkness of past eternities ; and under their guidance they construct and develop the planets, and lead them from sphere to sphere towards the regions which are fitted for them. At

this moment many of them fall, either seduced by pride, and overlooking the directing hand of the Lord, or they question his power by mistrusting their own. The time of the human incarnation of the spirit, according to his fault, has then arrived ; but the planet is not allowed to perish because the first architect has failed, but continues its progress under the supervision of a superior spirit, who takes the place of the fallen spirit, and continues his work.

We have been speaking of spirits who have already attained to some degree of knowledge, and are entrusted with the formation of planets ; but even before arriving at this point many are hurled from the ether into gross matter, many turn aside at the very entrance of the path, and many have neither the courage to make the needful efforts nor to persevere after the first attempt.

But never forget that all spirits, whether fallen or unfallen, were originally equal at their starting-point, and will also be equal when they reach their goal. They will be equal in purity when they have become pure spirits, although they have pursued different paths, because it is rendered to each according to his works.

§ 60. You have told us that Mary and Joseph were both perfect spirits, but that Joseph was less elevated than Mary ; while both were inferior to Jesus. What is the exact meaning of this, and why are some inferior to others in perfection ?

God alone is perfect from all eternity. He alone is possessed of absolute perfection, and universal and infinite love and knowledge. He alone can say, " I will go no further," because he has attained the absolute limits of perfection from all eternity. It is he alone who has always existed, and having always known everything, has nothing to learn. The created spirit can never equal God ; and as everything in the infinite vastness of the universe is always tending to progress, the spirit, whatever may be its intellectual advancement, has always more and more to learn, throughout the eternities. Intellectual progress is therefore indefinite ; for every spirit has always something to learn in universal knowledge, without ever finding any limits.

Moral perfection is relative, like intellectual progress. A

spirit may be morally and intellectually perfect, relative to worlds inferior to that which he inhabits. A spirit may stand very high in the spiritual hierarchy as compared with yourselves, and may be morally and intellectually perfect as regards your planet, and may yet be very far from having attained the culminating point of perfection. He may still have to advance very far in universal knowledge before reaching it ; and it is these whom you call superior spirits.

A spirit is perfect as compared to you and your planet when he has succeeded in subduing all human passions, and in divesting himself of all impurity of thought, and, consequently, of action. Such a spirit is animated by the most ardent and devoted love for all the creatures of the Lord, and is filled with reverence and adoration towards his Creator. He has reached the apex of love and devotion, but not of knowledge.

The culminating point of perfection is *sidereal perfection*. A spirit has attained to this when he has attained to moral and intellectual perfection relative to the higher or lower worlds, both material or fluidic, which are inhabited by fallen or unfallen spirits, until they have attained to the purely fluidic worlds, where the essence of the perisprit is completely purified ; when the influence of matter over the spirit has become completely nullified, and it is no longer liable to incarnation upon any planet whatever. Sidereal perfection is only attained by pure spirits ; but even these are not possessed of unlimited knowledge, for this belongs to God alone, and not even to those spirits whose knowledge is nearest to his ; for no created spirit can ever equal God.

When the pure spirit has attained to moral infallibility, he is only intellectually infallible relatively, and through the aid of others, when he is deficient in some branches of knowledge which are necessary for the accomplishment of any mission ; because, although he is morally perfect relatively to all spirits whomsoever, it is the will of God that he should always be aided and sustained by those who are his superiors in knowledge.

The hierarchy of knowledge among the pure spirits, who

are all equally pure, is only a principle of assistance proceeding from God alone, the sole source from whence all merit and power proceeds, and to whom it returns. But you may be very sure that although the pure spirit may still have much to learn before arriving at the extreme limits of universal knowledge in space, he is always morally and intellectually perfect, relatively to the planets which he visits.

God is the eternal essence of all life, the Supreme Intelligence, and Uncreated Creator; the First Cause, sovereignly intelligent and omnipotent. The pure spirits are intermediate between God and the superior spirits who are the ministers of the divine will; and thus act upon yourselves, by the mediation of good spirits, according to the spiritual hierarchy. These have all various tasks assigned them, and aid in the preparation, development, and guidance of everything which conduces to the universal life and harmony in all worlds whatever, whether inhabited by fallen or unfallen spirits, according to the natural and immutable laws which God has established in space.

Every world whatever has a protecting and ruling spirit—a Christ of God—the origin of whose perfection is lost in the darkness of bygone eternities, and who is infallible and unfallen. He has presided over the formation of his world, and is entrusted with its development and progress, and with that of all the spirits who inhabit it, that he may lead them to perfection. The missions of these Christs of God are relative to the degree and development of the planet. They preach love to such ungrateful worlds as yours; but in more elevated worlds they teach great discoveries, arts, and sciences. In all, they labour to awaken the sleeping instincts, according to the necessities and capacities of the planets which they direct. The Christs of God fulfil their missions with equal zeal, whatever may be the inferiority or superiority of the worlds which they govern; whether upon Mars, upon your earth, or Venus, or on Jupiter.

Those spirits who have arrived at sidereal perfection, after having fallen and been purified, always regard those

who have arrived at the same perfection without falling, with a species of love and reverence. But do not suppose that there is any line of demarcation between those who have fallen and those who have remained pure. Not so ; they are equal in purity, devotion, and love. Let the men of your planet contend about the hierarchy of precedence and the inequality of social conditions : in the sight of God, whatever is equally pure, is equal.

We have said that the protecting and ruling spirits of the planets are infallible and unfallen. They are infallible because they are in direct and conscious sympathy with God, and receive his inspirations and wishes ; and they are likewise superior in universal knowledge to the spirits who have also become pure after having fallen. Do not think that there is any partiality in this. God is all justice, and is incapable of partiality ; but the spiritual hierarchy is based upon the elevation and progress of spirits. You can understand that the spirit who has pursued a uniform course ever since his origin, must always be further advanced in universal knowledge than the spirit who has become purified after having fallen ; and it is natural that the most important missions in nature should be entrusted to the most advanced spirits.

We will now explain in what sense Mary and Joseph were both perfect spirits when they incarnated themselves on a mission. They were perfect spirits relative to you, for they were both morally and intellectually perfect as regards your planet, but not so, relatively to worlds superior to those which they had inhabited. They were superior spirits, and were very high in the spiritual hierarchy in comparison with yourselves ; but they had not yet attained to the culminating point of perfection. They were good and devoted spirits, but had still much universal knowledge to acquire before attaining to sidereal perfection.

They were both spirits who had not remained pure, but who had been purified. Mary had undergone a semi-material incarnation on an elevated planet. We call it semi-material because the body was fluidic, thus participating in the

nature of the perisprit. You cannot understand the nature of these fluidic bodies in the superior worlds, any more than that of the perisprit, as long as you are not in a position to understand the nature of the fluids of which they are composed. Strictly speaking, the perisprit may be called semi-material, because, though itself fluidic, it can materialize itself at will. As compared with what you call matter, it is as vapour compared to water ; matter etherealized, but still matter, and capable of assuming a compact appearance at times. You will only be able to understand this when your intelligence is sufficiently developed to penetrate the depths of ether which surround you.

In order to estimate the qualities of the air, you have analyzed, weighed, and measured it. The air was always around you, and yet how long you have required to accomplish even this !

Before you can understand the fluids which are diffused through space, and may be said to compose it, you must learn to rise into the regions where these fluids disengage heterogeneous particles. But before this the science of Aerostatics must have attained its acme of perfection, and as yet it is only passing through the first stages of its infancy. How many fruitless efforts have been already made to perfect it, and how many are yet to follow ! Man will one day be master of the air as he is of the earth and water, and he will then only be able to understand it, because he will be able to study it. At present you see only the difficulties of guiding yourselves and of breathing, but these will be overcome. Before men can ascend to these elevated regions, it will be necessary for them to guard against the want of air to support life, and against currents which would be poisonous to humanity.

These are great difficulties : but man's intelligence was given him to be used. The horizon continually expands before him to incite him to unceasing progress. Let him advance without fear, for the studies of one man will be useful to others as well as to himself when the time has come. God wills that others should aid you, but that you your-

selves should also work. If man arms himself with the love of knowledge, and the desire of progress, he will be sustained by good spirits, and will one day attain a perfect knowledge of the matter around him. After this the matter which envelopes him will itself become modified to administer to his new requirements, and he will pass from study to study, and from progress to progress, until he shall attain to those happy regions where he will acquire all knowledge relating to your planet and the solar system.

Any comparison between the objects in your world and those in higher worlds must be incomplete, but if you would compare the fluidic bodies of the higher planets with matter which changes its nature under your eyes, you may compare the human body of your planet to water, and that of certain other planets to steam. Steam is still water, but water in such a condition that it can rise into the air and mingle with the clouds, instead of needing any support.

During the successive incarnations which follow yours, the body gradually loses its density, and becomes more and more aerial. The feet no longer adhere to the ground, and the body no longer needs to be carefully balanced. The higher planets are surrounded with an atmosphere corresponding with their nature, and just as sea-water floats a body more readily than fresh, thus the density of the air of these regions is greater than that of the bodies of the mortals who inhabit them.

The fault which Mary committed was very slight, even in comparison to the elevation which she had already attained without falling. It was so slight that you would be unable to see the least trace of a fault in it; but much is expected from those to whom much is given.

Mary was incarnated on one of those blessed worlds on which you rest your hopes. For you, poor unhappy creatures, it would indeed be an enviable recompense for which you should strain all your efforts; but this incarnation was nevertheless a punishment to Mary, for she left a more beautiful world.

You may compare this to the case of a man who has had

a competency left him, after having always lived in the greatest poverty. He is able to procure the ordinary pleasures of life, and rejoices in his good fortune. But it is otherwise with the man who has been cradled in a golden couch, all whose fancies have been satisfied, and who had no desire which was not immediately gratified. Is he not unhappy when he sees his resources fail, is forced to compound with his creditors, and loses part of his fortune? For he knows that he has committed a fault, and that he himself is to blame for what he has lost. But as any comparison between earthly things and those of higher worlds must be faulty, we wish you to accept the spirit and not the letter of our explanations.

Mary was purified by this incarnation, and without falling again, she resumed the simple and direct path of progress, which she is still following. She has not yet attained to the culminating point of sidereal perfection; but notwithstanding this, her present incarnations (a material term which we employ to make you understand her perispritic condition) are so far above your comprehension that you could not form any idea of them.

Joseph had fallen more seriously, and had first suffered several incarnations on your earth, and had subsequently been purified by successive incarnations in higher and higher worlds, when he incarnated himself to aid Jesus in his earthly mission. His present elevation is great, and he is a superior spirit, though his knowledge is inferior to that of Mary.

Both Mary and Joseph are spirits very far inferior to Jesus. They are spirits who are morally and intellectually perfect with reference to you and your planet, but have still to advance very far in universal knowledge before arriving at sidereal perfection. After they have attained it, and become pure spirits, they must still advance continually in knowledge, for no spirit can ever exhaust its limits. Everything in universal nature is always progressing; but this is too far above your limited intelligence to be intelligible to you.

Jesus is a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, and one

of the greatest spiritual essences next to God. His knowledge is so vast that your limited intelligence could form no idea of it, and even the superior spirits cannot comprehend its extent. An innumerable company of pure spirits admire his knowledge, and labour to acquire it throughout the eternities ; but even Jesus himself was still studying when he descended among you, although he was then the very type of love and wisdom. He is still studying, even now, for the spirit knows no end but progress, and only God can say, "I will go no further ;" for he alone has attained the supreme limit from all eternity.

Do not suppose from this that Jesus had, or could have, any trials. He was and is unfallen and infallible ; for he is in constant and direct sympathy with God, because his perfect purity enables him to approach the centre of all purity. He was and is his Word to you, and may be called your God in the sense that he is your Master and King, through and for his God and your God ; his Father and your Father ; for he is the protecting and ruling Spirit of your planet. He was, and ever is, inspired by the love of progress, and labours incessantly to acquire fresh knowledge in the book of infinity ; for God alone has nothing to learn.

When your planet was entrusted to Jesus, he was a pure spirit, unfallen and infallible, but he has increased his own knowledge by working at the progress of your earth ; and his ascending course corresponds with yours ; for God rewards the love and devotion of every spirit, however advanced he may be, by giving him more and more knowledge in return for the progress which he has effected. Consequently the personal progress of every spirit corresponds with the progress which he helps his brethren to accomplish.

The love and devotion of Jesus cause him to constantly make still more ardent efforts to lead you on the path that you should follow to perfection. Your earth originally sprang from incandescent and impure fluids ; and gradually attained its material condition by successive phases of planetary-revolutions. It will pass through phases of new revolutions, from material to less and less material, and

finally fluidic conditions, until it becomes purely fluidic. Then Jesus himself, though always a perfectly pure spirit, will be superior in knowledge to what he had attained when he presided over the formation of the globe; or when he visited it eighteen centuries ago; or to what he now possesses in consequence of his devotion to you.

Everything which has been, is, or will be, in all the kingdoms of nature on your planet, follows an ascending course in the path of physical, moral and intellectual progress, under the operation of spirit action, according to the eternal and immutable laws of God. But during the great work of the purification of your planet and its humanity, the chaff will be separated from the wheat, at the time predicted for the regeneration of your world, when it can no longer be the dwelling-place of any but good spirits. The spirits who remain obstinately guilty or rebellious will be removed, and banished to inferior planets, where they will have to expiate their persistence in evil and their wilful blindness throughout long ages.

Mary and Joseph, like ourselves, continue to aid Jesus in his mission by assisting you to accomplish your destiny under his direction. You can understand that when you are about to attain to perfection, the spirits belonging to the band who aided Jesus in his earthly mission, will have attained to sidereal perfection, and taken their rank among the pure spirits.

MATTHEW IV.—VERSES 1-11. MARK I.

VERSES 12, 13. LUKE IV.—VERSES 1-13.

Fasting and Temptation of Jesus.

Matth. iv. (1) Then was Jesus led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted by the devil. (2) And having fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards hungry. (3) And the tempter came to him, and said, If thou be the son of God, command that these stones may be made bread. (4) But he answered and said, It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (5) Then the devil taketh him into the holy city, and setteth him upon the pinnacle of the Temple, (6) And saith unto him, If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall

bear thee up, lest thou shouldst ever dash thy foot against a stone. (7) Jesus said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (8) Again the devil taketh him to a very high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, (9) And saith unto him, I will give thee all these things, if thou wilt fall down, and worship me. (10) Then Jesus saith unto him, Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (11) Then the devil departeth from him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Mark i. (12) And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness, (13) And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was among the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

Luke iv. (1) And Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. (2) Being tempted by the devil for forty days. And he ate nothing during those days, and when they were ended, afterwards he was hungry. (3) And the devil said to him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. (4) And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. (5) And the devil, bringing him to a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the civilized world in a moment of time. (6) And the devil said to him, I will give thee all this power, and their glory, for it is delivered unto me, and I give it to whoever I please. (7) Therefore if thou wilt humble thyself before me, all shall be thine. (8) And Jesus answering said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and thou shalt serve him only. (9) And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down from hence. (10) For it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee. (11) And they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou shouldst ever dash thy foot against a stone. (12) And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (13) And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

§ 61. Satan, the devil, or the demon, is a figurative expression which stands for the whole company of evil spirits, eager for the ruin of man. Satan was not the name of any particular spirit, but represented a whole band of evil spirits who descended among men at that period to turn them aside from the ways of the Lord. Most of these, however, are now purified. Satan still exists, for evil spirits still persecute men, and still lead them aside from the ways of the Lord.

But all, like yourselves, will be purified in time, by means of a series of trials and expiations in successive reincarnations, each of which will be preceded, in the case of guilty spirits, by expiations in space, in the errant state, consisting

of moral sufferings or tortures, appropriate and proportioned to the faults or crimes which they have committed. The guilty spirit, whether in the errant or incarnate state, finds in these, hell, purgatory, expiation, reparation, and progress.

Reincarnation is the holy ladder which all men must mount. Its steps are the phases of different existences which must be passed through, first in the inferior, and then in the superior worlds, before arriving at the summit ; for God has proclaimed by his celestial messenger, your Master and ours, the Protector and Ruler of your planet, that no one can come to him without being born, dying, and being born again, until he has arrived at the limits of perfection ; and no one among men can come to him without being purified by reincarnation. O, men, you have done well to submit yourselves to the powerful influence of progress. Progress is taking place daily, though slowly ; and reincarnation, aided by Spiritism, will stimulate it, and give it a sublime impetus.

The fasting and temptation of Jesus were figurative, as we will explain to you. They were only real in the eyes of men, owing to the comments which the disciples and apostles made upon the teachings of Jesus after his earthly mission was completed. Jesus spoke to the people of the temptations which beset humanity, and the snares spread for them by evil spirits, as well as of the necessity of resisting them with faith and perseverance. But the subsequent comments of the disciples, who were influenced by the prejudices of their age and their Hebrew traditions, led them to imagine, when they considered the circumstances under which the discourse had been delivered, that it was a narrative of what Jesus had himself experienced. Hence the evangelists Matthew and Luke wrote the narrative of an actual fasting and of material temptations to which Jesus had been subjected by Satan.

This event, which religious authorities consider to be real and material, is an emblem. How was it possible for the mind of man thus to degrade one of whom he made a portion of God ; a part of the great All who governs the

universe; an opinion which returns partially to pantheistic ideas? How could men debase this portion of the Divine Being so low as to bring him in contact with the demon, the outcast of heaven, who was driven away by this very God, a portion of whom is reduced to parley with the proud and powerful exile, to such an extent as even to put himself in his power? How can it be supposed that if Jesus was human, and therefore subject to the infirmities and necessities of human existence, he could have lived forty days and nights in the desert without taking food? How can it be supposed that Jesus, being God, felt the pangs of hunger after forty days and nights to such an extent as to encourage the audacious assaults of this fallen angel, who could only be forced to abandon his prey (the demoniacs) under the powerful action of the will of Jesus? How could man be so proud on the one hand, and so inconsistent on the other, as to give himself a God as his Saviour, and to subject this God to the dominion of the demon, by putting him in his power, and subjecting him to his contact and influence to tempt him?

O poor humanity! seeking for wonders in the simplest things and rejecting those which are most obvious as impossible, and thus ignorantly degrading him to whom their superstitions assign a share of the divinity, and putting him at the mercy, both now and hereafter ("the demon departed from him *for a season*"), of him who is said to be "cursed to all eternity, with no hope of pardon or wish for repentance, and who fights against the Creator with strength, will and power?"

Yet you must not find fault with this, for there was a reason for the belief in a material temptation, as we shall presently explain; and all that occurred was to take place in the course of events.

Everything has its end and object in the succession of events which always take place at the right time; and human interpretations are always conformed to the state of intelligence, the requirements of the age, and the necessities of each period. Each of these interpretations represents

one of the stages which man must pass through in order to advance continually in the path of progress, gradually perceiving more and more of light and truth, as he is prepared to do so, for these are revealed to men in such proportion as they can bear, so as to enlighten them without their being dazzled.

If you follow the apparent human life of Jesus, by which he constantly preached devotion, charity, and love by example, and trace his actions, words, and teachings, you will see that he always conformed himself, so far as his earthly mission required, to Jewish customs, habits, and traditions. His language was appropriate to these, and to the intelligence of the men whom he addressed, that they might understand, or at least listen to it ; and thus he ensured the success of his mission, and caused his discourse to yield fruits both for the present and for the future ; fruits first of the letter and then of the spirit.

You know that the prophets prepared themselves for their mission by meditation, prayer, and fasting in the desert. Jesus appeared to human eyes to conform to this custom or tradition before publicly commencing his mission. After his baptism, he disappeared for the traditional space of forty days and nights, which the Hebrews regarded as, in some sense, sacred ; and this added to the impression which had already been made upon the people. But instead of going into the desert, he returned (as was his constant practice when the necessities of his earthly mission allowed him to absent himself from the eyes of men) to the superior regions, where, surrounded by celestial splendours, he governs, and will continue to govern, your planet, until it has attained to its fluidic degree, and he has led you to perfection.

After the forty days and nights he returned among men, and addressed the people and his disciples, who had noticed his absence, and now assembled round him, in the following terms :—

“ Verily I say unto you, If the devil should say to you, ‘ Listen to my advice, and submit to my will, and I will give you all the kingdoms of the earth : ’ resist him. Have you

not a much greater kingdom, the kingdom of God, your Father ?

“ If you are pressed by hunger, and the devil should say to you, ‘ Obey me, and I will make bread of these stones to nourish you ;’ refuse him with horror. The bread of earth only feeds the body, and you should seek after the bread of life, which feeds the soul, and fits it to enter into eternal life.

“ If pride should lead you to the summit of greatness, and the devil should say to you, ‘ Cast yourself into the space around you, and fear nothing, for you will be upheld,’ put him to silence, and do not tempt God, but consider within yourselves ; reflect on your weakness and the greatness of the Lord ; trust in him, and the devil will leave you for a time, but do not forget that he is always roving about, ready to seize his prey, and to profit by all your weaknesses.”

These are the words which Jesus pronounced when he reappeared, and which the Master has enjoined us to reveal to you. Apply them to yourselves, for, like all his other sayings, they must bear fruit in the present and in the future, as they bore fruit in the past, under the emblematic figure of a material temptation. These words were handed down by oral tradition, as was then the case with everything.

Some of the apostles and disciples had heard these words spoken, while others had only heard them reported ; but during the earthly mission of Jesus, their minds were constantly occupied by fresh events. It was only after the accomplishment of his mission that the events which had attracted their attention were represented as a whole, and that the evangelists recorded what Jesus said after he had disappeared for forty days and nights, as well as the events which had preceded, accompanied and followed his disappearance. Then they began to reflect upon these events, and their comments finally led to the belief that Jesus had practised a material fast in the desert, where he was tempted by Satan.

The apostles and disciples, like all who embraced the Christian religion, believed this to be an outward event.

They were men, or incarnate spirits, and were consequently imbued with the prejudices, beliefs, and traditions of their age.

Tradition required that every prophet should withdraw into the desert to fast before commencing his mission ; and as the words of Jesus were spoken after his absence of forty days and nights, they supposed that what he taught respecting those temptations of the devil to which man is subjected by hunger, pride and ambition ; the snares laid for him by evil spirits ; and the perseverance and faith with which they ought to be opposed, were a narrative of what he had himself experienced during this period. Consequently, they supposed that he had fasted in the desert for forty days and nights, after which he was hungry, and was then tempted by the devil in the very words which he had spoken to the people.

Material facts are necessary for material men. Men regarded Christ as a human being, subject to the infirmities and necessities of human existence ; and they could understand nothing but physical trials, especially at that age. At a later period, the revelation which the angel made to Mary and Joseph respecting the divine origin of Jesus was revealed to the multitude. After this, all regarded him as literally the son of God, and this accounted for his life of perfect purity, the miracles which he performed, and his resurrection and ascension.

The apostles and disciples regarded Jesus as subject to the infirmities and necessities of human existence, and to the temptations of the devil ; although the events of his earthly mission led them to look upon him as a great prophet. The new ideas which they received after the accomplishment of his mission, led them to regard him as greater than all the prophets who had appeared on earth ; the Son of God, and, as all his disciples thought, sharing in the divinity of his Father. Being liable to suffer temptation, he had been subjected to it, and had triumphed over it. As they regarded the teachings of Jesus as a narrative of real events which had passed between the devil and himself during his

absence or disappearance, they arranged a dialogue between them accordingly. Although the exact words which Jesus had pronounced had vanished from the memory of men, the idea and essence of the teaching remained. The apostles and disciples therefore had recourse to writing to preserve the dialogue according to the sense and essence of the teaching.

If you compare the exact words pronounced by Jesus with the version which arose under the influence of tradition and commentary, you will see that the idea and essence are the same. The allegory is presented in such a form that it may be taken literally, though it should be spiritualized by the intelligence. The lesson which Jesus intended to convey is still there, but converted into a real and material temptation, which the devil practised upon Jesus, who had undergone this experience, and, being both man and the son of God, was able to overcome it.

The hunger ascribed to Jesus, and his being carried away first to a high mountain, and then to the pinnacle of the temple at Jerusalem, were the result of comments. Jesus had disappeared for forty days and forty nights, during which his disciples and apostles supposed that he had retired into the desert to fast, according to the traditions, and was afterwards hungry. As they supposed that his words were a literal narrative of his own temptation by the devil, it was also needful for the devil to carry Jesus to two lofty places, first to show him all the kingdoms of the world, and second, placing him at the material summit of human greatness, to tell him to cast himself into space, or to throw himself down.

You must not forget the ignorance and simplicity of the men or incarnate spirits of that period relative to the system of the world, when they made these comments. The apostles and disciples regarded a high mountain, and the pinnacle of the temple at Jerusalem, as the most convenient places, and did not comprehend that there could be any others. They thought that a high mountain was the only place where the devil could have carried Jesus, to be able to show him all the kingdoms of the world. When they

gave a material sense to the words of the Master, relative to the summit of human greatness, where the devil placed Jesus in order to say to him, "Cast thyself down from hence, and fear no fall, for you will be upheld," the only place which they could conceive of as corresponding to this idea by elevation in space was the summit of the temple of Jerusalem. Those who believed accepted the facts, so far as their faculties permitted them, as they still accept them; but the incredulous rejected them, as is still the case, without further inquiry.

All is foreseen, and takes place in accordance with the universal law which governs worlds in the path of progress, and which always corresponds in the course of events, as in human interpretations, to the state of intelligence and the necessities of each period; but man is possessed of free will. God knows the use which he will make of it; for everything which you call the past, the present, and the future, is always, and to all eternity, unrolled before his face.

Man is always in possession of his free will, and at liberty to choose between the true thought gradually dawning on the minds of some, and the false, though useful thought. But man is drawn aside by his natural predilections, as when he preferred the sacrifice of a God to increase his own importance, instead of the sacrifice of a prophet; just as the material temptation of Jesus by Satan renewed his courage, and showed him his path, when he whom he regarded as a man-God had been subjected to temptation; for Jesus, although the son of God, and a portion of the Divine, was a man at the same time, and thus being subject to the infirmities of human existence, was accessible to the devil, and personally suffered the trial which he was able to overcome.

Nothing takes place without the will of God; in the sense that if he desired to interfere with human actions, his will alone would be sufficient. But the end and consequence of all things are always before him; and he never interferes with the destinies, thoughts and actions, of any one before-

hand. He does not govern like a tyrant, but permits everything to take its course. By leaving every one his free will and independence, he aids humanity to guide itself, and to walk in the path of progress by successive and always progressive revolutions, which react upon the course of events, and link them together. As these are always appropriate to the state of intelligence and to the necessities of the time, they develop the progress already made in the present, and prepare for fresh advances in the future.

If God had desired, he could certainly have employed spirit manifestations and medianimic action to show the apostles, disciples and evangelists, the falsity of the interpretation which converted a lesson which Jesus delivered to the people into a narrative of an actual fasting and temptation, which he himself passed through in the desert. But the necessities of the period required that they should be left in this belief; for it was needful that the masses should comprehend it.

If men had only considered the perfection necessary to attain to God, and the visible and ever-victorious perfection of Jesus, how greatly they would have been discouraged had they not been warned beforehand that the strongest may be liable to temptation! And what strength have they not derived from this example of the will being always able to repulse the inspirations of evil! They would never have dared to hope to attain to the ideal which was set before them, and when they found it too high for them, they would have rested on the surface of the ground; whereas, seeing him subjected to temptation, and coming forth a conqueror through faith, all might hope for the same reward.

Thus, the temptation of Jesus is a figure due to the necessities and the state of intelligence of the age, and the natural aspirations which attracted men, and it was likewise preparatory to the future. We have revealed to you the real nature of Jesus, to whom all spirits are subject, and who showed himself omnipotent over the demons, during his earthly mission, even to your eyes. He had not to

suffer the influence and still less the contact with evil spirits, and there is not a word in his teachings which could permit you to say so, or even to imagine it.

The forty days and nights which Jesus was represented in the parable as passing in the desert, are an emblem of human life. During this short space of time man is attacked by all its evil passions, and feels all its necessities, and it is for him to rise triumphant over the trial.

Therefore, beloved ones, act as you were taught by Jesus in the words which we have just revealed to you at his bidding. Act as you are taught by this emblematic figure of material temptation, which was designed to embody the teaching contained in his words. Triumph over the passions, and even the necessities of humanity by trusting everything to God. Worship and serve God only, and the spirits of the Lord will descend to aid you to ascend to the heavens.

Every man whomsoever, upon your earth, is liable to be tempted by evil spirits, who are too ignorant to discern those who are able to resist them. Even those who are incarnated among you on a mission are not exempt from their attacks. The words of Jesus to the people, and the parable which represents him as exposed to a material temptation, are sufficient to show you all how to act. The temptations and evil influences which are most dangerous to man are pride, the material appetites, and the ambition which is inflamed by these evil passions. Unhappily, the best intentions in principle break against these rocks, especially among those to whom God has granted the favour of incarnating themselves to contribute to the advancement of their brethren.

Learn to resist the attempts of the evil spirits, and to keep yourselves worthy of the favour which God has granted you in sending you the divine model in whose steps you should constantly endeavour to tread. Learn to show yourselves worthy of the favour which he has granted to you in opening the era of the new revelation, and sending his good spirits to develop your judgment, and enlighten your hearts

and intelligence. They bring you light and truth, and teach you the reverence, gratitude and love which you owe to God your Creator, and after him to his Christ, your protector, ruler and master. They come to teach you patience, resignation, gentleness, benevolence, simplicity of heart, humility of mind, chastity, according to the laws of nature, frugality, temperance, sobriety, disinterestedness, justice, tolerance, devotion, and love and charity towards your brethren. They come to teach you the love of labour and of knowledge, and the desire of progress, according to physical, moral and intellectual order; love for all the creatures of the Lord which he has entrusted to your hands to be employed for your use, according to the measure of your needs, or to be destroyed for your safety, but never to be abused. They come to instruct you in all duties and virtues, and to inspire you to practise them.

Learn to show yourselves worthy of the favour which God has shown you in sending his good spirits to teach you to resist the allurements of matter, and to distinguish good from evil in spirit and in truth. They come to reveal the secrets of the other world, and the source and character of good and evil influences. Your guardian angel and other good spirits always endeavour to inspire you with their good influences, whenever you are disposed to receive them, and it is possible for them to make themselves heard; but your evil impulses are due to the inspirations of wicked and impure spirits, who wander about, always ready to seize their prey, and to profit by all your weaknesses.

Watch and pray, therefore. Watch, by exerting a constant vigilance over your thoughts, words, and actions. Pray, not with the lips, but with the heart, to attract good influences towards you, and that God may grant you the protection of good spirits who will help you to practise all the duties and virtues which the Spirit of Truth has come to preach to you through the spirits of the Lord.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN.

With the concurrence of the Apostles.

§ 62. What do you mean by saying, when speaking of the opinion which makes Jesus a portion of God, "an opinion which returns partially to pantheistic ideas?"

Does not the doctrine which you call Pantheism make everything proceed from the same principle, to which everything also returns and is reabsorbed, to begin anew these perpetual divisions and reunions in the revolutions of the universal machine? On a smaller scale, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are represented as portions of God, dividing from the All, and yet forming only one with him. It is a variation of the theme of Pantheism.

The events on the banks of the Jordan illustrate the opinion which thus makes Jesus and the Holy Spirit two portions of God, according to pantheistic ideas. God is there divided into three portions; (1) Jesus, in a human body like yours, subject to the necessities of human existence, and the human infirmities of life and death; (2) the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus in the bodily form of a dove; (3) God, from whom the two other portions were thus separated, causing his voice to be heard from heaven, and saying to Jesus, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." After the two portions of God were divided from the great Whole, they return and mingle with him, to form one only. If we cannot rank such an opinion with pantheistic ideas, it must be classed with the pagan notion of a plurality of Gods.

This opinion is instinctively repudiated by the reason of man, and is called a mystery. It was the result of false human interpretations, due to ignorance both of the spiritual origin of Jesus and of the true meaning of the term Holy Spirit.

The New Revelation has now taught you that God is the one and only universal but indivisible Principle, who creates, but not by the divisibility of his essence; for God is One. Jesus is a created spirit, whose origin and starting-point were the same as those of all other spirits, but who is a pure spirit, and has attained to perfection without ever having fallen. The Holy Spirit is a figurative expression, denoting,

either collectively or individually, the pure, superior, and good spirits, who are the ministers of the will of God in their hierarchical order, and are the organs of his inspiration to man.

§ 63. How are we to understand the words, "Man is always possessed of free will. God knows the use which he will make of it, for what you call the past, present and future is unrolled before him to all eternity?"

Do you acknowledge the divine prescience, or do you degrade the Supreme Intelligence to the level of your own? If there was any influence controlling free will, free will could not exist. When a machine is constructed, the results of its action are foreseen, and everything takes place as was designed; but if an unskilful or careless workman gets between the cogs, or if a curious spectator approaches to examine it more closely, or touches a wheel, he is liable to be drawn into the machinery, and crushed, or otherwise injured. The maker had nothing to do with it either directly or indirectly, although he knew that if anybody should act thus, he would suffer in consequence. If he saw a rash man going too near, he would exclaim, "Take care, for you are in danger."

Distant as this comparison is, where or what fatality is there in reference to the order which guides the movement of the machine, and the men around it. Man in his pride and ignorance would like the Lord to take part in all his actions. Each of you, poor worms, wishes the Supreme Intelligence to descend to his level, and to take him by the hand. Ah, take a broader view of the greatness of your Creator! The Lord reigns over all the universes and illumines all their dark places. He exerts a superior guiding and governing influence, but leaves your free will full liberty to act amid the various conflicting physical and spiritual influences at work around you, amidst and under the control of general laws which he has immutably established through all eternity. This superior influence guides and governs by the universal spiritual action which is the agent of his Providence, and acts amid these laws under their dominion,

and within their limits, according to his omnipotent and immutable will. This influence continually leads you in the path of progress under the independent action of your free will, whether obedient or rebellious.

The whole is unrolled before God from all eternity. The past, present and future are words invented for your necessities, and are meaningless to him. He is He who Is, from all eternity. Can you not understand that while he permits man the freedom of his will, and of his thoughts and actions, his piercing gaze perceives at the same time what use man will make of his liberty?

The engineer who sees a rash, unskilful, or curious man coming near his machinery, can tell beforehand the consequences which may follow his imprudence, but his limited intelligence will not tell him whether the man will commit any act of imprudence or not. He cannot read his thoughts or follow their course; for he always sees a past, present and future in the use of free will, however slight the interval between may appear to him.

But past, present and future are nothing to God, and are all before him without a break. He reads the thought of man, sees the action of his will, and also sees before him in one view the course and consequences of all things, and knows the use which man will make of his free will, for everything is eternally and continuously instantaneous to God.

No comparison can be made between the brilliant sun shining in its full splendour, and the pale sparkle reflecting it and then dying away, when the light falls for a moment on a brook. As little can we compare the vast being who sheds light on all which exists, and your feeble intelligences. We repeat that the divine prescience is a faculty which it is impossible for you to analyze.

§ 64. How was the tangible perispritic body of Jesus kept alive and nourished?

We have told you that Jesus assumed a body analogous to those of the superior worlds. It was of a similar perispritic nature, but rendered more material by being combined

with the fluids which surround your planet. This body was consequently gifted with the same properties and the same means of life and nutrition as those of the superior spirits.

The needs and requirements of material life and nutrition to which your human bodies are subjected, disappear when the purified spirit has attained a sufficient degree of moral and intellectual elevation to be freed from all contact with the flesh, and undergoes incarnation, or, more correctly, incorporation, in the superior worlds. The modes and necessities of life and nutrition then correspond with the surroundings of the spirit which is clothed with a perispritic body. The body, like the perispit, in the nature of which it participates, then draws the materials of life and nutrition which it requires from the surrounding fluids, which it assimilates, and which are sufficient to sustain its constituent principles. This assimilation of the surrounding fluids which effects nutrition and sustains life, takes place according to laws which regulate these fluids, and which you cannot yet understand. The nature of these fluids, the laws which regulate them, their properties, uses, and functions, will not be explained until the time has come. It is not reserved for you to enter into these details. Let it suffice you to observe that on such material worlds as yours, the union of matter is necessary to the formation of matter. Man is clothed with a material human envelope, formed by the material laws of reproduction, and requires material nourishment drawn from the vegetable and animal kingdoms.

Man has two coverings : one fluidic, which we have called the perispit, which forms after death the fluidic body which constitutes the human individuality of the spirit ; and the other material, which is restored to matter as a corpse after death, and forms what you call the human body.

Man has appropriate organs to assimilate the elements required for the life and nutrition of these two envelopes. One set effect the material nourishment of the body by means of liquid and solid food, combined with the fluids which are requisite and necessary ; and the other set absorb the sur-

rounding fluids which are needful for the life and nutrition of the perisprit, or fluidic envelope. Material nourishment is therefore only necessary and possible for man when he is clothed with a material body in the material worlds. When the spirit is incarnated, or rather fluidically incorporated, in material worlds where the body is of a perispritic nature, life and nutrition is effected by the absorption of the appropriate surrounding fluids. The plant has no need to eat or drink, yet it absorbs, either from the earth or the air, the essences and fluids which are essential to its existence.

When the spirit is in the errant state, or clothed with a perispritic body, there is no need or possibility for it to eat and drink like you. It then maintains its existence by absorbing the surrounding fluids which are necessary to sustain the constituent principles of the perisprit in the errant state ; and in the state of incarnation or incorporation, those needed to sustain the perisprit, and the fluidic body which participates in its nature, and is assimilated to it, being entirely composed of fluids ; and this, unlike your material bodies, is not liable to corruption.

We will now further explain what we told you in § 14. The body which Jesus assumed was only a premature example of the human frame, as it will exist, some ages hence, in certain parts of your planet, for the incarnation of spirits who have then arrived at a sufficient degree of elevation. Let true science (that is, a science which does not remain stationary from prejudice at one point) observe what has taken place in the past, and the gradual course of events in the future ; and it will discover the material forerunners of these organisms which still appear to you impossible at present.

Man (speaking here of the species and not of the sex, otherwise we should specially and chiefly speak of woman as possessed of a more advanced organization) ; man, we say, will become physiologically modified, the influence of matter will become more feeble, the nervous system more developed, the intelligence more advanced, often beyond the physical strength (as you say, sometimes, that the sword wears out the scabbard) ; and at last the spirit will triumph

over matter. The flesh will diminish in proportion as the nervous system is developed, and in many organisms the animal vital force will be replaced by the spiritous nervous force. These will be the premonitory symptoms which will forewarn you of the change which is about to take place in you.

The system will be purified little by little; the thick blood which flows in your veins will become more and more mingled with the vital fluid which will replace the corruptible molecules, and the nervous system will develop and encroach on the fleshly envelope until the latter is reduced to a mere shell, and will finally disappear altogether, to be replaced by a tangible fluidic envelope, which will dissolve without suffering or violence. When the nerves have arrived at this point of development, they will resemble the webs of gossamer on which the spiders float in the air in autumn; their nature will gradually change, as they are more and more encroached upon by the nervo-vital fluid; they will become more supple as they diminish in volume; their sensibility will increase in proportion to this diminution, and they will finally harmonize with the envelope which covers them, and combine to form what we may call, to enable you to understand it, a tangible perispirt, or body like that of certain elevated planets.

We can easily make you understand the life and nutrition of such a body. Are there not some insects so constituted that it is sufficient for their organs to nourish the body with the pure air around them, and the substances which you cannot perceive, which are contained in the dew as it falls drop by drop on the leaves, which they do not drink, but the emanations from which they inhale? Such is the organism of the spirit when it assumes a body similar to that of Jesus; but this perispirtic body was as gross as it was possible for his spiritual nature to assume.

In this form of incarnation or incorporation, absorption is effected by the pores as well as by respiration. The whole being is nourished by the subtle substances which surround it, penetrate it, and minister to its requirements.

Little by little you will see instances of this. You will first meet with persons whom you will regard as abnormal phenomena, who content themselves with so little nourishment that it would seem impossible for them to survive ; others who will sustain life on water only, or on some other insipid liquid ; and, finally, others who will reverse all ordinary rules, and require no nourishment at all. Such phenomena will show themselves imperfectly at first, and will appear to be cases of disease.

These cases will perplex scientific men, who will study and experiment, without finding the clue to the mystery. Such cases will afterwards become more numerous, and it will finally be acknowledged that certain abnormally constituted beings can exist independently of known organic laws. At a later period it will be perceived that the exceptions are becoming so numerous as to reverse the former rule. Spread the knowledge of magnetism, and predispose coming generations to the emancipation of the spirit ; refine matter ; purify the blood by charging it with fluids ; and you will aid in the emancipation of the spirit, and its victory over matter.

But this must take place gradually, for this condition cannot yet be maintained in ordinary humanity. At present, a few cases of sickness alone present you with such phenomena. These are the first indications which always precede the crisis of general transformation. On account of the present condition of the atmosphere, and the organs adapted to it, the cases which now fall under your notice are cases of disease, or are regarded as such, because, apart from the acknowledged laws regulating the performance of the bodily functions, those who attempt to exist thus, do not possess the requisite constitution, and the nourishment derived from the surrounding air is still insufficient for the grossness of the organism, which exhausts itself at length by its efforts to absorb and assimilate these fluids.

Such cases already appear at rare intervals. They will gradually become more numerous until the majority of the spirits who people your planet are sufficiently elevated to emancipate themselves from material necessities. Then those

who are materially incarnated will be looked upon as inferior beings until they have also succeeded in reaching the same elevation. This can only be accomplished gradually, like all transformations, and your planet will be subjected to the same law of progression, and will change its alimentary principles. The elements of material nourishment will become scarcer and scarcer ; the manner in which man abuses everything which he touches, will destroy the animals, the edible plants, the trees, and even the flowers.* Man will gradually be deprived of the material resources with which the earth supplies him, and will seek a remedy for these privations in science. He will then invent new kinds of food, produced by chemical combinations. He will extract the material particles which he can assimilate to his organism from the fluids around, as he has drawn heat from wood, light from coal and force from air. He will study the means of living without material nourishment, and succeeding generations will be born with purer organisms, gradually becoming less material and more fluidic, which will lead you on to the period of which we have spoken.

Never forget that the temperance, chastity, and purity of the parents influences the organisms of the children, both by attracting more elevated spirits, and also by providing them with a purer and more flexible corporeal envelope. There is no caprice or chance in the course of progress and transformation. The spirits who are thus incarnated, and whom you regard as abnormally constituted, are more or less elevated spirits, whose mission it is to call the attention of science to certain questions, and to provide the groundwork for future edifices. We may observe, in conclusion, that it will be easy to perceive the transformation which will take place in external nature. This will be effected when the means of material aliment become rarer and rarer (and it

* Fantastic as this statement may appear to some, it is literally true, not in Europe only, but in all settled parts of the world. Some dried specimens of Australian flowers were exhibited at a meeting of the Linnean Society of London in the spring of 1880 ; and it was stated that they had now become so rare that it was exceedingly difficult to obtain specimens at all.—TRANSL.

already begins to grow difficult to procure sufficient food supplies), and man will be obliged to change the food on which he subsists. He will call art and chemistry to his aid to sustain life on other substances. This will result in the production of artificial food, which will first derange the animal economy, and lead to diseases and infirmities. But in succeeding generations the diseased organs of the parents will gradually become modified in the children, and adapted to the new requirements of humanity. The organs will then also become more sensitive, and will more readily appropriate themselves to the nutritious particles suspended in the atmosphere. At length the cataclysms which your planet must inevitably undergo in order to effect its physical reconstruction, will assist the development of these new digestive faculties.

§ 65. What took place when Jesus appeared to take food ?

He was surrounded by an incalculable number of obedient and devoted superior spirits. They caused the food which he was supposed to take to disappear in such a manner that it appeared to be consumed by Jesus, by enveloping it with fluids which rendered it invisible, and they then removed and dispersed it in such a manner that it might serve for the necessities of other creatures.

If you trace the course of the earthly mission of Jesus, you will see that during the whole period of his mission, whether before or after his "resurrection," he rarely appeared to take food, and then only when it was necessary either to convince men of his humanity (which it was necessary for them to believe in, that his mission should be accepted, and succeed), or else to give them a lesson of temperance, or to set them an example of charity, pardon, and love.

The disciples of Jesus felt no surprise at his mode of life. They saw him pray, and as fasting was rigorously enjoined among the Jews, they believed that he practised it as a mortification, or as an evidence of his perfection.

§ 66. How did Jesus disappear, and afterwards reappear, when he was believed to have retired into the desert, or up a mountain, to pray ?

When the spirit is clothed with a material envelope, it is.

at liberty to release itself, but it always remains connected with it by a fluidic cord which is invisible to the human eye. It can emancipate itself from the body by disengaging itself during sleep; and in some very rare cases when the body is not asleep, but always when it is in a more or less ecstatic condition. It can even make itself visible and tangible at a distance, with the aid of its perisprit, and present every appearance of the human body, so as to create a complete illusion; and even in some very exceptional cases (of which you have some well-authenticated instances*) possessing all the apparent faculties of human life and speech.

The spirit undergoing material human incarnation cannot dematerialize its body, for only the decomposition caused by death can effect this.

When superior spirits are undergoing a fluidic incarnation or incorporation, they can materialize their fluidic body at will, so as to render it visible and even tangible; and they can dematerialize it, to make it vanish from your sight, by restoring it to its normal state, which is invisible to you. They can modify it to assimilate it to the regions which it traverses, but when they are subjected to incarnation or incorporation, they can only separate from their body by death, which restores them to their errant state, with their perisprit purified as far as their last incarnation or incorporation has purified it. The death of the body of superior spirits is merely the disintegration of the matter which surrounds the spirit; for the fluids which are assimilated to the perisprit to effect incarnation or incorporation, are matter to the spirit. This disintegration resembles decomposition to their acute senses. Although their bodies are composed of incorruptible substances, they see them dissolve visibly, each of the principles which compose the fluidic body separating completely, and returning to the various mediums which attract them, and whence they had been drawn.

* Several instances are quoted in *L'Union Spirite Bordelaise* (Nos. 20 and 21 for Oct. 22 and Nov. 1, 1865) where all the authorities are referred to.

Jesus availed himself of the laws which govern the fluidic bodies in the superior worlds, as well as those governing the fluids of your planet which compose your bodies (compare § 14) and thus constituted his apparently human body, which we called a tangible perispit, to make you understand it. As Jesus was a pure spirit, and not subject to incarnation or incorporation on any planet whatever, he formed this tangible perispit by his own will, and was perfectly able to lay it aside. The substances composing this body were naturally ethereal to human eyes, and disappeared by separating; and they recombined themselves at the will of the Master.

Pure spirits alone possess the full knowledge of the nature of the fluids employed in the formation of this tangible perispit, and their various modes of action according to the laws and effects of magnetic attraction. Your limited intelligence prevents you from comprehending the extent of the spiritual power of Jesus, which enabled him to render this body invisible to men by separating its constituent principles and holding them by his will-power always ready to reunite as easily as to separate. You must remember that the perispit which served as the visible and tangible body of Jesus during his residence on your planet, was only a sort of dress which he assumed to visit you, and which he abandoned whenever he was absent from human sight, when his spirit returned to the superior regions. Jesus thus withdrew from men whenever his presence was unnecessary, or ceased to be necessary. At such times the particles which constituted his tangible perispit vanished, and re-appeared at his desire in the manner which we have explained.

The organic life of this body was not maintained when Jesus was absent from it. The nature of this body, as well as its organic life, and the means by which Jesus rendered it invisible, laid it aside, or resumed it at pleasure, and finally quitted it permanently at the time of the "ascension," depend on laws which you cannot yet understand. It would be impossible to explain them now, because you are ignorant of the nature of the fluids and their combinations, effects,

and active properties, under the influence of magnetic attraction, and the agency of the pure spirits.

When Jesus disappeared from the eyes of men, he allowed his apparent human body to mingle with the mass of fluids, while it retained its constituent principles intact. Jesus held them together by the power of his will, and by an attractive magnetic influence. It is wholly impossible for you to understand this, for the powers of the pure spirits, and even of the superior spirits, much more the power of Jesus, are beyond your comprehension. It is only by studying and practising human magnetism that you will be enabled to comprehend spiritual magnetism, and its active influence throughout all nature. When Jesus had once constructed his perisprit, its elements remained in a state of mutual attraction, which caused them to reunite whenever the will which governed the whole acted on them for the purpose.

The disintegration of the temporary perisprit of Jesus (temporary, because he only used it during the period of his earthly mission) did not prevent a connecting link existing between its particles.

We would like to explain this more clearly, but your language furnishes no appropriate words ; and we are also prevented from giving you a direct explanation by your ignorance of the nature and properties of the fluids, and their mode of action and functions in the formation and life of the superior spirits, and in that of the body of Jesus ; you are also ignorant of the laws which govern these phenomena. Nevertheless, if you look at a cloud when the wind blows, you will see it break up, rise into higher regions, and disappear from your sight ; but it has a tendency to reunite, and if the breeze becomes favourable, it will form anew, and reappear as a compact cloud. Although any comparison is inadequate, this is very similar to the effect produced when Jesus withdrew his spirit from the perispritic body which made him visible to your eyes. When he returned to men, the scattered particles reunited, when they were retained by his presence, and the whole represented a body similar to yours in appearance, though not of the same nature.

The chemist will show you the effects of synthesis and analysis. He will show you many instances of the composition and decomposition of heterogeneous bodies forming a united whole during their union, and assuming an appearance differing from that of the constituent parts. He can analyze this product into its various parts, or combine them afresh by the methods of his art. Reflect on what the will of man can already accomplish by magnetism, although your knowledge is still so deficient and your experiments still so rudimentary. Think of the magnetic effects which man can obtain by the action of his will through the attractive influence of the fluids. Then consider how powerful must have been the will of Jesus upon this body which he had constructed, when he was thoroughly acquainted with the nature and properties of all the superior and inferior fluids, and with all the effects of spiritual magnetism. Many will call in question, and criticize our statements, and when the time has come to reply to them, we will further enlarge upon the idea underlying our words. Each day's labour is sufficient for the day.

It was not till the "ascension" of Jesus and the completion of his earthly mission that the constituent particles of the perisprit, which had served him as a robe among men, were completely dissipated, and returned to the medium which attracted them. The fluids which had been borrowed from the higher spheres returned thither, and those which belonged to your atmosphere again diffused themselves into it.

§ 67. You say, "How can it be supposed that Jesus could live in a desert for forty days and nights, without taking any food, if he was subject to the infirmities and necessities of human existence?" Will not those who do not accept the New Revelation quote the case of Moses, who remained for forty days and nights on a mountain, without eating and drinking? And is it not said that Jesus might also have endured a fast of forty days and nights in the same way, if his nature had been similar?

We adhere to our statement. You are told (Exodus xxxiv. 28) that Moses remained forty days and nights on the mountain, during which he neither ate bread nor drank water. That is, Moses ate no prepared food, but he fed on

wild plants and certain insects, with which the Hebrews occasionally sustained life. You must not forget the sobriety and the small need of food felt by Orientals, and the inhabitants of warm climates generally. Was not the mission of Moses ended before he reached the promised land? Have any of the spiritual missionaries (Moses, Elijah, John, and others) ever fulfilled a mission like that of Christ, the Lord's Anointed? Are you told the same of Jesus as of Moses? No; you are told (Matth. iv. 2; Luke iv. 2) that Jesus ate *nothing*; that he fasted for forty days and nights—that is, that he lived the whole time without taking any food whatever, prepared or not, but abstaining altogether, which is the meaning of fasting among the Hebrews. Consequently, the comparison of texts cannot be sustained; and we can only say again, How is it possible that if Jesus had been subject to human infirmities he could have lived in the desert for forty days and nights without taking food—fasting, without taking any food whatever, and not feeding on wild herbs and insects like Moses?

We must now explain why this special kind of incarnation was necessary in the case of Jesus. You acknowledge that he was a purer and more perfect spirit than any on your planet; that he has been its conductor from before the time that it emerged from chaos, or from the mass of fluids enclosing its germs. Consequently, he must be supreme over all. And can you suppose that such an ethereal spirit could endure the contact of such gross matter as the human body, as you understand it? Ah, that would be a miracle indeed, for it would reverse the order of nature, which has been established from all eternity.

You are obliged to adapt your vessels to ethereal essences that you wish to enclose, without risk of their breaking, or the spirit evaporating, and returning to the fluids from whence you have drawn it; and yet you are unwilling to admit that so ethereal a spirit as the Christ was obliged to enclose himself in an appropriate envelope! You will at least acknowledge that it is very presumptuous of those who persist in regarding Jesus as a separate though indi-

visible portion of God, to enclose this very God, the Spirit of spirits, an essence of incalculable tenuity, in so gross an earthly casket as your body ! Reflect, and ask your conscience whether you can possibly admit this.

The immaterial or purified spirit can only assume a covering which harmonizes with its tenuity. It may assimilate a covering much inferior to its essence, but it cannot resume primitive matter when it has reached the culminating point of purification. As the fluidic link which unites spirit to matter is of a completely ethereal essence, it cannot adhere to the corporeal human matter of your planet ; whereas it may have some affinity for a fluidic body which is immaterial to you, but which is still gross compared with the purity and tenuity of certain spirits. The tenuity of the perispirit of the pure spirit renders its attractive nature different to that of spirits who are materially incarnated ; and this renders its adhesion to corporeal human matter impossible.

When Jesus assumed a body similar to that of certain elevated worlds, he assumed a covering which was material to human eyes. A miracle, in the sense hitherto attached to the term, consists in the accomplishment of an event contrary to the established laws of nature. It would be a miracle to see a human being become a lion, an elephant, or a whale. The literal fulfilment of the prophecies which represent the stars as falling from heaven would be a most startling miracle, because such events are contrary to the established order of nature ; but there is nothing miraculous in events which you do not understand, but which may appear miraculous to you because you are ignorant of their causes.

In the course of time, purification, and progress, your researches will demonstrate that what is now rejected as impossible, is in accordance with natural law. This is especially true of incarnations in superior worlds, and the special character of the incarnation of Jesus, which will then be seen to be as natural as the motions of the stars, or the changes of the seasons, the tides, and everything that takes

place daily before your eyes ; or even the generation of the plants and animals, which appears so natural to you, although you cannot yet fully explain it.

Let those who reject this revelation respecting the life and origin of Jesus, reflect upon his whole life, and on the various events recorded in the Gospels, which confirm it when explained in spirit and in truth ; let them learn the rudiments of spiritual science, and they will understand and acknowledge it.

This time will come to all ; and we say to all, Whatever may be your opinion respecting the nature and origin of Christ—whether you believe him to be material or fluidic, a man-God or the Messiah—admire his figure shining above you. Admire his love and devotion ; use all your efforts to imitate him, and you will be certain to attain to light and truth before long.

MATTHEW IV.—VERSES 12-17. MARK I.—VERSES 14, 15. LUKE IV.—VERSES 14, 15.

News of the Imprisonment of John—Retirement of Jesus into Galilee—Prophecies—Residence at Capernaum.

Matth. iv. (12) Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he retired into Galilee. (13) And leaving Nazareth, he came and settled in Capernaum-on-Sea, on the borders of Zabulon and Naphthali. (14) That the word might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the Prophet, saying, (15) The land of Zabulon, and the land of Naphthali ; by the way of the sea beyond Jordan ; Galilee of the Gentiles ; (16) The people sitting in darkness saw great light, and light has risen upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death. (17) From that time Jesus began to teach publicly, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand.

Mark i. (14) And after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. (15) And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye, and believe in the good news.

Luke v. (14) And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and the fame of him went out into all the surrounding country. (15) And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

§ 68. You require no explanation here. Jesus brought light wherever it was most needed, and his lessons were intended for all ears.

LUKE, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 16-21.

Jesus visits Nazareth, and reads from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

(16) And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, according to his custom, and stood up to read. (17) And the book of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and when he had unrolled the book, he found the place where it was written. (18) The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them who are bruised, (19) To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (20) And he folded up the book, and gave it to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon him. (21) And he began to say to them, This writing is fulfilled to-day in your ears.

§ 69. When Jesus had reached this point in his apparent human life, he took this opportunity of proclaiming that he was the anointed messenger of the Lord, who had descended upon earth to accomplish a mission of love, charity, devotion, and redemption, which should prepare for human regeneration through the preaching of his Gospel, and should lay its foundations securely.

LUKE, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 22-30.

Jesus reproaches the Nazarenes—Anger of those in the Synagogue—They take him to the brow of the hill to cast him down, and he disappears from them.

(22) And all bore witness to him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, and said, Is not this the son of Joseph? (23) And he said to them, You will surely repeat unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself; whatever we have heard to have been done in Capernaum, do also here in thy own country. (24) And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. (25) And I tell you of a truth there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, when there was a great famine in the whole country, (26) And Elijah was sent to none of them, except to a widow woman in Sarepta of Sidon. (27) And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them were cleansed, except Naaman the Syrian. (28) And all in the synagogue were filled with wrath when they heard these things, (29) And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down the precipice. (30) And he, passing through the midst of them, went his way.

§ 70. You need not be surprised at the Nazarenes asking, "Is he not the son of Joseph?" You are aware that all men regarded Jesus as the son of Mary and Joseph; and that it was only after the close of his earthly mission that Mary divulged the revelations of the angel, and the disciples began to regard Jesus as the son of the Virgin Mary, and of God himself, and thought that he was speaking literally when he spoke of God as his father.

When Jesus read in the book of the prophet Isaiah, and added, "Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country," he gave a lesson to those who were too proud to believe in the Lord's anointed, when he thus proclaimed himself his messenger. His teaching was intended to bear fruit both in the present and in the future, as was the case with all his lessons to men. His words (verses 25-27) were designed to teach the Jews that God looks not on the nation, but on the virtue of any person, and that they were most presumptuous to believe that they were the only people to whom God showed favour, and who deserved to be thus privileged. Let none among you share the vain pride of the Jews. The Lord looks on all his children with equal love, and those alone are privileged who are the most deserving and the purest, apart from all external forms of worship and nationality.

We now call your attention to verses 29 and 30. Was it possible for a man thus to escape from the hands of infuriated enemies, bent upon his destruction, and surrounding him on every side? Would the character of Jesus have stooped to some miserable subterfuge to move the pity of those who were about to hurl him from the precipice? And yet Jesus disappeared from among them! What conclusion do you draw from the fact of his disappearance—a fact which was repeated many times in the course of his apparent human life, both before and after his "resurrection?"

You are told that when Jesus was about to be hurled down the precipice by those who had dragged him to its brink, he passed through the midst of them, and went away—that is, through the midst of the infuriated crowd who surrounded

him. Jesus released himself from the hands of those who held him, by dissolving the tangibility of his apparently human perispritic body, and thus disappeared from their sight ; at the same moment, those who held him, as well as those who crowded round, were seized with a dizziness caused by spiritual magnetism. Those who held him let him go without knowing why they did so, and when they saw that he was gone, they thought that he had availed himself of the protection of some accomplice, and had hidden himself. You know the influence which the spirit world is capable of exerting on your organisms. What is the nature of the influence which stops you instantaneously in the course of a thought or action, without your being conscious of the check at the time ? It is a kind of dulness which affects the brain by the action of spirit magnetism upon the fluids which envelope it.

The dizziness felt by the enemies of Jesus was caused by the influence of the superior spirits who surrounded him. The current of their thoughts was suddenly arrested, and they saw Jesus disappear without knowing at the moment that he was gone ; and they only recovered the full possession of their senses when he had already vanished from their sight. There was a large crowd, and the action of the spirits only affected those who were nearest to Jesus, and saw him pass among them. Those who were further off did not see him, but believed that he had escaped in another direction. Everything took place as we have described to you, because it was then necessary for men to believe in the "humanity" of Jesus, without being able to take note of such phenomena as these.

You consider these explanations important, and justly so, for they enable you to understand the nature of the body of Jesus, which was apparently human, but really perispritic, and superior to humanity. Everything in the apparent human life of Jesus, and in the consecutive events of his earthly mission had an express design. Some events were intended for example and instruction, and others were designed to lead the men of that age to believe in his

humanity; and at the same time to supply future ages with evidence of the purely perispritic, though tangible, nature of his body. This was only to be explained by the light of the New Revelation, which we now bring you at the commencement of the new era of the Christianity of Christ. It will enable you to explain, understand, and believe facts that would otherwise be unintelligible, absurd, impossible, and absolutely inadmissible, if Jesus had undergone human incarnation as you undergo it, and had had a body like yours.

You must not confound the influence which we have just described as exerted by superior spirits on the men of Nazareth, with the influence which spirits can sometimes exert on men, when they cause them to lose sight of what passes, and give them the representation of something else. This belongs to a class of more or less complicated phenomena, which we shall have occasion to explain at another time.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 18—22. MARK, CHAP. I.
VERSES 16—20. LUKE, CHAP. V.—VERSES 1—11.

*Calling of Peter, Andrew, James and John—The Miraculous
Draught of Fishes.*

Matth. v. (18) And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. (19) And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. (20) And they immediately left their nets, and followed him. (21) And going on from thence, he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them; (22) And they immediately left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Mark i. (16) And as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. (17) And Jesus said unto them, Follow me, and I will cause you to become fishers of men. (18) And they immediately left their nets, and followed him. (19) And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending the nets. (20) And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the servants, and followed him.

Luke v. (1) And it came to pass that as the crowds pressed upon him to hear the word of God, and he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, (2) And saw two boats standing by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were wringing out their nets. (3) And he went into one of

the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put off a little from the land ; and he sat down, and taught the crowds from the boat. (4) And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, Push out into deep water, and let down your nets for a draught. (5) And Simon answered and said unto him, Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing, but I will let down the net according to thy word. (6) And when they had done this, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their net broke. (7) And they made signs to their partners who were in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. (8) When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. (9) For he and all who were with him were astonished at the draught of fishes which they had taken. (10) And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon's. And Jesus said to Simon, Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men. (11) And when they had brought the boats to land, they left all, and followed him.

§ 71. You may learn a lesson even from the submission of the first disciples of Jesus. They were inspired by their guardian angels, and they hearkened to the voice which urged them to obey. Jesus read their inmost souls, and chose them, and they followed him by a kind of attraction which links sympathetic souls together.

There was no "miracle" in the draught of fishes, in the sense that men attach to the word "miracle;" for it was not an event contrary to the laws of nature. The immutable will of God never departs from the laws of nature which he has established from all eternity. There is nothing supernatural, for everything is accomplished in physical nature through spirit-action according to natural law. The draught of fishes was intended to astonish these men, who were simple and ignorant in their incarnate state. They were seized with terror ; their hearts were humble, and as they were ignorant of the cause of the phenomenon, they thought that God had manifested his power by a "miracle;" and did not attempt to penetrate further into the mystery.

Can you wonder at the amazement of the disciples when the proud and ignorant incredulity of your own days rejects the fact because it cannot understand and explain it? Do not the incredulous deny the power of spirits and magnetic phenomena, either without examination, or without sufficiently studying them from a theoretical and experimental stand-point? Do they not refuse to examine

into Spiritism, which combines revelation with science, and into spiritual science and magnetism, in which humanity might find all light, all science, and all truth, as well as all physical, moral, and intellectual progress?

We have already explained (§ 14) that magnetism is the universal agent which moves and governs all things. Everything is subjected to magnetic influence, and everything throughout the universe and in all the kingdoms of nature takes place by magnetic attraction. (Compare p. 45.) When man has become sufficiently enlightened to comprehend the full extent of this great law, the world will be subject to him, for he will be able to direct its material action. But he cannot attain this power without long and profound study of the causes of things, nor without reverence and love towards Him who has entrusted him with that great principle of action by the exercise of intelligence and experiment. If man studies and experiments with humility of heart, he will learn to avail himself of this powerful agent, magnetic attraction.

Human magnetism is the concentration of the fluids existing in man and in the atmosphere around him, by the human will, and by this means man is able to act upon men or things at a distance. Spirits are able to draw to themselves the fluids existing in man or diffused through space, by concentrating them by their will in a similar manner; and they can employ these fluids to influence men or things, and produce the various effects which they may desire. The power of the will of man, and of the magnetic results which he can obtain, are in proportion to the degree of purity to which he has attained, which occasionally procures him the aid of elevated spirits in his efforts, without his being aware of it. The will power and magnetic power of a spirit also correspond with his degree of purity, and with his moral and intellectual elevation, in proportion to the knowledge which he has acquired of causes. This also enables him to penetrate to the source of things, and to understand the various powers of magnetic attraction.

The "miraculous" draught of fishes was due to natural

causes, and was effected solely by the will of Jesus, who was thoroughly acquainted with the powers of the universal agent, magnetic attraction, and with the nature and properties of fluids. His sight was not obscured by the flesh, but easily penetrated the water. He was always a spirit, and his perispritic body left him the full and complete possession of his spiritual life. He saw the fluids surrounding various kinds of fish, and he drew them into the waters around the boat by the exertion of his powerful will, and they rushed into the open nets.

Do not ask for a further explanation of this. It would be beyond the limits of your humanity; and it is absolutely impossible for you to understand the laws and effects by which these results were produced. Man cannot yet penetrate these secrets. Do not forget that Jesus was a pure spirit among the pure, and that you cannot attempt to emulate his powers until you have acquired the requisite purity. There are still many secrets awaiting you in nature, but they will be unfolded to your gaze in proportion as your ideas are purified and enable you to ascend to the source of things.

The only spiritual application which we shall make of the draught of fishes is that at the present day Spiritism corresponds to Peter's nets. Men will be attracted by the fluids which the good spirits will diffuse around you, and will throw themselves into the nets of their own accord, that they may be rescued from the polluted waters of human vice.

We shall explain to you afterwards that Peter was selected by Christ to watch over the progress of faith, the development of intelligence, and the fulfilment of his promises. Christ declared that he should build his church (meaning your planet and its humanity) by conducting your planet in the path of physical progress to its fluidic degree, and by leading mankind to perfection through physical, moral, and intellectual progress.

§ 72. Could exalted spirits still produce similar effects by their magnetism?

Yes, with the permission of God, and aided, if needful,

by spirits higher than themselves ; but we never act without a motive, or for some useful purpose. What has happened once may happen again, and often does take place without your knowledge. Many events which you attribute to chance or good luck are due to our secret influence.

§ 73. Could man attain a "miraculous" draught of fishes at the present day by means of human magnetism, and the theoretical and practical knowledge which he has already acquired, if he were aided by sufficiently exalted spirits ?

No ; not man as he is at present. He must first acquire a degree of purity which he is far from possessing. God never delegates his power except to those who have become worthy to wield it.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 23-25. MARK, CHAP. I.
VERSES 21-28. CHAP. III.—VERSES 7-12. LUKE,
CHAP. IV.—VERSES 31-37.

*Preaching of Jesus—His Fame—The Physical and Moral
Cures called "Miracles."*

Matth iv. (23) And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and infirmity among the people. (24) And his fame went throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and demoniacs and lunatics and paralytics, and he healed them. (25) And great multitudes followed him from Galilee, and Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judæa, and from beyond Jordan.

Mark i. (21) And they went into Capernaum, and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught. (22) And they were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (23) And there was in their synagogue a man possessed by an unpurified spirit, and he cried out, (24) Saying, Alas, what is there betwixt us and thee, O Jesus of Nazareth ? art thou come to destroy us ? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. (25) And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be silenced, and come out of him. (26) And when the unpurified spirit had convulsed him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. (27) And they were all amazed, and debated together, saying, What is this ; what new doctrine is this ? for with authority commandeth he even the unpurified spirits, and they obey him. (28) And immediately his fame went out into all the surrounding country of Galilee.

Mark iii. (7) And Jesus went to the lake with his disciples, and a large crowd followed him from Galilee and from Judæa. (8) And from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and beyond Jordan, and the districts round Tyre and Sidon, a large crowd, hearing what great things he

performed, came to him. (9) And he asked his disciples to have a boat ready for him, because of the multitude, lest they should press upon him. (10) For he healed many, so that as many as had diseases pressed upon him that they might touch him. (11) And the unpurified spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried out, saying, Thou art the Son of God. (12) And he cautioned them many times that they should not make him known.

Luke iv. (31) And he came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. (32) And they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with power. (33) And there was a man in the synagogue who had a spirit of an unpurified devil, and cried out with a loud voice, (34) Saying, Alas, what is there betwixt us and thee, O Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. (35) And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be silent, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and did him no harm. (36) And they were all amazed, and debated with each other, saying, What is this word? for with authority and power he commandeth the unpurified spirits, and they come out. (37) And his fame went out into all parts of the surrounding country.

§ 74. What can we teach you about the apparent human life of Jesus and the events of his earthly mission, except what may be deduced from the Evangelists? Do you not perceive that Jesus constantly practised every form of charity, and attracted to himself not only the great and powerful, but the humble and unhappy? He preached repentance, and spread healing of soul and body around him. O men! if you lay his teachings to heart, we shall have no occasion to comment upon them. Follow Jesus with love, and the intelligence of love will be developed in you. In effecting material cures, Jesus employed the magnetic power given him by his perfect purity, and of which man cannot yet form an adequate idea. Nevertheless, you may imagine what the magnetic power of the will of Jesus over the regenerating fluids must have been, when you consider that he was a spirit of unparalleled purity, and that he was thoroughly acquainted with all their properties; and if you consider the influence which the magnetizer can sometimes exert over his patient by human magnetism, especially in the case of a conscious or unconscious healing medium who employs magnetic action, and is aided by good or superior spirits. Therefore, you should not be surprised at his accomplishing so many material cures during his earthly mission. He was thoroughly acquainted with the formation, conditions of life,

and functions of your bodies, and with the seat and causes of your diseases and infirmities. Nothing escaped the influence of his spiritual life, which was undimmed by the flesh which limits your spirits ; and although he had assumed a perispritic envelope, to make himself visible and tangible among you, he was always a spirit, only apparently incarnated, and possessed of his full independence and liberty in its immeasurable extent and action in space.

You are told that all who were afflicted with any infirmity crowded round him to touch him (Luke, chap. vi. v. 18), because virtue went out from him which healed them all. Jesus shed around the vivifying magnetic principle which he possessed, and which he increased still more by the power of his will. Being a spirit, though apparently incarnated, he saw beforehand those who came to him and needed his power ; and he then exerted his will to impress more strongly the minds of men who would have been indifferent, if not incredulous, about moral cures, but who exclaimed, "Hosanna" at the least physical relief.

In effecting moral cures, it was simply enough for him to show himself to the evil spirits. He showed them his spirit, and not his envelope, and his powerful will was alone sufficient to drive them away. At that period, as at present, all the most elevated spirits who labour at the progress of your planet and its humanity, were subject to his moral influence ; and he also possessed an immediate power to compel all the inferior, impure, and evil spirits to obey his will. Praise be to the Lord, he still possesses, and ever will possess, these powers.

You must understand by such expressions as Satan, demon, devil, unpurified spirits, &c. ; evil spirits. These human expressions are synonymous, and are employed by the Evangelists with the same signification. You must understand by "possessed," or "possessed by the devil," persons who were either under the bodily or under the bodily and mental control of evil spirits. Lunatics were persons who were liable to temporary obsessions; taking place at almost regular intervals.

The possession spoken of by the Evangelists was simply control. Jesus always availed himself of expressions in accordance with the prejudices and traditions of those around him, in order that they might understand and listen to him.

Subjugation is the dominating influence of an evil spirit who has overcome and temporarily subjected to his will a weaker spirit who has permitted him to take possession of it. Whether subjugation is bodily only, or bodily and mental, the obsessing spirit does not inhabit the man whom he has subjected, but influences him by remaining constantly at his side. In order to produce corporeal or physical effects, he acts fluidically on his victim, by combining the fluids of his own perispit with those of the perispit of the latter, and avails himself of every medianimic susceptibility, whether sensitive or impressionable or physical, which the organism of his victim places at his disposal. He causes him to feel his presence; he torments him at his pleasure, or throws him into convulsions; in short, he makes use of his body according to his caprice, by means of fluidic action and the dominant power of his will, and produces various physical effects.

In producing combined physical and mental effects, the spirit acts as we have just described, and makes use of the various medianimic faculties of his subject, whether hearing, speaking, seeing, or psychographic, by acting on the material organs suited to the desired manifestation. He makes him hear his voice; makes him speak, or write, or see visions; in short, he causes him bodily and mental torment in every way that his victim's organization allows. Or else he leads him into absurd or mischievous resolves, and the most ridiculous actions; or he goes so far as to exert fluidic action on the brain; and uses his powerful will to produce effects which men unacquainted with spiritual phenomena regard as an ordinary case of madness attended by lucid intervals.

All the physical and mental phenomena related by the Evangelists of persons said to be possessed by the devil, were produced in the way that we have just described.

Independently of obsession and of bodily, or bodily and

mental subjugation combined, there is a case which you may call "possession," in which the obsessor displaces the incarnate spirit, and uses his body as his own. This substitution is effected by the dominant will of the evil spirit, who expels the incarnate spirit from his own body, to which he nevertheless remains bound, as it is connected with its perisprit by a fluidic cord. The evil spirit introduces himself into the body by combining the fluids of his own perisprit with those of the perisprit of his victim. That of the latter is the indispensable instrument and agent, but is completely dominated by the other.

During this temporary substitution, the spirit of the victim is removed from his body, but is bound to it by the fluidic cord, and sees it act under the domination of the evil spirit who has temporarily subjugated it to his will, without having the power to prevent it. This substitution may take place when the victim is awake, as well as in the somnambulic state ; and in the former case it is often attributed to mental derangement ; but cases of this kind are very uncommon.

There is another exceptional case of substitution, which takes place for some useful purpose, and with the permission of the guardian angels, as a voluntary act. This happens when the incarnate spirit is in a state of magnetic somnambulism, and consents to withdraw from his body at the request of a spirit, and thus lends him the instrument which he requires for some manifestation. In this case the mode of substitution is the same as in the last, and is effected in a similar manner, but with the difference that both spirits consent to and desire its accomplishment.

Obsessions and subjugations are due to the attractive influence of similar fluids, and result from the disposition of the incarnate spirit, and the nature of his evil tendencies and desires. They are sometimes a trial, and often an expiation connected with the events of a previous existence. Although they are an evil to the incarnate spirit, they are nevertheless permitted for his benefit ; for be well assured that everything, even punishment, is intended to conduce to your moral improvement and progress. Nothing can take

place without the will of God, nor without the supervision of superior and good spirits.

You meet with obsessed and subjugated persons among you daily, whom men who are ignorant of spiritual truths consider to be afflicted with physical diseases or infirmities, or with ordinary madness. They try in vain to heal them by human methods, instead of resorting to prayer and moral example.

Do you, who have not yet attained to that perfect purity which only pure spirits possess, and which would give you an immediate power over evil spirits, repulse them on the instant by prayer and moral example. Act towards the incarnate spirit in such a manner as to enlighten and soothe him, and thus predispose him to attract good spirits to himself, whose fluids and assistance may drive away the obsessing spirits. Act thus with a collected mind, and with charity for your wandering brethren, that you may win them back by persevering prayer of the heart and not of the lips ; exhort them fervently with the firm and gentle benevolence and charity, founded on prayer, which finally moves the most hardened and rebellious. O Spiritists ! rely on the good and superior spirits around you, and call them to your aid. They will hasten at your friendly voice, and unite their efforts with yours. Take confidence, for they always listen to the prayer of a pure heart and good conscience, when they are called to aid in a work of love and charity.

There are always "demons" among you. You know that Spiritism is both a revelation and a science, and will disperse all clouds and enlighten all darkness. It will enable you to distinguish those who are obsessed or subjugated, and are only apparently ill, infirm, or mad, from those who are actually so. The former require moral treatment, but human methods of physical cure are applicable to the latter. You can distinguish between doubtful cases when you are moved solely by humanity, disinterestedness, love and charity, by means of psychography, or, better still, by seeing or hearing mediumship. These methods would reveal the presence and action of the obsessing spirit.

You are told that there was a man in the synagogue who was "possessed by an impure spirit." He was subjugated bodily and mentally in the manner which we have explained ; and the spirit acted fluidically on his vocal organs and rendered him a speaking medium. He thus exclaimed—"Alas, what is there betwixt us and thee, O Jesus of Nazareth ? art thou come to destroy us ? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Then Jesus commanded the obsessing spirit to cease the subjugation, using terms appropriate to the intelligence and ideas of the bystanders, saying—"Hold thy peace, and come out of the man." This man suffered from the fluidic action of the perispit, and the will of the obsessing spirit on his own, by which he controlled him at pleasure, and was seized with violent convulsions. He fell down in the midst, and uttered a great cry when the obsessing spirit departed.

When the spirit asked, "Art thou come to destroy us ?" he alluded to the knowledge of the causes and effects of subjugation, which Jesus could have taught to men if he had wished, and which would have kept them on their guard. But the time had not yet come to teach men the secrets of the other world. They would long remain unable to receive the knowledge of the relations of the invisible with the visible world ; and Jesus consequently answered—"Be silent, and come out of the man."

You are told that when the unpurified spirits saw Jesus, they fell down before him, exclaiming, "Thou art the Son of God." These were persons whom the evil spirits had subjugated bodily and mentally, and who mingled with the crowd, or crossed the path of Jesus. But the spirits were themselves exposed to the sight of the Lord, and their victims fell down under their influence and became speaking mediums, who uttered words of truth for the instruction and enlightenment of future ages.

When the spirits caused their victims to fall down before Jesus, and to speak such words as "Thou art the Holy One of God," "Thou art the Son of God," they were impelled by the superior spirits who surrounded the Master, for in

thus speaking they proved to men the identity of the Christ. They did not behold Jesus as a man, but as a pre-eminently pure spirit, and he consequently forbade them to make it known, for the time was not yet come for man to know what was beyond humanity.

Such expressions as "the Holy One of God," "the Son of God," "the Lord," are terms of reverence implying the superiority of Jesus over all spirits, even the most elevated of those who labour at the progress of your planet and its humanity. The New Revelation has taught you the exact import of these expressions by teaching you the spiritual origin of Jesus, and his mission as regards your planet and its humanity.

It was necessary for Jesus to impress the masses strongly by means of material facts addressed to the gross senses of man, and by displaying his power over nature, over "hell," and over the "devils," who prostrated themselves before him, and proclaimed him to be the son of God. As men were then ignorant of the causes and effects of these phenomena, and were unable to understand them, they regarded them as "miracles."

This was necessary to cause his mission to be accepted at that ignorant period, and to insure its success and future results. Are we not still obliged to proportion our instructions to the degree of intelligence and moral development of those to whom we speak? After the completion of the mission of Jesus, his Apostles continued to act, like him, to confirm its truth. Their incarnate condition was no impediment to them, for they were aided by pure and superior spirits, and being upheld by the will of their Master, they acted as if they had been in a spiritual state themselves. Aided thus by the will of Jesus, and the secret aid of good spirits, they effected material and moral cures, as Jesus had done, and by the same means. They healed the sick and infirm by the magnetic power which was communicated to them, and they employed the immediate power which was given them over all errant and incarnate spirits, to drive away the evil spirits who obsessed or subjugated men. They

also "raised the dead" by recalling the spirits to inert bodies, which presented all the appearance of death on account of the partial disengagement of spirits, which were nevertheless connected with their bodies by a fluidic link. Similar cases of physical and mental cures have often occurred from the time of Jesus and the Apostles till your own day, when the new and blessed era of Spiritism has commenced. Those which took place in public were believed to be miraculous, but others have been effected secretly; and men have neither understood the facts themselves nor their cause. Each period changes according to the minds of the men who live in it. In the present condition of physics, you have material "miracles," which sceptics do not believe, and attribute to sleight of hand or collusion.

When the intelligence of men has reached a certain point, they require moral "miracles." These are cases of the soul, and not of the body. It is needful to cure what suffers most; and is it not your soul? Has not the most diseased and most precious portion of your being most need of a cure?

After the New Revelation which you have received of the relations of the invisible to the visible world, and the means by which Jesus and his Apostles accomplished works which the ignorant regarded as "miraculous," you will look upon such phenomena as simply the result of the purity and elevation of the incarnate spirit. Or else you will regard them as due to the secret aid of pure and superior spirits, and of the will of the Master, whose magnetic power will be medianimically communicated in an occult manner to effect material cures of human diseases and infirmities. Immediate power will be given in the same manner to drive away evil spirits instantaneously, and to recall life to inert bodies.

When the time has come, incarnate spirits will be able to cure diseases and infirmities, to drive away evil spirits, and to restore life to inert bodies like the Apostles; but observe that these cures were only called "miracles" because their cause was unknown. They will appear to you to be only the natural consequence of moral purity, and you will regard

such actions as only a proof that he who accomplishes them is either more elevated than others, or more protected, because more worthy of protection.

Material and moral cures are often effected among you even at the present day, but they pass unnoticed simply because they are related by Spiritists. They are often received with indifference and incredulity by those who do not understand them, and even by those who profit by them; whereas those which were effected during the earthly mission of Jesus were repeated and exaggerated, and appealed much more strongly at an ignorant period to the gross senses of men. The Pharisees of your own days deny and reject the revelation which the spirits of the Lord bring to men by his order and in the name of his Christ, pretending that it is a work of the devil; just as the Pharisees formerly denied and rejected the revelation offered them by Christ himself. They accused him of driving away demons by the prince of the demons, and asked for "miracles." Refer such objectors to atheists beating their breasts at the feet of their offended God, and earnestly praying for the continued existence which they had denied. Tell them that moral miracles will come in due time, which will purify all humanity, and cause the pure gold to issue from the furnace into which it will be cast.

Editor's note to the preceding chapter.

I have witnessed one of these rare and exceptional cases of substitution, by the voluntary act of an incarnate spirit who desired to aid a suffering spirit to manifest himself, and thus to ameliorate his condition. This took place under the following circumstances:—

In the month of March, 1863, I went to visit Mme. T., a very lucid somnambulist, during one of the consultations which she was in the habit of giving to patients. I was accompanied by M. Puginier, a lieutenant in the 88th regiment of the line, and by M. Du Boscq, a member of the General Council of the Department of the Gironde. Just as we were on the point of leaving we were recalled by a sudden exclamation. Mme. T., still in the somnambulant state, stood up, and addressed me as follows: "It is I, G. D., who wish to speak to you, and have availed myself of the present opportunity of conversing with you. I have entered this body, and now make use of it for the purpose. I suffer terribly, and am very unhappy," &c. (I had known G. D. intimately during his earthly life, but he had been dead for some months.)

He spoke freely to me, and described his terrible moral sufferings;

and, what was much worse, he told me that he saw no end to them, and despaired of any relief. He took my hand, with that of Mme. T., as if it had been his own; and I had a long conversation with this unhappy spirit, which lasted more than half-an-hour. I instructed and consoled him, and advised him to be patient and resigned, and exhorted him to a sincere and profound repentance for the faults which he had committed during his earthly life, and endeavoured to awaken the desire to repair them. I pointed out to him the greatness, justice, goodness, and infinite mercy of God, who is always ready to pardon the guilty and wandering spirit, when he has grown humble, penitent, and sincere, by opening to him the way to new experiences by reincarnation, which is also the path of reparation and progress. I thus endeavoured to enlighten this crushed soul with a ray of hope and faith.

While this substitution lasted, the spirit of G. D. made use of the body of Mme. T. as if it had been his own, and employed its material organs to speak and act, reproducing the tones and gestures of his earthly life.

After the suffering spirit had departed, and the spirit of Mme. T. had again resumed possession of her body, she said, still in the somnambulist state, "This poor creature is in great suffering, and very unhappy. He was anxious to speak to you, and I consented, with the permission of my guardian angels, to lend him my body, so that he could enter it and use it for the purpose. I stood by, connected with my body by a luminous fluidic cord, but invisible to human eyes."

This substitution was repeated several times at the house of Madame T., and in the presence of M. Du Boscq, who was also the friend of G. D. From the time of the first interview I asked the spirit of G. D. to come to my house every evening, when suffering spirits, wandering in space, came to manifest themselves through a writing medium, and to ask and receive prayer. Ever since the spirit of G. D. has manifested himself of his own accord. I have prayed for him for a long time, and continue to do so still. My efforts, advice, exhortations, and prayers have been rewarded, and I have the joy of having contributed to the relief of this suffering spirit, and to his consolation, enlightenment, and improvement, by developing in him more and more patience and resignation in his moral sufferings, and by awakening the desire of reparation and progress.

I have also witnessed a case in which the presence and action of an obsessing spirit was revealed by medianimic somnambulism. The patient was a man who appeared to suffer from a nervous disease, which the doctors had in vain attempted to cure by the methods employed for material cures. All doubt was removed by the aid of medianimic somnambulism, which enabled us to perceive that it was a case of obsession, and that it was needful to employ moral treatment for a moral case. The circumstances were as follows:—

I went one day in December, 1863, to witness one of Mme. D.'s consultations, and this man came to consult her, and he described how he had been suffering for several months from what the doctors considered to be a nervous affection. He experienced contractions and spasms in the throat, face, and neck, at intervals; and when he sat down to table, his teeth and jaws were sometimes fixed in such a manner that it was impossible for him to eat, and he had to give up the attempt, although he was very hungry. He had consulted several doctors, and had tried many remedies without any result. He was greatly troubled, and very anxious about his condition.

He had scarcely finished speaking when a slight spasm appeared in his face, and the somnambulist said, as if addressing a third party, "Let this man alone." She then exhorted this invisible being not to torment the man, and said, "I am going to pray for you ;" and then prayed. Next she turned to the patient, and when she had examined him, she said, "You are not ill, but you are tormented by an evil spirit, and you must pray for him. You will never get rid of him except by prayer. Go and pray, not with the lips, but with the heart, with charity and unselfishness. Come back in a week's time, and let us know the result.

I then went up to Mme. T. (who was already in the somnambulant state when I arrived), and put myself *en rapport* with her by taking her hand. "Ah, you are there !" she said to me. "This man is subjugated by an obsessing spirit. He is not ill at all ; and this affection will disappear when the spirit has left him."

"Well," replied I, "we must undertake this moral cure, for instead of one spirit, there are two." I then addressed the obsessing spirit, and said, "Come to me at 7 o'clock this evening, at the time when unhappy or suffering spirits request my prayers through a writing medium, and receive them. If you will not come of your own accord, I will evoke you ; I will pray with you, and show you that you are acting wickedly, and that you ought to feel love and charity towards all your incarnate and errant brethren after death, as well as on earth."

On that evening, and on every succeeding evening for a week, I evoked the obsessing spirit, and prayed for, exhorted and advised him. The patient returned to Mme. T. at the end of the week, and I met him there. When he was *en rapport* with the medium, he said that he had suffered rather less, but that he was not yet cured. Mme. T. still saw the obsessing spirit by the side of the patient when she was in the somnambulant state, and prayed with and exhorted him.

These interviews were repeated every week at Mme. T.'s house. The patient continued his prayers, and I also continued my evocations and prayers for about a month. At the end of this period, the obsessing spirit, led by his guardian angel, manifested of his own accord at my house. He had repented and turned towards the light. He had become a suffering spirit, had given up tormenting the patient, and asked to be prayed for. Three days afterwards I met the patient at Mme. T.'s house at the usual time. He was restored to health, and said, "I have had no return of my complaint for the last five days ; I am quite cured." The patient was delivered from his subjugation, but I had still a duty to perform towards the spirit who had subjugated him, and who had now become a suffering spirit. From the time that he first manifested himself spontaneously, he continued to visit me to receive my prayers every evening of his own accord. I have the joy of having contributed to his relief and moral improvement by developing in him more and more patience and resignation in his sufferings, repentance, and the desire of reparation and progression.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 1-12. LUKE, CHAP. VI. VERSES 20-26.

Sermon on the Mount.

Math. v. (1) And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain, and when he had seated himself, his disciples came to him.

(2) And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, (3) Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. (4) Blessed are the mourners, for they shall be comforted. (5) Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (6) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. (7) Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. (8) Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (9) Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. (10) Blessed are those who are persecuted on account of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. (11) Blessed are ye, when they shall reproach you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, on account of me. (12) Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in the heavens, for thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Luke vi. (20) And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. (21) Blessed are ye who hunger now, for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh. (22) Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall mark you out and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man. (23) Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven, for their fathers did according to these things to the prophets. (24) But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your encouragement. (25) Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. (26) Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for their fathers did according to these things to the false prophets.

§ 75. These lessons teach humility and gentleness, as well as kindness and benevolence. They teach resignation under those physical and mental sufferings which must always be regarded as a just expiation, because they either arise from the faults or imprudence of man, which greatly aggravate his earthly trials, or else from those of his previous existences, which are all connected together; for every one of you suffers the secret penalties entailed upon him by previous incarnations. Christ also enjoins upon you the ardent, earnest and constant love of duty and tolerance at all times and under all circumstances, consideration for the faults and weaknesses of others, and active and devoted sympathy for the physical and mental sufferings of your brethren. He likewise teaches you to pardon insults and offences, and to forget them so sincerely that the past is dead both to the thought and heart; and to feel love and charity towards all. He teaches you purity of heart, which does not consist exclusively in abstaining from all evil words and actions, but even from all evil thoughts. True purity of heart

can only exist in abstaining from everything evil, and in the active and devoted practice of everything good, according to physical, moral and intellectual order. It includes moderation, mildness, patience, obedience, resignation, firmness and perseverance in faith, and in the practice of justice, whatever may be the insults or physical and moral persecutions which you may have to endure from men. It also includes disinterestedness and the renunciation of material objects as the means and end of pride or selfishness, and of the material appetites, passions and vices which degrade humanity. It includes the desire of celestial happiness, and gratitude towards the Creator, who has reserved a great reward for those who have acquired these virtues and fulfilled these duties. All this is contained in the words quoted at the head of this section. Study them, and, what is of more importance, practise them. Do not rest your hopes on earthly happiness, nor put your trust in your riches or intelligence, but only in your God, from whom you receive everything.

Let the rich man act as though he were poor ; let him share with his brethren, and bear himself meekly. Let the wise man act like the little child who waits for its mother's guidance ; but let him share with his brethren by giving them wise and gentle advice, always based on his own example. Let him who has enough think of him who is hungry, and let him share with them the material bread which feeds the body, and the bread of life, the spiritual bread which feeds the soul. Let him who is joyful act as though he were in sorrow, and let him share with his weeping brother, by endeavouring to console him, and by sympathizing with him in his sorrows. You may sum up these lessons as the practice of work, love and charity, according to physical, material, moral and intellectual order.

Have men understood the real meaning of these words of Jesus, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens?" The poor in spirit are those who trust in the Lord, and not in themselves. They know that they owe everything to their Creator, and that conse-

quently they possess nothing of their own. Their spirit is free from pride, and resembles the poor man who is destitute of worldly wealth. He can act more freely, for he does not fear the thieves who creep into the rich man's house at night; and he stands naked before the Lord. That is, he ascribes nothing to himself, but acknowledges that he owes everything to the goodness of his Heavenly Father, and his humility smoothes his path by removing the obstacles which pride would raise up all around him.

Be, therefore, O beloved ones! simple-hearted and humble-minded, for humility is the source of all virtue and progress. It smoothes the path of man towards the light and the realms of happiness; whereas pride leads to darkness and expiation, and to exile on the inferior worlds.

(Matth. v. 11; Luke vi. 22.)—These words, like most of those which the Master addressed to his disciples, applied as much to the future as to the present. They are addressed to all who are called upon to endure any kind of persecution, whether physical or moral, on account of their faith in God. They apply to all those who are persecuted for their belief and suffer for their faith, but overcome their trials, however severe they may be. Men will be persecuted for the truth as long as your world remains unpurified; and those who triumph over these persecutions may well be called happy, for defection is easy, especially at the present day; and those who persevere to the end will receive a great reward.

Arm yourselves with all your energies, Spiritists. The most dangerous weapon, and that most dreaded by man, is ridicule; and it is this which you have to encounter to-day. It inflicts painful wounds; but keep on your guard, and arm yourselves beforehand with the healing balm of faith. Let your faith sustain you. It will make you deaf to sarcasm, and lead you to think lightly of the unfair treatment to which you will be exposed. Faith is your shield; shelter yourselves behind it, and advance boldly, for all the darts hurled by envy and calumny will recoil upon themselves. Let your conduct be always both dignified and

charitable, in your words and teachings. Practise what you preach, and we will uphold you.

You should also understand what Jesus meant by saying, "But woe unto you who are rich, for you have received your encouragement." This malediction of the just and gentle Pastor only applies to those who sacrifice everything for the good things of the world, stake all their enjoyments and hopes upon material objects, reject the truths which are offered them, repulse their guides, protectors and brethren, and put their confidence in the evil spirits who control them. Jesus said, "Woe to them," for they will have to suffer, to redeem their past offences, and their remorse will be bitter in proportion to their having wilfully hardened themselves.

Jesus also said, "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep." Yes, those who laugh at the truth will one day lament over their derision. Everything must come in due time, but let them laugh at you now. A day will come when they will repent, and will ask to return among you, as apostles of the true spiritual faith, and then they will laugh no more. Do not be offended at their ridicule, but rather weep for those who laugh at you, for they will bitterly repent it.

Jesus also said, "Woe to you when all men shall speak well of you, for thus did their fathers to the false prophets."

When Jesus spoke thus to his disciples, there were and had been false prophets in the world. They exist now, for your world still remains in a state of moral inferiority. They are men who try to draw the simple and confiding over to their own ideas, under the influence of pride, selfishness, material interests, cupidity, intolerance, ambition, or fanaticism, or some other evil motive. They are men who know the truth, but conceal it from the eyes of the people to keep them obedient and submissive; men who understand the truth in their inmost soul, but refuse to acknowledge it from pride, and teach error knowingly, fearing lest it should be said, "Woe to them!"

Woe to you, whoever you are, when the men who hearken to the voice of these false prophets, and speak well of them

and walk in their steps, shall speak well of you ; for you will be attracted by their praises, and liable to be led astray, and enticed into the paths of error and voluntary lying, hypocrisy, and moral perversion.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 13-16. MARK, CHAP. IX.—VERSE 49 ; IV.—VERSES 21-23. LUKE, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 34, 35 ; VIII.—VERSES 16, 17 ; and XI.—VERSES 33-36.

*Salt and Light of the World—Candle under a Bushel—
Nothing Hidden which shall not be Revealed, nor Secret
which shall not be Known.*

Matth. v. (13) Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt become tasteless, with what shall it be salted ? It is then worthless, except to be cast out, and to be trodden down by men. (14) Ye are the light of the world ; a city built on a hill cannot be concealed. (15) Neither do they light a candle and put it under the measure, but on a candlestick, and it gives light for the whole family. (16) Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and may glorify your Father in the heavens.

Mark ix. (49) Salt is good, but if the salt has become unsalted, with what will you season it ? Have salt in yourselves, and live in peace with one another.

Mark iv. (21) And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under the measure, or under the bed, and not to be put on the candlestick ? (22) For there is nothing hid which shall not be made manifest, nor anything secret which shall not come to light. (23) If any one has ears to hear, let him hear.

Luke xiv. (34) Salt is good, but if the salt has become tasteless, with what shall it be salted ? (35) It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill : they cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Luke viii. (16) And no one when he has lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a candlestick, that those who enter may see the light. (17) For there is nothing hidden which shall not be brought to light, nor secret which shall not be known, and come to light.

Luke xi. (33) And no one having lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, nor under the measure, but on the candlestick, that those who enter may see the light. (34) The light of the body is the eye ; if therefore your eye is single, your whole body is also full of light, but whenever thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. (35) Look therefore, lest the light that is in thee should be darkness. (36) If therefore thy whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the candle gives thee light with its brightness.

§ 76. Spiritists should understand these metaphors. Salt

here represents the principles of a man's own character, which he ought to diffuse around him. It includes morality, love to God and submission to the divine laws; and thus the *savour* of man consists in his observance of all the laws of God and Christ. If he is led astray by evil tendencies, he loses sight of the end which he should attain, and the means of reaching it; he loses his savour, and is cast out. That is, the guilty spirit who has failed in his earthly experiences is first subjected in the errant state to appropriate moral sufferings or tortures corresponding to the faults which he has committed, and then to reincarnation, either on your earth or on the inferior planets, according to his degree of guilt, where he is forced by new trials to redeem the past, expiate his offences, and advance.

He will be cast out; "he that has ears to hear, let him hear." This will take place when the regeneration is about to be accomplished, and your planet will no longer be inhabited except by good spirits. The spirit who still remains guilty and rebellious, will then be removed from your earth, and cast down to lower worlds, where he will have to expiate for long ages his obstinacy in evil, and his voluntary blindness. Need we explain to Spiritists such metaphors as the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and the candle which is not put under the measure or under the bed when it is lighted, but on the candlestick, that all who enter the house may see the light and be enlightened? These words of Jesus refer to all ages, and apply to all men who became the apostles of a revelation which they seek to propagate by word and example.

You are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" at the present day as respects the New Revelation, as were the disciples of Christ for the revelation which he brought them by the Gospel teaching. Need we say, You have received the light, but not for yourselves alone, and you should share it with your brethren according to the necessities of each? Enlighten them; raise the torch which sheds around this blessed light, and wave it aloft that its rays may shine on all sides, that all may be enlightened.

When Jesus said, "There is nothing hidden which shall not be known, and nothing secret which shall not be brought to light ; he that hath ears to hear, let him hear," he spoke of the future. Jesus gave the men of that period teachings which were appropriate for them, and seeds which should bear fruit in the future. His obscure discourses were intended to be understood by future generations, and some have been chosen to comprehend this. That is, some men have not accepted the letter literally, but have sought for the spirit, comprehending that the mission of Jesus was not to set a barrier to human intelligence by assigning definite limits to it, but rather to open space and the future before progressive minds.

Christ spoke in figures and symbols, because human intelligence was not yet strong enough to bear the weight of the revelations which were hidden under the veil of these parables. Judge of this, ye who still warp them. Nothing which man ought to know should remain concealed, and man has reached a point where his knowledge ought to increase rapidly. But let not your pride imagine that the time for the accomplishment of all things has arrived. Your spirits are still too much darkened, and you are still like inexperienced children who approach the fire imprudently, and are severely burned. Be careful, and watch over yourselves. Warm yourselves at the fire which God prepares for you, but imitate the prudence of Moses, and do not yet approach the burning bush too closely, lest you should be consumed by the flames. Be patient ; God is preparing great events for your regeneration ; prepare for them while you quietly and steadily follow the path which we trace out for you. We will lead to the spot whence flows the infinite light, but let us spread our protecting wings over your eyes, which are too weak to endure its powerful rays.

Your conscience is the torch of your heart and mind. If your conscience is pure, your heart and spirit will be enlightened, and everything in them will be luminous, for you will be aided, inspired and protected by good spirits. If your conscience is evil and impure, your heart and spirit

will be in darkness, for you will have become the prey of the evil spirits of error and lying. See, therefore, that your conscience, which is the light within you, does not become true darkness to your heart and spirit by its impurity. You will retain peace within you by preaching what you teach by your own example.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 17-19. LUKE,
CHAP. XVI.—VERSE 17.

Jesus came to Fulfil the Law.

Matth. v. (17) Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to complete. (18) For verily I say unto you that until heaven and earth pass away, one iota or one dot shall not pass from the law until all things be fulfilled. (19) Therefore if any one shall annul the least of these commandments, and shall teach men thus, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of the heavens, but whoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of the heavens.

Luke xvi. (17) And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one dot of the law to fail.

§ 77. Jesus speaks of the law, and not of the additions which have been made to it, or the traditions which have been substituted for it; human maxims, commandments, and doctrines, which men have established as the result of their interpretations, which have changed or falsified the sense and application of the law. When Christ said that he was not come to destroy the law but to complete it, he showed men that the morality which he preached was the same as that which had been previously taught by the messengers of the Lord, whether missionary spirits or prophets; but that everything must follow the natural course of progress.

The law which had been given to men before was proportioned to their development. It included the promise of the future, and Jesus came to complete it. He himself, while fulfilling the prophecies, pronounced others for future ages, which he is still about to accomplish by means of the promised "Comforter," "the Spirit of Truth."

The spirits of the Lord come to bring men the New Revelation, which you may call the Revelation of the

Revelation. They come to enlighten and develop the intelligence, and to purify the hearts of men in the crucible of science, charity, and love.

They say, like Jesus, "Do not think that we are come to destroy the law and the prophets." Nothing of the law can pass away, for the law is universal love, which must continue to increase until it has brought you to the eternal throne of your Father. We come to repeat, to explain, and help you to comprehend in spirit and in truth the sublime and simple moral doctrine of the Master, the secret teachings which he delivered to men, and the obscure prophecies which he pronounced during his earthly mission. We are not come to destroy the law, but to accomplish it, by freeing the law of Christ from the additions which have been made to it, the traditions which have been substituted for it, and the doctrines based on human interpretations which have changed or falsified its meaning and application. We come to restore the whole truth of the law, to establish unity of belief in the world, and to guide you all (apart from the various external religions which now divide and separate you) to fraternity by practising mutual justice, love and charity, according to material, moral and intellectual order.

Spiritism is the confirmation of Christianity, not as men have made and established it, but as Jesus instituted it, by his Gospel teaching being properly understood and practised in spirit and in truth. What is the Christianity of Jesus, if it is not the universal religion which should enfold all men in the same circle of love and charity?

Not an iota of the law shall pass away without being fulfilled, for the Hebrew law was the stepping-stone to the law of Christ; and we repeat that Spiritism is the confirmation and means of fulfilment of the latter. The law consists entirely in the love of God above all things, and of your neighbour as yourselves, which includes the observance of the Decalogue, and the practice of the law of love, always and everywhere, and towards all. He who shall break one of its least commandments, will be the least in the kingdom of the heavens. That is, after expiation in the errant state, he

will be obliged to repair his errors, and to progress by re-incarnation upon your earth, or on inferior planets, according to the degree of his guilt.

But he who shall do and teach them shall be called great in the kingdom of the heavens. That is, he will raise himself to the superior planets in proportion to his moral advancement and the progress which he has acquired, and will continually advance, through humility, in knowledge, charity and love. He who is appointed to teach, and does not practise what he teaches, is not only guilty of the evil which he has done, but of the evil which he has caused through contradicting his words by his actions.

Spiritists, do not act like the chiefs of the ancient synagogues, or like the Scribes and Pharisees of your own or former ages, for you would be very guilty; you, who have received light to enlighten your own path, as well as that of your brethren.

You, above all others, ought to preach by example; for this is the only preaching which leads to good results. Remember the words of Christ: "They lay heavy burdens upon your shoulders, which they will not touch with one of their fingers. If you would walk in the ways of the Lord, and come before him gloriously followed by all whom you have redeemed, begin by taking on your own shoulders the burden which you would impose on others. Show them how to make it light, and you may then induce them to bear their share of it. Imitate the life of Jesus; everything is contained in this. He himself taught all things by example; do you also teach by example, and let your words never be anything but the counterpart of your actions.

Spiritists ought above all things to practise the law of love which they preach with holiness and sincerity. If you wish to attract the masses you must show them the benefit which they may expect. Let your conduct exhibit the submission and love which you feel towards your God, and the practical love and charity which you feel towards your brethren. Never set yourselves up as models, but act as such. Be gentle towards those who reject your teachings.

Wait till their eyes are opened, and they are able to bear them. When the oculist removes the thick film which hides the light of day from a blind man, does he let him enjoy the light all at once? Not so, for it would dazzle him, and the brightness of day would be too brilliant for his enfeebled organs, and plunge him back into a deep night from which he would perhaps emerge no more. Thus you should temper the light of truth to the eyes of the mentally blind. Try with prudence to sow the seed in their hearts gradually. It will spring up, and although the fruits which it should produce may not ripen under your eyes, a time will come when your hearers will be profited. Your teachings will return to their thoughts at the hour of material death ; the light will illumine the path ; and you will have helped them to pass through a crisis which is very trying to matter. Do not dispute with the incredulous, nor take offence at ridicule ; be calm and dignified in your faith, and persevering in your good works. Scatter the seed freely, and it will fall on good ground, and spring up there ; but cultivate the good soil, that one grain may bring forth thirty-fold, another sixty-fold, and another a hundred-fold ; for each of those whom you have brought to the faith will also diffuse the faith around him. Thus like the ripe ears, loaded with grain, which are shaken by the wind and scatter their seeds broadcast, the truth will spread, and increase in wholesome fruits.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 20-26. LUKE,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 54-59.

Abounding Justice—Evil Word—Reconciliation.

Matth. v. (20) For I say unto you, That unless your righteousness shall greatly exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens. (21) You have heard that it was said to the ancients, Do not kill ; for whoever shall kill shall be liable to judgment. (22) But I say unto you, that every one who shall be rashly angry with his brother shall be liable to the judgment, and whoever shall say to his brother, Worthless fellow, shall be liable to the Sanhedrim ; and whoever shall say, Vile wretch, shall be liable to the Gehenna of fire. (23) Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, (24)

Leave there thy gift before the altar, and withdraw ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. (25) Agree with thy adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary should deliver thee to the judge, and the judge should deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. (26) Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt in no wise come out thence until thou hast paid the last halfpenny.

Luke xii. (54) And he said to the crowds, When you see the cloud rising in the west, you say immediately, A storm is coming, and it happens thus. (55) And when the south wind blows, you say, There will be a sirocco, and it happens. (56) Ye hypocrites, you know how to examine the face of the earth and the sky; and how is it that ye do not examine this age? (57) And why do you not also judge of yourselves what is right? (58) For when thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, take care to be released from him on the way, lest at any time he should drag thee to the judge, and the judge should deliver thee to the officer, and the officer should cast thee into prison. (59) I say unto thee that thou shalt never come out thence until thou hast paid even the last mite.

§ 78. Men should always strive diligently to discern what is just according to material and moral order, in their relations with their brethren. The day will come when justice will be practised after another fashion than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, without pride and without hypocrisy. These passages are also designed to teach men how to obey the commands of the Lord ; not passively, by abstaining from forbidden acts, but by practising all the virtues which are opposed to those faults—by love, gratitude and submission towards him who has set before us all the full rule of conduct that we must follow in order to attain to him. Happy are those who follow it without departing from it.

Such expressions as “worthless fellow,” “the judgment,” “the Sanhedrim” and the “Gehenna of fire,” are symbolical. God judges man according to his actions, and consequently if man fails in gentleness and kindness towards his neighbour, and insults him, he will be punished by him who desires that men should act towards each other like brethren. The words Sanhedrim and Gehenna are only emblems designed to impress upon men that they will be judged for their actions, and suffer the punishment they have deserved, which will be appropriate to the fault which they have committed, and to the nature and degree of their guilt.

The words of Jesus (Matth. v. 22) apply to all ages and to all men who have fallen short of the universal law of love. Most assuredly the Spiritist who fails in this law will be punished more severely than he who has not yet perceived the light, or he who has seen it and has not dared to accept it on account of conscientious scruples, which are not faults which deserve punishment, but which merely retard the progress of the spirit, who will be sufficiently punished by his own regrets.

The words of Jesus (Matth. v. 23, 24) teach man that he should exercise forbearance towards him who has offended him by extending his hand to aid him to return. Secondly, they point out to the man who has committed a fault, that he should immediately endeavour to repair it. Act therefore as the Divine Master himself acts every day. Does he not call to you incessantly? Does not he whom you have so grievously offended in all things continually hold out his arms to embrace you? Does he not call you to repentance by every possible means? and do you not often see him heap kindness on those who appear to you the most unworthy, simply to awaken gratitude in unworthy hearts, and to lead them back to himself?

The expressions in Matth. v. 25, are simply material images to teach man the conduct which he ought to pursue towards his brethren with respect to the judgment of God. Hasten to pardon your enemies, and to become reconciled to your adversary while you still travel the road of life, for you do not know if you may not be stopped on the road by death, and led before the Supreme Judge, who reads all hearts, and often finds many traces of evil passions which you do not look for. Therefore reconcile yourselves to those who have offended you and pardon them, as you would wish your heavenly Father to pardon you, if you needed it as much.

Jesus said, "You shall in no wise come out thence until you have paid the last mite." These words imply, man is the debtor of God, who has given him all things to put to a good use. Consequently, if he does not practise the

virtues which he has been taught, and rejects his brethren, he will be rejected in consequence of the eternally harmonious action of the law of justice and love.

LUKE, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 1-5.

Repentance.

(1) And there were present at that time some who brought him news about the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. (2) And Jesus answering, said unto them, Do you think that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such things? (3) I tell you, Nay; but if you do not repent, you shall all perish in like manner. (4) And those eighteen, upon whom the tower at Siloam fell, and slew them, do you think that these were guilty beyond all the inhabitants of Jerusalem? (5) I tell you, Nay; but unless you repent, you shall all perish thus.

§ 79. The Jews considered that mental sufferings and calamities, and physical evils, were so many proofs that the wrath of God rested on the victim, and therefore that he was a guilty man. Jesus desired to put an end to this mistake, without going into explanations respecting anterior existences, the half-obliterated belief in which was only supposed to extend to certain privileged spirits who had obtained the favour of reincarnating themselves. The Jews, who believed in reincarnation, thought that it applied only to extraordinary messengers, such as Elijah, whom they recognized in John the Baptist.

The law of reincarnation, which was obscurely indicated by Jesus in his conversation with Nicodemus, was not intended to be explained to men until the era of Spiritism, when they would have become capable of receiving it. This revelation raises the veil under which the letter of the Gospel had concealed this law.

Jesus reminds those who listen to him that they, like others, are living on earth to expiate their faults, both known and unknown. You should not blame the man who is overtaken by calamity; but consider your own heart, and reflect whether you yourself have not deserved to suffer the same trial or punishment.

LUKE, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 6-9.

Parable of the Barren Fig-tree.

(6) And he spoke this parable, A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and came to seek for fruit on it, and found none. (7) And he said to the gardener, Behold I come three years seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I do not find it; cut it down, why should it cumber the ground? (8) And he, answering, said unto him, Master, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig round it, and manure it; (9) If perchance it shall bear fruit; and if not, thou shalt cut it down afterwards.

§ 80. The moral of this parable is obvious. It is an emblem of the long-suffering of the Lord, and of the benevolent and devoted intervention of the spirits who watch over your welfare and progress. If a man rebels against the inspirations of his guardian angel, and permits nothing to soften his cold and ungrateful nature, but allows his earthly existence to pass away without bringing forth the fruits which the experiences which he has selected should mature, he resembles the barren fig-tree. This worthless tree yields no fruit, in spite of the exertions of the gardener, who has dug round and manured it; and it is therefore cut down—that is, the backward spirit is removed from the sphere where his existence could only be injurious, and after having undergone expiation in the errant state is forced to resume the course of reparation, expiation and progress by means of fresh experiences. But he is incarnated on inferior planets, as a hardened offender, and he carries with him the secret penalty of his previous incarnation. On the other hand, the man who finally opens his heart to the inspirations of the good spirits around him, resembles the fig-tree, which benefits, though late, by the attention bestowed upon it, and begins to bear fruit. He will not be cut down, but only removed from the world, and received with affection by those whose cares have roused him from his lethargy. The man who recognizes his errors will indeed be subjected to the expiations necessary to repair them; but will not be banished to an inferior condition, like those hardened offenders whom nothing can soften.

LUKE, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 10-13.

The Infirm Woman.

(10) And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath-day ; (11) And behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. (12) And when Jesus saw her, he called her, and said to her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. (13) And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

§ 81. The Jews attributed to Satan (that is, to evil spirits) everything which they could not understand or explain. When Jesus cured infirmities, the bystanders often ascribed the cause to possession, whereas the Master says merely, "disease." But observe that although the narrator, writing in accordance with Hebrew ideas, said that this woman had a spirit of infirmity, Jesus himself said, "Thou art loosed from thine infirmity;" and laid his hands upon her, which he only did in cases of material cures, instead of commanding the spirit to depart from her, as in cases of possession ; that is, of obsession or subjugation.

This woman was afflicted with softening of the spinal marrow, causing weakness of the spine, which deprived her of the power to raise herself. The spirito-magnetic action employed by Jesus restored the needful strength to the enfeebled organs, and the woman stood up. But you could not understand any explanation respecting the agencies by which the cure was effected, because you have not yet acquired a knowledge of the nature and effects of the fluids which surround you. Any questions would therefore be superfluous. Confine yourselves to spirito-magnetic action—that is, to spiritual magnetism, which may be combined with the action of your own fluids.

Whenever you make use of magnetism in faith, for the sole purpose of relieving the sufferings of humanity, your guides aid you by spiritual magnetism, which is imperceptible and invisible to you. If you pray fervently for aid, their action can be still further increased. Practise this celestial science which the Lord has entrusted to you, with ardour, perseverance, and disinterestedness. If you are devoted

and benevolent, you may thus raise up those who fall, make the deaf hear and the blind see. You can heal wounds, stanch the flow of blood, strengthen the weak, and make the crooked straight. We do not say that your will-power would be sufficient alone, for you are not yet sufficiently disengaged from matter ; but perseverance and the secret aid and intervention of your guides, will enable you to obtain with time results which the will of the Master alone was sufficient to effect instantaneously. We repeat, do not neglect the treasure which the Lord has entrusted to you. Serious practice and perseverance will develop your powers, and if you exert them in faith, the Lord will bless your efforts.

LUKE, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 14-17.

Observance of the Sabbath.

(14) And the ruler of the synagogue, being angry that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath-day, answered and said to the crowd, There are six days in which men ought to work ; therefore come to be healed on these, and not on the Sabbath-day. (15) Then the Lord answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, does not each of you loose his ox or his ass from the manger on the Sabbath, and lead him out to water ? (16) And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom behold Satan hath bound for these eighteen years, to be released from this bondage on the Sabbath-day ? (17) And when he had said this, all his opponents were ashamed, and all the crowd rejoiced at all the glorious acts which he performed.

§ 82. Moses instituted the Sabbath as a safeguard against the abuse of power and authority. It was necessary to speak strongly to compel the obedience of these hard-hearted people who were always ready to rebel. Moses gave them a law to protect them against themselves ; otherwise their slaves and even their cattle would have been overwhelmed by the burdens laid upon them.

The Sabbath was a compulsory rest, imposed even on avarice and cupidity, which were forced to slumber to allow their victims time to regain their strength.

Material laws are for material men ; but intelligent laws are for intelligent men. Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark ii. 27).

That is, the Sabbath was designed for the repose of man. It sets a barrier against the excessive toil that he might sometimes impose on himself, but more frequently on others; but it was not intended that any reasonable observance of it should be forced upon men. Rest your bodies from fatiguing labours, but never let your hearts rest from doing good.

Do not be surprised that when Jesus, as he said himself, had released the woman from her infirmity, he should have expressed himself somewhat differently to the ruler of the synagogue. Jesus always conformed his language to the ideas of those to whom he spoke, that they might understand or at least listen to him; but the knowledge of the real import of his words was reserved for the future. If he had told the people that he had only cured a disease, he would not have been believed. He therefore used the customary expressions in order not to conflict with the opinions and prejudices of the listeners, and that they might believe in the cure which he had effected; and said, "Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham whom Satan (understand here disease or infirmity) has bound for these eighteen years, to be released from this bondage on the Sabbath-day?" But at the same time he said to the woman, "Thou art released from thy disease or infirmity."

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 27-30.

Evil Thoughts.

(27) Ye have heard that it was said to the ancients, Do not commit adultery. (28) But I say to you that every one who looks upon a woman with evil desire, has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (29) And if your right eye should cause you to offend, pluck it out, and cast it from you; for it is profitable for you that one of your members should be destroyed, and not that your whole body should be cast into Gehenna. (30) And if your right hand should cause you to offend, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should be destroyed, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Gehenna.

§ 83. These expressions of Jesus are symbolical, and are not to be understood literally. They are designed to teach men that it is not enough to abstain from all evil words and

actions, but that even evil thoughts must be abandoned. The "right eye" and "right hand," which "cause men to offend," are also wholly material images, appropriate to the age, and intended to make a profound impression on material men. These words of Jesus form the continuation of those which have been already explained in § 78. It is not enough to refrain from doing evil, but man should practise good also ; and to that end he must destroy the source of everything evil in himself, without looking upon it as any sacrifice, and thus cleanse the heart ; for although men disregard a guilty thought, it is nevertheless sinful in the sight of the Lord, whose eyes are too pure to regard anything but the spirit in man ; and who cannot regard the slightest blemish with approval. Evil desire is equivalent to adultery, because it is a sin of the spirit.

MATTHEW, CHAP V.—VERSES 31-37. LUKE,
CHAP. XVI.—VERSE 18.

Marriage—Oaths.

Matth. v. (31) It has been said, Whoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce. (32) But I say unto you that whoever shall put away his wife, except on account of fornication, causes her to commit adultery, and if any one should marry her who is put away, he commits adultery. (33) Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients, Do not perjure yourselves, but perform to the Lord your oaths. (34) But I say unto you, Swear not at all ; neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God. (35) Neither by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet ; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. (36) Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou art not able to make one hair white or black. (37) But let your word be Yea, yea ; Nay, nay ; for what is beyond this is of evil.

Luke vi. (18) And every one who divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery ; and whoever marries her who is separated from her husband, commits adultery.

§ 84. The teaching of Jesus concerning divorce was designed to prevent men divorcing their wives on slight pretexts. It was not said in vain, though figuratively, that God created a man and woman in the beginning as the basis of humanity. Man should not be so brutal as to regard woman as created only for his pleasure, but should comprehend that the Lord has created her like himself, a

spirit equal to him in all things, and that he should bear the joys and sorrows of human life with her. If the physical constitution of the woman is weaker, and she needs protection from man, it is only to emphasize more forcibly the duty of the strong to aid the weak.

Although man is often ready to repudiate the companion whom he has chosen, do not lay the blame on the laws of Nature, but on human customs. It is these which make the union of man and woman a commercial transaction, instead of the union of two sympathetic spirits who are happy to pass through the experiences of humanity together. When man abandons his evil instincts and understands the real object of his existence, he will no longer desire facilities of divorce.

We will give you further explanations on this subject in our remarks on Matthew xix. 1-9, and Mark x. 1-12.

The words of Jesus respecting oaths were designed to put an end to an abuse among the Hebrews. The oath is useless for men whose hearts are pure, for they would never think of breaking or denying their word; and Jesus spoke to those who desire to walk in the ways of the Lord. But in the present state of man, the oath is a salutary check imposed on him by civilization; and yet how few respect it! The obligation of taking oaths will disappear from human laws when Spiritism shall reign on the earth. Yes, when men have abandoned evil passions, and have killed the *old man*, the new man, the man born of God, will have no need to say more than Yea, yea; Nay, nay. But you are still distant from that happy age.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 38-42, LUKE,
CHAP. V.—VERSES 29, 30.

Patience, Resignation, Charity and Morality.

Matth. v. (38) You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. (39) But I say unto you, Resist not evil; but whoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. (40) And if any one should sue thee, and take away thy cloak, give up to him thy coat also. (41) And if any one should compel thee

to go one mile, go with him two. (42) Give to him that asketh thee, and do not turn away from him who would borrow of thee.

Luke vi. (29) To him who strikes thee on one cheek offer also the other, and from him who taketh away thy cloak, withhold not thy coat also. (30) And give to every one who asketh thee, and from him who taketh away thy goods demand them not back.

§ 85. The meaning of these words, when interpreted according to the spirit and not according to the letter, is obvious, if you consider the age and the men to whom Jesus spoke ; and the object of his mission, which was so full of self-abnegation, devotion, love and charity. He scattered seeds, both by teaching and example, which were destined to bear fruit both at the time and afterwards.

The precepts of the old law were designed to inspire fear in men who could not be influenced by any other motive. Their natures were violent, and they could not receive a law of mildness and gentleness. In order to cause the rights of others to be respected, it was necessary that everyone should be firmly convinced that he would be doomed to suffer as much or more injury than he had caused his brethren.

On the other hand, the law of Christ proclaimed the love and self-abnegation which all men should feel even towards those who wish them ill, and seek to injure them ; as well as to their own friends, and those who are near and dear to them. Follow this admirable law, for everything is comprised in it.

(Matth. v. 38, 39.)—Jesus taught man to set an example of gentleness and resignation. Before resenting an injury, man should try every possible means to reclaim the offender, and should even lay aside all pride, and humble himself before him who has injured him, if needful, to recal him to the path of life. Nor should man ever seek to justify himself, whatever may be the gravity of the offence or injury. This is revolting to human pride, but Jesus set you a noble example, although there was no need for him to say, in reviewing his conduct, "I have committed the evil which I have suffered," or "I was capable of committing it." He who was perfectly pure and innocent endured outrage in en-

deavouring to enlighten his persecutors. This is the lesson which you should draw from these words.

But as everything must be appropriate to the spirit and intelligence of an age, do not seek to abolish the laws which govern you, and which, though still very imperfect, spiritually speaking, are necessary to your safety. Allow the law to take its course, after you have in vain employed every means which charity suggests to recall those who have departed from love and charity, by heaping wrongs upon you, or unjustly injuring your human interests.

(Matth. v. 40.)—This verse was intended to point out to man that the kindness he was willing to show towards his guilty brother, might be sufficient to reclaim him. It is not to be supposed that Jesus intended to encourage theft or violence, by yielding to, or even exceeding, their demands; but you know that forcible language is necessary to make an impression on those whose intelligence is dull. Jesus was therefore obliged to set such examples of love and self-renunciation before the men of that age, that even if they tried to follow his precepts at a very great distance, they would nevertheless be on the right track.

(Matth. v. 41.)—Never refuse to satisfy any wish of your brother, as far as possible; and not only do not refuse him, but even endeavour to exceed the limits which he himself has set to your kindness, in the effort to oblige him. Do not content yourself with granting him the favour which he desires, but see if there is not some greater need hidden behind his request. Study the desires and necessities of your brother, and render him the same services which you would wish him to render to you, if you were in his place. You should also make allowance for his feelings of delicacy in rendering a service which he has not ventured to ask.

There is an under-current of moral and material charity implied in the words of Jesus, "Give to him who asketh of thee, and from him who would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." Do not refuse to give alms, either with your purse, heart, or intelligence, according to your means.

Do not attempt to deprive those who have obtained any-

thing from you by unfair or even violent means, of their ill-gotten gains; but rather try to turn them to their moral advancement by showing them your mildness, your goodwill, and your readiness to be useful to them in spite of their misconduct, always within the limits pointed out by your intelligence, and more especially your heart. Do not encourage vice, but seek to reform it by the means which Christ has placed in your hands.

In the present state of human society, and according to its actual degree of moral advancement, it is absolutely necessary, for the safety of public and social order, to resist injustice, outrage and spoliation, by the lawful methods of human law and justice, to hinder a brother who desires to commit evil from failing in his trials, or to reclaim a brother who has already done evil, to a path where he will not fail in future. Human punishment, like divine justice, should aim at the moral improvement and progress of the criminal.

Privileged natures, Christians or Spiritists, may endeavour to follow the example set by the Divine Master, even at present. Let them follow these Gospel precepts of humility, abnegation, renunciation, charity and love, with the hope and intention of improving the condition of the good, and in causing the wicked to blush and to reflect; such precepts and examples, constantly repeated, cannot fail to bear fruit in future ages. O men! endeavour to understand the divine law, and you will feel the value of these precepts. It is not yet given you to practise them, and your laws are appropriate to the present needs of society; but the day will come when the only tribunal to which men will be subjected and the only judge worthy to shed light on their differences will be God, and all will bow before his tribunal.

Yes, the day will come when the conscience of man himself will enable him to judge his own thoughts and actions, and he will see himself as he is. God, the only guide of his conscience, will speak to him and judge him; and he will then listen to this divine voice, which he has rejected so often, and will no longer commit any action without having submitted it to his control. But you are still very far from

that happy time when you will walk under the eyes of your Father in integrity and love.

You have not yet arrived at the period of the fulfilment of the Gospels, just as Moses and the prophets of Israel had not yet arrived at the fulfilment of the law of God. You must wait for the moral revolution which begins with the predicted era of Spiritism and the New Revelation. Wait for the results ; and if you do not see them fulfilled with your bodily eyes, it will be granted you to follow them with your spirit, and to work with more efficiency at the fulfilment of all the words of Jesus.

§ 86. Is the period when the Gospels will be fulfilled the time when Spiritism shall have enlightened the world, and when the earth has become the exclusive residence of good spirits, after those who remain guilty and rebellious have been removed ?

Yes, this will be the time when man shall have laid aside his robe of impurity to assume the robe of innocence which our love is weaving for him.

§ 87. Will the slow and progressive moral revelation necessary for the fulfilment of the words of Jesus be accompanied by a physical revolution affecting man, the various kingdoms of nature, and the constitution of our globe ?

The physical revolution which must take place contemporaneously with the moral revolution (as we will explain to you at the proper time) was predicted by Jesus during his earthly mission, and was recorded, though veiled, in the Gospels, and in the revelation made to John in the Isle of Patmos.

Physical progress takes place contemporaneously with moral progress. The requirements of nature change when those of the soul are purified ; and little by little, by a transition which it would be difficult for you to appreciate, the physical constitution of man and his globe, which is already modified, will be progressively transformed. This may be confirmed to you by the various geological phases which the earth has already passed through, and it will still be progressively purified and modified to provide a human dwelling corresponding to the purity of spirits who have laid aside all their vices and weaknesses. The ascending

scale in the path of progress will be pursued by the animals, plants, and all the kingdoms of nature, at the same time as by man, to maintain the harmony of your planet. You may easily perceive, even now, that fierce or intractable animals begin to submit to the yoke of man. This is a beginning, and everything must feel the effects of progress towards the good time to come ; but it will be long and difficult. Economize and concentrate your powers to attain and rest happily in the love of the Father. That is, aid as far as your moral and intellectual elevation will permit, in the fulfilment of his designs and labours in universal life and harmony.

§ 88. Do not the words, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," refer, under a veil, to the justice of God, and to the purification and progress of the guilty spirit by expiation and reincarnation ?

Yes, certainly. Everything recorded in the Old Testament has an allegorical character, which you will be able to understand as you advance in spiritual science.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 43-48. LUKE,
CHAP. VI.—VERSES 27, 28 ; 32-36.

Love and Charity towards all.

Matth. v. (43) Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. (44) But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who threaten you, and drive you away. (45) That ye may be the sons of your Father who is in the heavens ; for he causeth his sun to rise on the wicked and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and on the unjust. (46) For if ye love those who love you, what reward have ye ? Do not even the tax-gatherers do this ? (47) And if you salute your brethren only, what do ye which is extraordinary ? Do not the tax-gatherers do this also ? (48) Be ye therefore perfect as your Father who is in the heavens is perfect.

Luke vi. (27) But I say unto you who hear, Love your enemies ; do good to those who hate you. (28) Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who threaten you. (32) And if you love those who love you, what grace is it in you ? for sinners also love those who love them. (33) And if you do good to those who do good to you, what grace is it in you ? for sinners likewise do the same. (34) And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what grace is it in you ? for sinners also lend to sinners, that they may receive an equal share. (35) But over and above this, love your enemies, and do good, without expecting to receive anything back, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be called the sons of the Highest, for He is kind to the wretched and the wicked. (36) Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

§ 89. Follow the law of love and charity everywhere and always, towards all, whether you know them or not, and whether they are friends or enemies. The whole doctrine is included in these words, for the practice of the law of love and charity implies the practice of all virtues and of all duties. If God grants the bounties of nature to all mankind, why should man refuse to share with his brethren what he holds in trust from their common Father? Judgment belongs to God alone. His judgment is perfect, and free from all the private interests which so often warp yours. Leave to God the task of judging those whom he has made; for he alone is fully acquainted with their hearts and characters.

Never do anything merely for the sake of reward. All your actions ought to be performed from the love of duty, and from love and gratitude towards God; for if your actions are only an offering made to God in view of the return which you expect from him—you, men who can accomplish so little—you act the part of the usurer in sight of eternity, and as long as you are influenced by this selfish motive, you cannot be the sons of the Most High. Those acts alone are rewarded which are the fruit of love and devotion.

Your weakness is alarmed and your pride revolted by the words of Jesus, "Love your enemies." In practising this precept, it is not enough to feel neither hate, ill-feeling, nor desire for vengeance towards an enemy, or to abstain from everything, both in word or deed, which might injure or even annoy him, or to pardon and forget the evil that he has done you, or continues to do you. You must return your enemies good for evil in everything, always and everywhere, and under all circumstances, with sincerity of thought and heart. Labour thus unceasingly to recall them to a better mind. It is needful to do good to those who hate you, sincerely, and with the feeling of universal love which should increase in the heart of man, and bring him nearer and nearer to God. You should bless those who curse you, and pray for those who persecute you and revile you, but with the heart, and not with the lips. He who does good to his

enemies, and blesses them and prays for them in this spirit, has learned to love them.

Endeavour to free yourselves from material influences, by the practice of love and charity, and by prayer, and you will perceive that the kindness, pity and benevolence which your heavenly Father practises towards the ungrateful, the just and the unjust, the good and the wicked, will become more and more developed in your own hearts, under the action and influence of your moral purification.

(Matth. v. 47).—Exert and practise with sincerity all the virtues which have been taught you, to lead you to him who is perfect.

The new revelation of Spiritism, the Revelation of the Revelation, and the third and latest manifestation of the goodness of God to men, is the light to enlighten your path, and to give sight to the blind. Do not reject this light, but resolve to practise its teachings with heartfelt sincerity. The spirits of the Lord will explain and enable you to understand the teachings of Jesus, and inspire you to practise them sincerely, fully and intelligently. You will then attain the good which is set before you ; the path will be long, tortuous, and full of stumbling-blocks and difficulties, but light and blessings await you at last.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 1-4.

Humility, Disinterestedness, and Secrecy in the Performance of Good Works.

(1) Take heed not to practise your works of mercy before men, to be seen by them ; for otherwise you have no reward from your Father in the heavens. (2) Therefore when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may be extolled by men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their full reward. (3) But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth ; (4) That thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret himself shall reward thee in the light.

§ 90. These words need no explanation, for you can all understand them. Act with the design of doing good, and not for the sake of human praise. Never even seek for the

spiritual benefit which you may receive; endeavour to follow the steps of Jesus, for he had nothing to gain by his self-devotion. He was good and charitable to the utmost limits, simply to be good and useful to men, who deserved it so little.

Always act thus, and avoid the praise of men. This generally carries with it a subtle poison which sooner or later proves grievously injurious to the heart which has received it with pleasure. Act only to receive the approval of your own conscience, and when it tells you in your heart that you have done well, turn with joy to your heavenly Father, and thank him that he has granted you the means of obtaining his approval. As for reward, you may look for it from his love; and benevolent spirits will tell you what it is. In all cases, let not your left hand know what your right doeth, but practise material and moral charity with all the quick intelligence and delicacy of a heart moved only by disinterestedness, sincerity, humility, devotion and love. In the spiritual sense, and in the idea of Jesus, the word "alms," which conveys a debasing and humiliating sense to you, signifies material and moral charity.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 5—15. LUKE,
CHAP. XI.—VERSES 1—4.

The Lord's Prayer.

Matth. vi. (5) And when thou prayest, be not like the hypocrites, who like to pray standing in the synagogues, and at the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their full reward. (6) But thou when thou prayest, go into thy chamber and shut the door, and pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee in the light. (7) And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions, like the Gentiles, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. (8) So do not imitate them, for behold, your Father knoweth what you need before you ask him. (9) After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father in the heavens, hallowed be thy name: (10) Thy kingdom come: thy will be done, as in heaven, also on the earth. (11) Give us to-day the bread which suffices us; (12) And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. (13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the

glory throughout the ages. Amen. (14) For if you forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will also forgive you ; (15) And if you do not forgive men their offences, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Luke xi. (1) And it came to pass that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. (2) And he said to them, When ye pray, say, Our Father, who art in the heavens ; thy will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth. (3) Give us day by day our bread which suffices us ; (4) And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive every one who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil.

§ 91. The explanations respecting prayers are the same as those respecting almsgiving. Never do anything for the purpose of winning the approbation of men, but let all your actions be accomplished with the sole desire of rendering to the Lord the homage which is his due, which is simply the sincere and disinterested observance of the laws of love and charity which he has imposed upon you. When prescribing secrecy, in silence and privacy, apart from the gaze of men, both for prayer and almsgiving, Jesus forbade exterior pomp and ceremonies, and long prayers made with the lips and not with the heart, both at that period and in future.

Let us repeat together, beloved pupils, the prayer which the Master sketched out for men, that you may understand its spiritual sense and import.

“ Our Father :” our Creator, from whom we all derive our being. “ In the heavens :” who art so exalted above every human creature, that thy dwelling is infinite space, where our impure eyes cannot behold thee.

“ Hallowed be thy name.” Let all thy creatures bless thy name, and let all their thoughts and actions show how greatly they honour the mighty Source from whence they have sprung ; and let them not harbour any thought in their hearts which might be offensive to the All-pure.

“ Thy kingdom come.” Let all men live submissive to thy law, and let all acknowledge and bless the source of their existence.

“ Thy will be done, as in heaven, also on earth.” Let all men acknowledge the immutable laws which thy will has

imposed upon them. Let them live submissive to those laws, and practise them with love and gratitude, that they may honour and worship thee, as the happy spirits yield unreserved submission to thy sublime will, and are happy in being its humble instruments and ministers.

“Give us to-day the bread which suffices us.” O Lord, grant us every day the food which we require to sustain the existence which thou hast given us. Let the food be only our indispensable nourishment, without ministering in any way to our grosser appetites. Grant, O Lord, that we may be so sustained by this perishable food that we may rightly implore and receive the bread of life, which can alone lead us to the foot of thy eternity.

“Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.” Let thy goodness extend over us, who are weak creatures, always rebelling against thy divine will. Pardon us, for we have often fallen, and we still stumble at every moment of our lives; O Lord, extend thy mercy to us. But as love and pardon are the law of our existence, if we fail to practise it, let thy justice extend over us. Thou hast told us through thy celestial messenger, our Master, the protector and ruler of our planet and its humanity, “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and bless those who curse you.” Having regard to these words, we ask, O Father of justice, that thou wilt render us our due, and pardon us in the same proportion that we may have pardoned the faults of our brethren.

“Lead us not into temptation.” Give us strength, O God, to resist the evil instincts of our nature. Sustain our courage, and renew our strength, which so often fails us, and let the thought of thee always rise like an impassable barrier between the sin which displeases thee, and ourselves, thy unworthy servants, who nevertheless aspire to thy favour, that we may accomplish our earthly experiences without weakness or failure. “But deliver us from the evil.” O Lord, grant that we may be surrounded by thy good spirits, and may be submissive to their inspirations, advice, and teachings. Let the purity of our hearts drive away the evil spirits who strive

incessantly to lead us astray, and so often entice us into the wrong path. Deliver us, O Lord, from their evil influence, and permit us to lead them to thee by our counsels and prayers, and especially by the moral example of our thoughts and actions.

“For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory throughout the ages. Amen.” O Lord, thou alone art great above all things ; thou alone, O God, art the sole creator of everything which moves in infinite space. O God, thou who art omnipotent in immensity, art our supreme judge, our Sovereign, and our well-beloved King. The homage of our hearts and our eternal songs of praise are due to thee. O Lord, grant that it may soon be given to us to unite our voices to those of the happy spirits who celebrate thy glory and greatness, and thy infinite goodness above all things. O Father, this is the desire which the humblest of thy children dares to express at thy footstool.

Dear brethren, meditate on this lesson which we give you on the Lord's Prayer, in the name of Christ, the Spirit of Truth. Let your hearts ponder on all that this sublime prayer has done to inspire men with emotions which have kept them in the right path, and to develop and strengthen right feelings of duty towards God and the human race, and towards themselves. Let your hearts ponder over all that this sublime prayer contains of love, gratitude and submission towards him who has been, is, and will be throughout eternity, the God of mercy, and of absolute and infinite perfections. May the God of Love bless you.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN.

With the concurrence of the Apostles.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 16–18.

Fasting.

(16) And when ye fast, be not sullen, like the hypocrites ; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear to men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (17) But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face ; (18) That thou appear

not unto men to fast, but to thy Father, who is in secret; and thy Father, seeing in secret, shall reward thee in the light.

§ 92. Fasting was a material and physical custom among the Hebrews. The words of Jesus were intended to prevent its becoming a source of hypocrisy or pride among those who conformed to it; for everything done for the purpose of attracting the attention and approval of man, loses before God the merit which it would have derived from purity of intention.

Do not understand the word fasting to be used here in its literal material sense, but symbolically, according to the spirit. When you do any act whatever, to be pleasing to God, to render him the homage which is his due; or submit to any privation, do not act in such a manner that men perceive it, and praise you; for where would then be your merit in the sight of God?

You must fully understand that when we speak of privations, we mean anything which can mortify your animal instincts, and to which you submit, that it may be agreeable to God. We do not tell you to impose on yourselves such privations and mortifications as may be injurious to the animal life, without destroying anything evil which might exist in the spirit. Man should maintain his health and strength by sufficient food, and by observing the laws of health, that he may be able to fulfil the law of labour, and all his various duties. But let him confine himself to what is necessary, observing frugality, temperance and sobriety in all things.

Do not subject yourselves to any privations which are useless, because they neither serve to purify your spirit nor to relieve your brethren. No privations are regarded by the eyes of God, except those which are profitable to your brethren. Deny yourselves, but let it be for others, with the feeling and object of charity. Reduce what you consider necessary for yourselves, in order to give to those who require it, and mortify your animal instincts by denying yourselves all useless or superfluous pleasures, that you may not give way to any manner of excess.

It is your soul which you must save and purify. Cleanse it from its faults, clothe it in impenetrable armour, and purify it by every means which reason suggests. Look only to your soul, and let the privations which you impose on your body be only a means of arresting the tendency to some excess, or of enabling you to share your necessities with those who are in want.

You are spirits, though fallen very low. Train your spirit that it may be enabled to win back its share of the heritage which it has lost ; and let all your efforts be directed to deliver it from this human life, and the bonds which ally it to the brute ; but avoid any excess, both as regards the spirit and the body.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 19–23. LUKE,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 32–34.

The Pure Heart—The True and Only Treasure.

Matth. vi. (19) Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. (20) But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. (21) For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also. (22) The light of the body is the eye ; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body will be luminous. (23) But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be dark. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness ?

Luke xii. (32) Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. (33) Sell your possessions, and give alms ; make yourselves bags which do not grow old, an unfailing treasure in the heavens, where the thief does not come near, nor the moth destroy. (34) For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

§ 93. All these are material symbols. Seek for the spirit, and you will discover the true sense and the full meaning of the thought of Jesus. Do not seek that which forms the welfare of man on earth, when it comes into collision with the welfare of the spirit in space. Seek only, with love, that which may lead you towards your God, and let all your human actions be always guided by the thought that you are not of this world, but that you are wandering travellers, and ought to do your best to fulfil the experiences which

have been assigned to you, and the mission with which you have been entrusted, that you may return to your own country, and to the Master who sent you forth, and is able to take a good account of your actions.

Never allow yourselves to be dazzled by perishable splendours. Whatever lustre may surround them, they are a source of darkness to your spirit. Their light will perish with them ; and you will find yourself lost in the shadow of an existence which is freed from the vanities of the earth, and has nothing to shelter it before God.

Never forget that your treasure is with God, the giver of all graces. If you continually dwell on this thought, your heart will always turn towards him ; all your actions will tend towards your Creator ; all your thoughts will rise towards him, and your heart will be with your treasure ; with your God, the source of all good.

(Luke xii. 32.)—These words were addressed to the first disciples. Their number was very small in proportion to the task assigned them, but they were devoted spirits, and walked in the steps of the Lord. The words likewise apply to the first Spiritists, who are also few in number in comparison to the task before them, but who, like the first disciples of Jesus, are devoted spirits, walking in the ways of the Lord. You are thus encouraged, like the disciples, to confide in the Lord, and to hope in his promises.

(Luke xii. 33.)—Jesus did not mean that you should strip yourselves of all your worldly wealth ; and that you could not otherwise attain to God. This interpretation, if carried out literally and not according to the spirit, would lead to absurd consequences, besides being opposed to all the teachings of the Master. The words mean that the possession and disposal of a man's property should be free from selfishness, and sanctified by charity. Good works, thus practised according to material, moral and intellectual order, form the only imperishable riches (spiritual riches), as an element of moral progress, which alone opens the path to perfection, and leads to God.

LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 13-21.

Avarice.

xii. (13) And a certain man in the crowd said to him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. (14) And he said to him, Man, who appointed me a judge or divider among you? (15) And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness, for the life of a man is not in the superfluity of his possessions. (16) And he spoke a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly, (17) And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store up my crops? (18) And he said, Thus will I do, I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and I will there store up all my crops and my goods, (19) And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast many good things laid up for many years, rest, eat, drink, and rejoice. (20) But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be demanded of thee, then whose shall be those things which thou hast provided? (21) Thus is he who layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich towards God.

§ 94. Jesus did not come to rule over the perishable world, nor to lay down material laws. What was the object of his mission? To withdraw the minds of material men from matter, and to break their idols of flesh, that he might exalt their spirits. Consequently he was obliged to speak strongly; and yet he is still only feebly hearkened to. Such was the spiritual sense and object of this parable. At the present day you are more advanced, and yet how often are we not obliged to repeat to you the words of Jesus! Lay up your treasure where neither moth nor rust destroy, nor thieves steal. How many among you, in spite of all our cares, and in spite of the daily preaching of the Gospel, trust only in their riches, and lay up worthless treasures, and bury themselves wholly in them! Remember your soul, for death may overtake you at any moment, even this very night. See, therefore, that the constant practice of love and charity may make you rich towards God at the moment when your soul will be required of you; and may lead you to free yourselves from the material desires and appetites, which incline you, according to the tendencies of your nature, to sensuality, pride, selfishness and avarice.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 24-34. LUKE, CHAP.
XVI.—VERSES 13-15 ; CHAP. XII.—VERSES 22-31.

God and Mammon.

Matth. vi. (24) No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. (25) Therefore I say unto you, be not over-anxious for your life, about what you shall eat or drink, nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not your life more than food, and your body than clothing? (26) Behold the winged creatures of heaven, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them ; are ye not much better than they? (27) And who among you by anxious thought can add to his stature one cubit? (28) And why do ye take anxious thought for clothing? Look on the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, nor do they spin. (29) But I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was never arrayed like one of these. (30) And if God thus clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? (31) Therefore do not anxiously consider, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we put on. (32) For the Gentiles seek after all these things ; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. (33) But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be conferred upon you. (34) Therefore take no anxious thought for to-morrow, for to-morrow shall take anxious thought for its own affairs. Sufficient unto the day is its own evil.

Luke xvi. (13) No household servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. (14) And the avaricious Pharisees also, who were present, heard all these things, and they derided him. (15) And he said unto them, Ye are they who justify themselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts, for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

Luke xii. (22) And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no anxious thought for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. (23) The life is more than food, and the body than clothing. (24) Consider the ravens, for they sow not, neither do they reap, and have neither chamber nor barn, yet the Father feedeth them ; how much better are ye than the fowls? (25) And which of you by taking anxious thought can add to his stature one cubit? (26) If therefore ye cannot accomplish that which is least, why take ye anxious thought for the rest? (27) Consider the lilies how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : but I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (28) And if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe ye, O ye of little faith? (29) And seek not what ye shall eat, nor what ye shall drink, and do not excite yourselves. (30) For the nations of the world seek after all these things, but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. (31) Seek ye rather the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be conferred upon you.

§ 95. By such teachings Jesus endeavoured to turn the mind of man from matter, and to show him the object which he ought to set before him, and strive after above all things; the acquisition of eternal life, or, in other words, the life of a pure spirit who has completed all his experiences, and attained to a pre-eminent degree of purity. He then begins to comprehend God, and rejoices eternally throughout his spiritual life in approaching nearer and nearer to the fire of his omnipotence, though without ever being able to equal God.

Jesus spoke to men who were sunk in gross instincts. He had to contend with their rebellious natures, and was obliged to speak strongly that his words might be dimly remembered in their hardened hearts.

You must not argue, from these expressions of Jesus, that man should abandon his human existence and future to the care of God alone. He should not forget that he is a worker with a task to perform. He should not forget that a man who is subject to human necessities must seek to procure the means of sustaining his existence by work, and that a day will come when the workman's strength will fail.

Therefore, let him who can lawfully store up the grain which should form his subsistence in his old age, do so with integrity before the Lord, and gather it while he is in the flower of his age. Let him gather it carefully, without wasting a particle, for he should remember his brethren who have only been able to glean painfully a few scattered ears to maintain their daily existence, and who will then require their share of the grain which the Lord has permitted him to gather abundantly. Work according to your strength and opportunities, and always remember those who cannot, or can no longer do so. God blesses pure hearts and good intentions.

"You cannot serve God and Mammon." Mammon was a divinity worshipped by the ancient nations. He was lord of silver and gold, chiefly the latter, and, like the classical Jupiter, was the impersonation of the vices of humanity. Hence Jesus said, "You cannot serve two masters at once."

You cannot live a life agreeable to God if you follow all the allurements of worldly life. You cannot be at once both amiable and selfish, charitable and avaricious, self-forgetful and angry; gentle, humble-minded, simple, and proud; you cannot be active in material, moral and intellectual work, and idle; kind to all, and fond of violence and murder; you cannot serve two masters at once, for either you will love the one and hate the other, or you will serve the one and despise the other. He who attaches himself to worldly prosperity cannot live the life of self-renunciation which spiritual progress requires. We say to the Pharisees of your own days, who will ridicule these words, as Jesus said to the luxurious, proud and avaricious Pharisees of his own age: "You are very careful to appear just to men, but God knoweth your hearts; for what is great in the eyes of men is an abomination before God." What men regard as highly exalted are riches, glory, and pride, which they make their divinities; but the Lord loves the humble-minded, and the simple and gentle-hearted.

The words of Jesus (Matth. vi. 25, 26, 28-34; Luke xii. 22-24, 27-30) were clothed in Oriental imagery appropriate to the intelligence of the period. They were specially addressed to material and avaricious men, who were wholly pre-occupied with worldly advantages, and who saw nothing beyond, caring only to increase their own prosperity or fortune, tending their bodies like a precious plant, and neglecting their souls, the only good which they should have anxiously cared for. Jesus was obliged to speak strongly, to ensure their remembering anything of his words; and his teachings were always suited to the moral sores which he desired to heal.

In these words, Jesus reminds man of his origin; God, the Creator of all things, who watches over everything which he has created with equal care, and gives to each what it requires, according to its needs; material food to matter, and spiritual food to spirit. But man is always liable to overlook the real object of his teachings, and it is needful to point out that Jesus did not counsel reasonable

beings to wait in idleness till it pleases God to feed them as he feeds the fowls of the air, or to clothe them as he clothes the lilies of the field. It is enough for man to leave the Lord to provide what is necessary for his real advantage ; but he ought to employ his faculties, activity, and energy to obtain his protection by work.

The lilies of the field rest in the bosom of the earth till the Lord weaves the robe which makes them the noblest of the flowers. Man must wait until the will of his God develops in him virtues which should make him illustrious in the eyes of his brethren ; but he should await this in activity. God aids him who works ; therefore you must not make the words of Jesus a pretext for fatalism or indifference.

(Matth. vi. 34.)—According to the spirit which quickeneth, what Jesus here condemns is excessive care for life, and not that which is necessary. Man must sustain his existence ; his care for the future cannot and ought not to be less than that which some animals display ; but at the same time he should not concentrate all his thoughts and desires on heaping up the goods of this world. He ought to possess foresight, but never be ambitious, and he should leave himself in the hands of the Lord, who knows what is good for every one, and who permits trial to purify the creature, to render it worthy of its Creator.

(Luke xii. 25, 26.)—The following is the real sense and meaning of this passage, in spirit and in truth :—Man should not even desire to alter the course of events which God has decreed, but should do all in his power to turn them to the glory of God, and to his own salvation. He should not endeavour to alter their nature ; and above all, when they have been fulfilled, he ought not to say, “ If I had done so-and-so, this would not have happened.” Man should remember that whatever happens is due either to his position on the earth, and thus forms part of his necessary experiences, or results from his own weakness, which led to the fault, imprudence, or negligence which he laments. In either case he should acknowledge that God always

directs and overrules everything for the future good of the incarnate spirit.

(Matth. vi. 33.)—Man should strive above all things to live according to the will of the Lord ; for when he has once entered on this path of purity, he will draw to himself the blessings of his heavenly Father, and will understand their real nature. These are not material blessings, concerning only that which is mortal in you, and which gives you most anxiety ; but abundant blessings, which will aid your spirit to purify itself more and more, and lead it to understand that the pains and sufferings which affect the body are blessings from the Lord, because they purify your spirit, break the bonds which chain it to the earth, and permit it to ascend from your miserable existence towards the regions of eternal happiness.

When humanity shall have attained to the degree of moral purity which it ought to acquire, the questions relating to moral laws, as they are explained to you by the spirits of the Lord, concerning adoration, work, reproduction, conservation, destruction, society, progress, equality, liberty, justice, love, and charity, will be settled very easily ; for material, moral and intellectual wealth will only belong to any particular individual in the sense that each lives for all, and all for each. The children of the Father will then form one great family, and unite the desire of mutually aiding one another with its effectual fulfilment ; but these times are still far, very far off. Therefore do not seek to make premature changes in your manners and customs and laws, for such changes should only be the result of the change in your hearts which will bring with it, through the practice of mutual and fraternal aid, the development of your intelligence, by instruction, knowledge, and love ; moral well-being, and consequently material prosperity.

Jesus said, "Sufficient unto each day is the evil thereof." As labourers of the soul, you drive the plough in barren soil. We prepare the seed, and are obliged to choose it carefully, for there are very few places in which it can germinate. Wait till the time of harvest has come, when the

Lord shall summon his industrious labourers. The trumpet will call them from the four corners of the earth, and the diligent labourers will rejoice at the sight of the numerous ears which they have sown in their furrows. Take courage, for the time will surely come.

Yes, Jesus has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Not a word which fell from his lips shall remain unfulfilled ; but time has no limits in the eyes of the Lord. For yourselves also it has none ; and when you have passed the barrier which hems you in, and have left your temporary sojourn in matter, and returned to your true country, you will be able to follow the progress of humanity ; touching the revelation of Christ with one hand, and its complete fulfilment with the other.

LUKE, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 19-31.

Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

(19) Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. (20) And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who was laid at his gate, full of sores. (21) And desiring to be fed with the bread crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, and the dogs also came and licked his sores. (22) And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom ; and the rich man also died, and was buried. (23) And in Hades, he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (24) And he cried out and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. (25) But Abraham said, Child, remember that thou hast received thy good things in thy lifetime, and Lazarus in like manner evil things ; and now he is comforted thus, and thou art tormented. (26) And besides all these things, there is a great gulf fixed between us and you, so that those who wish to ~~cross~~ over to you cannot, nor those who would cross thence to us. (27) And he said, I ask thee, therefore, father, to send him to my father's house ; (28) For I have five brethren, that he may testify to them, lest they should also come to this place of torment. (29) Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them. (30) And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if anybody went to them from the dead, they would repent. (31) And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

§ 96. The hard, rich man suffers the penalty of his faults

and may thus be said to be in hell, when buried ;* while the unhappy man who has been patient and resigned is recompensed for his afflictions. Punishment must take its course, and it cannot be shortened, except by repentance. Whatever efforts a just man might make, he could not stay the justice of the Lord as long as the guilty man himself remains impenitent ; and the rich man suffered, but he did not repent. His anxiety for his brothers was only that they might avoid his sufferings ; but he did not repent. His request was a demand, and not a sign of repentance. Although Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom, he was nevertheless a poor man, one of the common people, and the born servant of the rich man, even in "hell ;" that is, in a state of punishment.

The dialogue is full of childlike simplicity, and was appropriate to the period and the intelligence of the age. Its imagery was designed to make a strong impression on those who heard it, but it is likewise addressed to you who consider your intelligence above such language.

Men, do not create a barrier between the poor man whom you repulse, and yourselves, for if he submits to your contempt with resignation, faith, and courage, he will be rewarded, while you will have to atone for your harshness and hardness of heart. As long as you persevere in your harshness, the abyss which separates you will be impassable to you both, and only repentance can bridge it over, and allow you to meet again.

What is the spiritual explanation of verses 27-31 ?

The language of the rich man in the parable (verses 27, 28 and 30) shows you that the Jews believed in the communication of men with the souls of the dead, or spirits ; and sanctions this belief at the same time. Abraham's answers were designed to show that any communication from beyond the tomb is useless to those who are systematically incredulous. What would have been the effect of the apparition of the poor man upon the rich man's brothers, who shared his opinions and his selfishness, as the parable implies ? They

* The French Testament reads : " The rich man died, and was buried in hell."—TRANSL.

would have accused him of continuing to make himself troublesome, even after death; and they would have banished the apparition from their thoughts, as they would have driven the man from their sight; for it would have been still more annoying to them.

Besides systematic unbelief, the unbelief of callousness also leads man to deny communications from beyond the tomb, because they bring threatening revelations, and he would imagine himself in security; or because they insist on immediate reforms, and he desires to give way to his passions. Let such men first endeavour to apply the law to themselves, and conform to its teachings.

The Catholic Church says, "You have the Gospel and the Church; why seek further?"

Those who speak thus parody the words of Jesus (verses 29 and 31 of the parable); but when Jesus put the words, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them," into the mouth of Abraham, he implied, "You have the law and the prophets; you have the universal love to guard you; and you have the example of those who have practised it to guide you."

Those who refer you to the Gospels have made them a dead letter. It is no longer the law, for their own practice does not manifest the vast love which embraces all indiscriminately, which rejects no one, encourages all the weak, and seeks to recall all the wandering sheep without inquiring by what path they return to the fold. The law and the Gospels correspond to love, and the prophets and their interpreters correspond to the practice of love. Those who depart from it do not themselves follow the law which they desire to impose on others. It is because those who refer you to the Gospels have made it a dead letter that the Lord has sent the Spirit of Truth at the time foretold, when the abomination of desolation is standing in the holy place, where it ought not; that he may recall men by a general diffusion of the Spirit to the purity and simplicity of the sublime morality of the Master, and to the practice of universal love; and lead them to truth, for progress is a law of nature.

Those who take the parable literally say, "Its whole idea is contained in verse 15: 'For that which is great among men is an abomination in the eyes of the Lord.' In fact, the rich man is in hell only because he was great in the world, and the poor man is well-pleasing to God—he is 'in Abraham's bosom,' only because he was insignificant in the world." It is not said that the rich man had misused his wealth, nor that the poor man had made a good use of his poverty; but the rich man had had his good things during his life, and Lazarus had had nothing but evil. The same thing is implied in the words recorded by Luke (vi. 24, 25) in the commencement of the Sermon on the Mount: "But woe unto you, rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe unto you who are full now, for you shall hunger; Woe unto you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep."

This feeling of bitterness against riches and reprobation of the rich man arose in Christianity simultaneously with its struggle against the world; but the very thought of the Founder is different: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matth. vi. 33).*

Those who speak thus, even if they are partially justified by the false human interpretations which have been given to the Master's words, wholly misunderstand the spiritual sense and object of the thought of Jesus, which was purposely veiled by the letter, as well as of the parable itself; and of the texts quoted, which we have already explained. This false interpretation bore good fruit in its own time, for its very violence led dishonest, avaricious, and selfish men to abandon their wealth to escape the threatened chastisement; and thus to set examples of self-renunciation which would be better understood at a later period.

When you wish to fell a tree, you do not set to work with a lancet, but wield an axe with the full strength of your arm; and in order to destroy deeply-rooted and evil passions, you cannot use soft words, with nothing to back them, but must use strong language, to which the heart will respond. The words of Jesus were always chosen so that they might bear fruit immediately, and likewise prepare for a future harvest. Even what you regard as errors sprang from false interpretations, were only deep furrows ploughed into the hard soil, and forcing it to yield sweeter and more delicate fruits, when the tillage should finally have softened, improved, and made it fertile.

* This paragraph seems rather out of place, and perhaps belongs to the body of the work, but I have left it in small type, as it stands in the original.—TRANSL.

Let those who make such objections consider the spiritual explanation of this parable, and comprehend that the words of Jesus are "spirit and life" linked together in an harmonious whole, and then they will understand.

What is the spiritual meaning of verse 26?

It alludes to the impossibility of any spirit staying the course of divine justice.

The expressions in verse 26 are veiled by the imagery and the letter. Do they imply that good spirits cannot approach evil ones as long as the latter remain impenitent, and that guilty spirits cannot ascend to regions inhabited by good spirits?

No; the superior spirits cannot come in contact with inferior spirits undergoing punishment; but good spirits of a lower degree are around them, though invisible. On the other hand, inferior spirits can never ascend towards regions inhabited by good spirits, unless sincere repentance enables them to feel the influence of their protector, and unless they have been authorized to follow the good spirits for their own instruction and progress.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 1–6. MARK, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 24. LUKE VI.—VERSES 37, 38, 41, 42.

Do not Judge others—The Mote and the Beam—Do not throw Holy Things to Dogs.

Matth. vii. (1) Judge not, that ye be not judged. (2) For by what judgment ye judge, you will be judged, and by what measure ye mete, it will be measured to you again. (3) And why beholdest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, and dost not perceive the beam in thine own eye? (4) Or how shouldst thou say to thy brother, Let me pull the mote out of thine eye, and behold the beam is in thine own eye. (5) Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull the mote out of thy brother's eye. (6) Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, nor throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Mark iv. (24) And he said unto them, Take heed what you hear, for with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you, and to you shall more be given.

Luke vi. (37) And judge not, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you shall be forgiven. (38) Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall they give

into your bosom. (41) And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and dost not perceive the beam that is in thine own eye? (42) Or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull the mote out of thine eye, and dost not see the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull the mote out of thy brother's eye.

§ 97. The lesson contained in these words of Jesus, and others like them, is easily understood, and there is no necessity for a very elaborate commentary. Let man reflect and examine his own conscience before judging his brethren; let him take a clear estimate of his own character, and ask himself what he would answer if he were summoned before the Judge; and his own unworthiness will show him the indulgence which he ought to feel towards his brethren. Let him reflect on and practise the words, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

(Mark iv. 24.)—When Jesus spoke thus to his disciples, and through them to all men, he desired them to judge discreetly, and not too lightly. If an ignorant man passes judgment on his brother, he will always do so with severity, because he does not understand the reason of his actions, and is incapable of estimating them aright. Consequently he who judges severely will be judged in like manner.

The words, "to you shall more be given," signify that the more efforts you make to approach the Master, the more he will deign to stoop towards you. They have no connection with the preceding passage, and were not intended to imply that he who has judged his brethren severely will be more severely judged himself. You will be measured (judged) by the same standard with which you have judged your brethren, but you will also receive graces in proportion to the efforts which you have made to deserve them. This passage refers only to the graces which you may or may not deserve, according to whether you have made efforts to attain them, or have neglected to progress.

You should be charitable, and forgive your brethren their offences as you would wish your own to be forgiven. But if you do not pardon your brethren, or show them any consideration, how can you expect your Father in the heavens

to be indulgent towards you? Have you deserved it? Have you not broken his laws, and shown yourselves deficient in the love and charity which we are always preaching to you, and which is the only support on which you can rely? Pardon others, if you would be pardoned yourselves. Pass no judgments on your brethren, for you yourselves will also be judged by a righteous Judge, who reads your inmost hearts, and beholds all the miserable passions which move you. Do not judge your brethren, for you only see the surface, and although it may appear troubled to you, the depths may be pure before God; whereas, in your own case, it may be the depths of your heart which are impure.

(Matth. vii. 5.)—Begin by purifying your soul from all the vices and bad passions which prey upon it. Purify your hearts before God, and then only, when you yourselves are perfect, you may venture to find fault. You may do so then, but you will not, for the perfection of your souls will then lead you near to him who said, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone at her," and who, though himself sinless, said, "Go and sin no more."

(Matth. vii. 6.)—Try to penetrate into the true spiritual sense of these words of Jesus, as applied to the present and the future, in their relation to the teaching and propagation of the Gospel, and their application to the present period of the New Revelation. Your conduct should be regulated by surrounding circumstances, and by the company whom you address. Test it and prepare it, and however slight may be the sign of fertility which you may perceive in it, sow the seed with prudence and precaution, and cultivate it carefully, to further its development. But if the soil should appear dry and barren, keep silence, and let it be understood that you do not wish to speak. Such a refusal will excite curiosity, and curiosity will arouse in some natures the desire to know. In this case, devote yourself to the work, and instruct those who at first repulsed you, but who now desire to learn. Hold out your arms to the wandering sheep, come to the assistance of the lost,

and lead back to the Lord the little flock which you have assembled. The Master rewards his faithful servants bountifully, and the happiness of having rescued your brethren from incredulity, discouragement, and negation, will recompense you for your laborious life, and prepare you to enter into the joys of eternity.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 7–11.

LUKE, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 5–13.

Prayer.

Matth. vii. (7) Ask, and it shall be given unto you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (8) For every one who asks, receives ; and he who seeketh, findeth ; and to him who knocketh, it shall be opened. (9) Or what man is there among you, who, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ? (10) And if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ? (11) Then if you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in the heavens give good things to them that ask him ?

Luke xi. (5) And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, give me three loaves ; (6) For a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him. (7) And he shall answer from within, and say, Do not trouble me ; the door is already shut, and my children are with me in bed ; I cannot get up and give you what you want. (8) I tell you, even if he will not get up and give him the (loaves) because he is his friend, yet on account of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. (9) And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given unto you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (10) For every one who asketh, receiveth ; and he who seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. (11) If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone ? And if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish ? (12) Or if he ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion ? (13) If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ?

§ 98. By these words, Jesus sought to guard his disciples against the discouragement which is likely to be caused by apparent unsuccess. These sayings are applicable to all generations ; perseverance may attain everything. Perseverance strengthens your resolutions, and adds to the perfection of your work ; it confirms you in your faith, and thus renders you worthy of the attention of the Master, who will grant

to your repeated efforts what he would have deferred giving you, if you were not yet sure of yourselves.

Man should not attempt or undertake anything without having prayed to the Lord from the depths of his heart, and besought his aid.

The Lord is full of compassion ; he knows what is fitting for his children, and always grants it abundantly. But his blind and ungrateful children rarely understand the secret designs of Providence. A father does not give his child a serpent when he asks for a fish. Your Father never refuses you necessary blessings ; but how do you know what is needful for you ? Are you yourselves able to judge of the food which will best agree with you ? Are you able to judge of or to understand the character of the experiences which it is needful for you to undergo ? Your Father knows it, and will grant you the food best suited to your constitution. The more light you receive, the better will you be able to understand these sayings. The great Father does not give a stone to him who asks for bread. Pray to your Father for the bread of life, and he will grant you abundant opportunities of acquiring it.

(Matth. vii. 7, 8.)—These sayings of Jesus, like all others, must be understood according to the Spirit which giveth life, and not according to the letter which killeth. Pray to the Lord that you may understand truth, and your prayer will be heard. Knock at the gates of eternity, and you will be admitted to the sanctuary. Pray to the Giver of all holy and divine favours with purity and love, and ask him to give you his light to illumine your brethren, and he himself will place the torch in your hands, and its rays will illumine the world.

Man cannot alter any portion of the divine decrees, but if you pray for strength and light, it will be given you to comprehend why you suffer, and you will be enabled to bear even the severest trials with patience and resignation, even with love.

If you can efface newly-committed faults by sincere repentance, you can, by prayer, and by the request that you

may not commit them again, obtain the support and encouragement which will be given you to sustain and direct you, and to enlighten you respecting the experiences which you have chosen, and the conduct requisite to pass through them as the Lord would desire you. But you must first render yourselves worthy of such aid, and thus render it possible for you to receive it.*

It is said, "Ask and it shall be given unto you ;" but this does not mean that you can ask God to change your experiences, and violently to alter the course of events which he has decreed. It means that it will be given to you to understand the secret ends of his providence, and as it were, to enter into communion with his thought, and, to comprehend and accept the good which may result to you in eternity from the moral and physical sufferings which oppress you during your human existence. Your free will may change the surface of the events of your existence, but the essential basis will always be the same.

The thousand obstacles which arise from your social life and from your civilization, which is still so barbarous from many points of view, are not reckoned among your experiences. They are trifles which are of no importance in the mass of trials which you have to undergo.

"Your Father in the heavens," said Jesus, "will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask for it."

The Lord never remains deaf to the voice of his children, when they pray to him with faith and confidence. The Father of the great family does not always grant the favour which is asked of him in the form in which it is sought, because, instead of its being good for man, it might redound to his confusion ; but if any one prays to him with sincerity, he hearkens to him, and grants him the Holy Spirit ; that is, the love of God, and the understanding of events, under spirit influence, by permitting his messengers to surround and to enlighten him. The man to whom the heavenly Father has given the Holy Spirit is he who under-

* Either by inspiration or communication.

stands the words of the Master, applies them to his own conduct, and never despairs of the love and justice of the Lord.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSE 12. LUKE,
CHAP. VI.—VERSE 31.

Love and Charity.

Matth. vii. (12) Therefore all things whatsoever that ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets.

Luke vi. (31) And as you would that men should do unto you, do ye also the like to them.

§ 99. Love thy neighbour as thyself. Thy neighbour, whoever he may be, known or unknown, friend or enemy, is always thy brother, for he is the son of the same heavenly Father. Put yourself in his place, always and everywhere, and under all circumstances, in order to act towards him as you would that he should act towards you ; and therefore never say nor do anything that you would not have him say or do to you. But say and do to him according to all that is just and good in the material, moral, and intellectual order, which you would desire him to say and do to you if you were in his place, by practising towards him material and moral charity, to the utmost extent of your power, means, and faculties, both in word and act, and in all ways, with your heart, purse, arm, or intelligence.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 13, 14.

The Narrow Gate.

(13) Enter through the narrow gate, for the gate is broad and the way wide that leadeth to destruction, and there are many who enter through this. (14) For narrow is the gate and confined the way that leadeth unto life, and there are few who find it.

§ 100. The narrow gate and difficult path indicate the efforts which the incarnate spirit must make in order to attain to eternal life. He must struggle to cleanse himself from his vices, and to arouse in himself the virtues which are opposed to the vices which he has resisted.

Those who find the narrow door and the confined path

are those only who practise work, love, and charity, and consequently humility, tolerance, disinterestedness, and devotion towards all, and thus pass successfully through their experiences by resisting the evil instincts and tendencies which they have to contend with, and which necessitate successive reincarnations for the purification and progress of the spirit.

The wide gate and broad way which lead to destruction, and through which so many enter, represent pride, selfishness, and ambition, with all their consequences ; avarice, cupidity, envy, luxury, intemperance, anger, idleness, materialism, incredulity, intolerance, fanaticism, and the predominance of matter over spirit, or even the subservience of spirit to matter ; in short, wickedness in general, both in word and act, under all shapes, and in all degrees of evil.

LUKE, CHAP. XIII. — VERSES 23-30.

Efforts to enter by the Narrow Gate.

(23) And a certain man said unto him, Lord, are there few who are saved? And he said to them, (24) Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for I say unto you that many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able.

§ 101. Many endeavour to follow the road which leads to the Father, but become weary of the obstacles which they have to overcome, the efforts which they must make, and the sacrifices which they must impose on themselves, and stop, refusing to go further. These cannot pass the narrow door ; but the man who always follows the course which his conscience directs, never seeking to silence its behests by sophism, or even by delays, is he who will pass easily through the door, narrow as it appears. It will be wide enough when he approaches, for it will be opened to receive him.

We tell you, with Jesus, "Many will seek to enter, and will not be able." These are they who attempt it, but who do not persevere.

You can and ought, Spiritists, to apply these words to

yourselves. Many among you have seen the gate standing open, and have turned towards it, but with faltering steps, dragging with them a train of fraud, vices, and impurity ; and they do not really advance. They believe they advance, but the road constantly lengthens before them, and the gate gradually closes.

Therefore, before entering on this barren, stony path, lay aside everything which might impede your course. You can only reach the door if guided by a pure conscience ; and that alone is sure to find it open, and succeed in passing it.

(25) And when the master of the house hath risen, and has closed the door, and you begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us ; and he shall answer, and say unto you, I know not whence ye are.

§ 102. There is a limit to the long-suffering of the Lord. When the spirit who is required to progress on your earth remains obstinately stationary in his faults, as if he did not perceive the ascending path of progress stamped on all nature, he does not reach the goal at the same time as his brethren, and is consequently unable to enter with them into happier spheres. If the obstinacy and obduracy of the spirit resist all other methods, the Lord exiles him to the inferior planets, where he must recommence his wanderings until he recognises the necessity for progress.

(26) Then you will begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. (27) And he shall answer, I say unto you that I know not whence ye are ; depart from me, all ye that work injustice.

§ 103. This applies to all who continue to live a life condemned by the divine law, under cover of the religion which they profess. It is not enough to bear any religious title ; you must practise its morality. It is not enough to say, " Lord, Lord ; " you must do the will of your Father in the heavens.

(28) There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves cast out.

§ 104. These words were appropriated by Jesus in their form to the men to whom he spoke, but they are not alle-

gorical. They refer to the moral sufferings and tortures, symbolized by weeping and gnashing of teeth, which will be experienced by the guilty and rebellious spirits who will be exiled to the inferior planets at the time of the purification of your planet and its humanity. When a spirit is thus exiled to the inferior planets, he is always aware of the reason of his condemnation. Do you punish your criminals before they are sentenced? Yes, when they know that they are condemned, they will know that their obduracy alone has caused their punishment. They will see the extent of their fall, and will be able to estimate the greatness of their loss; but the Master's word will permit them to hope, and the sight of the happy will awaken in them the desire to succeed. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth among them; but they will also have a goal in view, and will desire to reach it. The Lord never condemns any one without leaving a door open for hope.

In addressing himself to the Hebrews, Jesus spoke to incarnate spirits, some of whom would persist in guilt till the time of purification. It is not necessary to be among the savages of Oceania, or devoid of knowledge or intelligence, to be rejected, for to such the Lord will give time. But those will be rejected who are proud and materialistic; those who seek the destruction of the masses by leading them into evil courses; and those who knowingly preach a corrupt morality. Yes, among those who listened to Jesus are some who are living in your own age, and who are still advancing in knowledge and intelligence, but, unhappily for themselves, not in simplicity of heart. They believe they possess everything, and when the time comes, they will see the nakedness of their souls.

(29) And they shall come from the East and the West, and from the North and the South, and shall recline in the kingdom of God.

§ 105. This alludes to the community of thought and belief which will be established among all men at the time of the regeneration, and also to the spirits who will come to your purified earth from different planets, at the predicted time when Jesus, the Spirit of Truth, shall appear

among you ; for the words of the Master are always designed both for the present and the future.

(30) And behold there are last who shall be first, and there are first who shall be last.

§ 106. Many of those who set out first will arrive last at the goal, from not having followed the path with perseverance. Those who trust in themselves and believe that they walk more surely, and surpass their brethren, will find themselves impeded by their pride, and proportionably retarded in their course. In the eyes of the Lord, the length of the existence of the spirit is nothing, but virtue and repentance are everything. Consequently, the spirit who has been slow to enter on the path of well-doing, but who has pressed on with perseverance and activity, may not only overtake, but pass by the indolent, if not guilty spirit, who makes no effort to advance, although he began his ascending course earlier.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 15-20. LUKE,
CHAP. VI.—VERSES 43-45.

False prophets.—The Tree known by its Fruits.

Matth. vii. (15) But beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are rapacious wolves. (16) You shall know them by their fruits ; do they gather grapes from thorns, or figs from burrs? (17) Thus every good tree bears good fruits, and the worthless tree bears bad fruits. (18) A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a worthless tree bear good fruit. (19) Every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down, and cast into the fire. (20) Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Luke vi. (43) For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a worthless tree bear good fruit. (44) For every tree is known by its own fruit, for figs are not gathered from thorns, nor do they gather a bunch of grapes from a bramble-bush. (45) The good man from the good treasure of his heart brings forth good, and the evil man from the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil ; for from the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh.

§ 107. Let him who preaches with the lips begin to preach by example ; everything is included in this. The labourer is known by his work. False prophets are those who preach a morality which they do not practise. He who does not exhibit to others the fruits of the morality

which he preaches is a bad tree. If you are a good tree, you should bear good fruits. Consequently, if all your actions are regulated by the morality of Christ, and are in harmony with his teachings, your fruits will be good ; but do not wander from them. Whatever may be your professions, if your actions do not correspond to them, you are bad trees destined to be cut down and cast into the fire ; that is, you will be doomed to expiation and re-incarnation, as we have already explained. Spiritists, preach to those whom you call false prophets by your own example, and display the fruits of the morality which you profess. The blind cannot perceive the glory of the light, but if you open their eyes they will see it.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 21-29. LUKE,
CHAP. VI.—VERSES 46-49.

God judges Men by their Works.

Matth. vi. (21) Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in the heavens. (22) Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many mighty works? (23) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you ; depart from me, ye that work lawlessness. (24) Therefore whosoever heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, I will compare him to a prudent man, who built his house upon a rock. (25) And the rain descended and the rivers came, and the winds blew, and rushed upon that house, and it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock. (26) And whoever heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, may be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. (27) And the rain descended, and the rivers came, and the winds blew, and dashed against that house, and it fell, and its fall was very great. (28) And it came to pass that when Jesus had ended these sayings, the crowds were amazed at his doctrine ; (29) For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Luke vi. (46) And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not what I say ? (47) Whosoever cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like. (48) He is like a man building a house, who dug and deepened, and laid the foundation on the rock ; and when the flood came, the river assailed that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded upon the rock. (49) And he who heareth, and doeth not, is like a man who built a house upon the ground, without a foundation, which the river assailed, and immediately it fell, and the downfall of that house was great.

§ 108. Not all those who say, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of God. Words perish and evaporate in space without reaching the ear of the Lord, when they are unaccompanied by acts. Be careful, therefore, always to practice what you preach, admire, or profess ; for it is not enough to admire the law of Jesus, and to say that it is perfect, if you make no effort to follow it, and to perfect yourselves in it. It is not enough to call yourselves Christians if your actions are opposed to the will of Christ. It is not enough to call yourselves Spiritists if your conduct remains unchanged ; nor is it of any avail to say, " We are mediums, and make use of our various medianimic faculties," if you do not practise the lessons which you have received, and do not endeavour with your whole heart to make these faculties useful in the cause of God, for the moral improvement of your brethren ; or set them the example by your constant, energetic, and sustained efforts for your own personal improvement. You should employ these powers with humility and disinterestedness, for the sole end of seriously, usefully, and effectively propagating the law of Jesus, and the sublime doctrine of the Spirits of the Lord, who come to explain this law, by freeing the spirit from the letter ; and to teach men to understand, love, and practise it, and thus prepare for the fulfilment of the promises of the Lord.

The practice of this law is necessary at the present day, especially for you, Spiritists. Let anyone who sets foot in this path, clearly understand that he cannot stop, and ought not to stray from it ; for to him much has been given, and from him much will be expected. He has no excuse, for the truth is no longer concealed from him by the thick veil of ignorance. The light has penetrated it, and his cold indifference will no longer serve as an excuse. Charity has drawn near him to warm him, and if his heart remains hard, it is because he himself willed it.

Much will be required of the Spiritist. Let him then prepare at once to give an exact account of what has been entrusted to him.

As soon as the last words were written, the medium was placed spontaneously under a new influence, and wrote in a different hand as follows :—

It is not enough to say that a system of morality is sublime, if you do not attempt to practise it. It is not enough to be a Christian, or even a Christian Spiritist, if you do not practise the morality which I teach. Then let those who would enter into the kingdom of my Father show themselves his children, with the heart and not with the lips ; and let them obey the instructions which they have received, and are still receiving from missionary spirits, according to my promises, with submission, zeal and confidence. These instructions are designed to teach all classes of men progressively, to lead them to truth, and to remind them of all that I have said unto them.

Let them say unto me, Lord, Lord ; but from the bottom of their hearts, and let their actions correspond to their words ; and the kingdom of the heavens shall be theirs.

In the name of Him whose protecting hand sustains the weak and humble, and humbles the proud and the powerful.

ELISABETH.

Then the writing again changed spontaneously, and the medium resumed the hand in which she had been writing before the last communication.

Bless the Lord for the favour that he has shown you, and ask him in your hearts to preserve to you the support of Him who has manifested to you to-day through his messenger. Persevere in the path on which you have entered, with faith and confidence, but above all, with earnest faith, and the Lord will extend his hand over you to remove the obstacles which might stop you.

JOHN, MATTHEW, LUKE.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 1-4. MARK,

CHAP. I.—VERSES 40-45. LUKE, CHAP. V.—

VERSES 12-16.

The Leper.

Matth. viii. (1) And when he came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him. (2) And behold a leper came and did obeisance

to him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. (3) And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. (4) And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man, but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses appointed, as a testimony unto them.

Mark i. (40) And a leper came to him, calling to him, and kneeling to him, and saying to him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. (41) And Jesus feeling compassion, stretched forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. (42) And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. (43) And he strictly charged him, and immediately sent him away. (44) And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man, but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses appointed, for a testimony unto them. (45) But he went out, and began to report many things, and to make the story known, so that Jesus could no more openly enter the city, but was without in desert places, and they came to him from all parts.

Luke v. (12) And it came to pass that when he was in one of the cities, behold a man full of leprosy, and seeing Jesus, fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. (13) And stretching forth his hand, he touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean; and immediately the leprosy departed from him. (14) And he charged him to tell no one; but go away and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing according to what Moses appointed, for a testimony unto them. (15) But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him, and large crowds flocked together to hear him, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. (16) And he withdrew himself into the deserts, and prayed.

§ 109. Jesus saw when men had faith, and rewarded it, but he also knew that the time had not yet come for the open proclamation of the mercies which he shed around him. It is the same at the present day. The Lord lends you his aid to cure the leprosy of your hearts; but all are not yet able to understand his mercy; hence we caution you to act with prudence. You may perceive from the indiscretion and disobedience of the leper that the benefits of the Lord cannot remain concealed.

Human magnetism is capable of effecting cures which you cannot yet understand; but the nearer man approaches spiritual life, the more he purifies himself, and thus brings himself into affinity with the magnetic fluids around him, the more he will control them, and be able to employ them for healing purposes. You do not yet know what man can accomplish by means of magnetism, and still less what he will be able to accomplish at a later period.


The instantaneous cure of the leper was only a natural event, due to the concentration of the fluids under the control of the powerful will of Jesus. These fluids penetrated his skin, and annihilated the impure substances which it contained, and which were not drawn into the system, and into the general circulation, for their inmost principle was destroyed by the purification of the bodily fluids; the tissue of the skin was instantaneously restored, and the sick man was healed. This is a "miracle" to human eyes, for it is a result that it would not yet be possible for man to obtain in his present state of moral impurity. When he will be capable of such an effort in accomplishing physical cures, his moral cure will also be effected, and your faith and submission will drive away the impure influences which prey upon your heart, and it will be clean in the sight of God.

We repeat that the more man purifies himself, the more will he be able to employ the magnetic fluids as healing agencies. The moral and physical purification of man will be effected by a slow and progressive revolution, and in a manner almost imperceptible to those who shall witness it; but the moral revolution should long precede the physical revolution.

What do your physicians do before attempting to purify the skin of a leper? They try to act upon the mass of the blood, and to free it from everything which corrupts it. We have a similar work to accomplish. Before your material organism can be improved, we must cleanse the source of your impurity. It is your body which keeps your soul captive, and the time will come when your soul will release itself, and raise your body into purified regions.

Jesus told the leper to show himself to the priest, and offer for his cleansing what Moses had appointed for a testimony unto them, so that he might return to ordinary life, since the lepers were driven away from their fellows. The priests had the right, if not the knowledge, to decide whether a man who had been afflicted with leprosy was cured, and might return to his friends.

Do not wonder that the leper could mix with the crowds



around Jesus to request and obtain his cure. Jesus wandered over the country, passing constantly from one place to another. You cannot compare your civil organization with that of so remote a period. The lepers were driven from the boundaries of the towns, but could not be forbidden the open country. They were separated from their friends, but were not shut up ; and there were as yet no places of refuge for the miseries and sufferings of the poor.

With regard to the offering, you must remember that everything in the law of Moses was symbolical. Just as the first-born of the flock was sacrificed to consecrate the first-born of the family, and as the offering of propitiation was sacrificed to atone for the sins of the people, thus lepers were required to bring their offering to the Lord, as a pledge of their purification, and in gratitude for the mercy shown to them. The offering was not determined by law, and the leper offered what he could afford—either fruit, a bird, or a lamb ; and he who offered most was then, as now, cleansed in the eyes of men. Does it not happen among you daily that the personal interest of a man biasses his judgment ?

It is said that Jesus was no longer able to show himself openly in the town on account of the public promulgation of his cure by the leper, but that he was without, in desert places, and that people flocked to him from all parts. This was because the crowd, who were more curious about material miracles than about the kingdom of the heavens, thronged around and impeded him ; and he needed space.

We have already explained the human expression, "He withdrew himself into the desert, and prayed." Whenever Jesus withdrew himself from the eyes of his disciples, they thought that he had retired to some secret place, to pass his time in prayer or fasting.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 5–13. LUKE,
CHAP. VII.—VERSES 1–10.

The Centurion.

Matthew viii. (5) And when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, calling to him ; (6) And saying, Lord, my servant was struck down in the house paralytic, suffering fearfully. (7) And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. (8) And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof ; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. (9) For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my slave, Do this, and he doeth it. (10) And when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to his followers, Verily I say unto you, I have not found such great faith, no, not in Israel. (11) And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens. (12) But the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the further darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (13) And Jesus said to the centurion, Go thy way, and let it be to thee as thou hast believed. And his servant was healed in the same hour.

Luke vii. (1) And when he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered into Capernaum. (2) And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. (3) And when he heard of Jesus, he sent to him the elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. (4) And when they came to Jesus, they besought him earnestly, saying, that he is a worthy man for whom he should do this. (5) For he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue. (6) Then Jesus went with them ; and when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof. (7) Therefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee ; but say the word, and my servant shall be healed. (8) For I also am a man set under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say to this, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my slave, Do this, and he doeth it. (9) And when Jesus heard these things he wondered at him, and turning to the crowd who were following him, he said, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. (10) And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant whole that had been sick.

§ 110. Have faith. God makes no difference between his creatures, whether they are gathered under one law or another. All earnest men are his children ; go therefore to him with confidence, whatever may be the human burden which you bear. Go to him, and he will relieve you ; show him your miseries and sufferings ; call him to your aid, and he will heal you ; let your faith be strong, and it will draw upon you the blessings of the Lord.

Jesus cured the centurion's servant by the magnetic principle; and all phenomena relative to material cures which are called "miraculous" or "miracles" spring from the same source. Paralysis arises from a congelation of the fluids which circulate in the human organism. The powerful will of Jesus altered these fluids by modifying and vivifying them afresh. Galvanism can give temporary movement to the nerves and muscles of a corpse; and when certain fluids which are diffused in the atmosphere are concentrated by magnetic action, they are capable of exerting a violent shock on the vital frame, which regenerates it. Men perceive a "miracle" in the power of him whose will alone was sufficient to produce these effects; but they may be explained by natural causes.

Just as the Lord has planted the earth beneath your feet with wholesome plants, of which you do not yet know all the healing properties, so also has he charged the atmosphere around you with strengthening, purifying, and regenerating properties, which you do not suspect, and which are still non-existent to you, for you cannot employ them with success until you have made the necessary studies. Moral studies alone can raise you to the height of knowledge which you wish to acquire, by delivering you from your brutal instincts. The purer man becomes, the greater mastery will he acquire over his will, his instincts, and his senses; and the nearer he approaches to perfection, the more will his power increase.

Nothing but the moral purification of man will make it possible for him to pursue the studies necessary to acquire a knowledge of the nature and properties of these magnetic fluids, and of the manner in which they must be employed for healing, according to the nature of diseases. The more the spirit frees itself from matter, the more its knowledge of subjects which are still obscure or unknown to man will extend and develop; but long before he is acquainted with the nature of the fluids, he will be able to use them with success, aided by the guardian spirits of humanity, who will be glad to prepare them for him by their secret

intervention, through spiritual magnetism, and, as it were, to place them in his hands, to be used as necessity requires.

The knowledge of these fluids will progress according to the moral state, and it will consequently not be complete until man shall have attained the degree of perfection which he may hope to acquire on earth.

Human magnetism must progress for a long time before attaining its perfection, when the power of the will of the spirit will be sufficient to combine or to disperse the fluids which man desires to act upon.

But the knowledge already acquired has effected some good, and has prepared the way for vast benefits, by enabling you at once to perceive hidden treasures, notwithstanding all obstacles, and to dive even into the bosom of the earth to obtain them. We do not speak here of riches, which man should despise as the instruments and means of pride, selfishness, and sensuality; but of those treasures which God has given him to restore his impaired health and strength.

We allude to the lucid somnambulism which has been produced and revealed by human magnetism; to the faculties of spiritual sight, and the instincts which the somnambulist acquires by disengagement under magnetic influence, and to the valuable remedies which his lucidity can and ought to procure for humanity from the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms. It can also pierce into the bosom of the earth, and perceive the deposits or products which are buried there.

Till the moral and physical purification of man has been accomplished, human magnetic action alone will rarely suffice for the cure of diseases. In most cases which are essentially physical or organic, it must be assisted and combined either with your human medical science, or with magnetic somnambulism, and the use of mineral, vegetable, and animal substances, with the healing properties of which you are either already acquainted, or which remained to be discovered.

You must know that additional remedies may be employed

in conjunction with the magnetic fluids, with good results. There is a sympathy between plants possessed of healing properties, and the fluids which they absorb. The plants become saturated with these fluids, and convey them into the organism. If you employ them in conjunction with human magnetism, their effects will be greatly increased ; and it is on this account that lucid somnambulists, freed from all external influence by magnetic disengagement, are very skilful in selecting medicinal plants. You should not reject any means of cure which the Lord has put into your hands. Medicine should not be regarded as a system, but rather as a method of restoring equilibrium to the organism when it is disturbed ; and all who desire to work for the physical restoration of humanity should devote themselves to profound and persevering studies, both theoretical and experimental, and should avail themselves either of human medical science, which has advanced far already, and is continually advancing ; or of human magnetism ; or of magnetic somnambulism, and should have recourse to all the means and resources which their studies may indicate. These may be derived both from the healing properties of mineral, vegetable and animal substances (especially vegetable), and also from the fluids with which the atmosphere around you is charged.

Although human magnetism alone will rarely suffice for the cure of purely physical disorders at present, yet you will find exceptional cases in which God will permit a man to precede his brethren. When a man is thus privileged on account of the elevation and purity which he has acquired, he will be aided secretly by superior spirits, and will accomplish cures which you look upon as impossible, by the power of his will, and by magnetic action. Such are the cures which have been termed "miracles."

§ III. What will be the destiny of the various existing systems of medicine ?

All medical systems should be combined into one only, and allied with human magnetism, and magnetic somnambulism, that their combination may lead to mutual aid, and

become the arsenal whence man may draw weapons to contend with disease, and to renew the health of his brethren.

Every system falls within the limits of the laws of nature ; including the principle of contraries and of similars ; human magnetism, and magnetic somnambulism.

It is the duty of man to employ study and experience to teach him to discern what cases require such and such remedies, that he may be enabled to restore equilibrium to the organism when it is interrupted, and to re-establish the harmony of the vital forces when it is impaired.

Man should seek for the source of the evil, and more especially try to discover the moral source of all physical and organic sufferings. A man cannot blame secret sorrows or evil tendencies if he breaks his arm ; but if you search the depths of the heart and conscience in the numerous evils which afflict humanity, you will see the root of the tree which spreads over all the members. The heart or soul is nearly always affected, and this results in disturbance of the nervous system, which is the source of all diseases and infirmities. If you inquire into the antecedents of the sufferer, you will often find that secret remorse or sorrow has impaired the health by vitiating the blood, which ought to be pure when it circulates in the veins.

Physicians (we speak to all who devote themselves to the relief of their brethren), be clear-sighted, and do not be as unskilful in applying a remedy to the sores of your patients, as the child who ties a bandage round a doll, supposing it to be a human being.

§ 112. What is the meaning of Matthew viii. 11—"Many shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens?" Please to explain the application of this passage, both as spoken by Jesus to his disciples, and as regards the present era of Spiritism in connection with v. 10 and Luke vii. 9—"Verily I say unto you, that I have not found such great faith, no, not in Israel."

It was a lesson designed to teach the Jews to abandon the idea that they alone were the children of God, and that they alone could expect his blessings. Jesus taught them that, no matter who a man was, or whence he came, he was

truly the son of God, if he had faith ; but that those who regarded themselves as entitled to special privileges because they belonged to the great Jewish race, would be rejected if they did not follow the path traced out by the Lord, and which Moses showed them when he called upon them to love God, and to love their neighbour as themselves.

You may apply this lesson to the Roman or any other Church which asserts that those who do not conform to her authority or doctrines are not only cast out of her communion, but rejected by God. She is proud of the wealth which has been conferred upon her, and will not admit that she should share it with others, but drives away the little dog which seeks to feed on the crumbs which have fallen from her table, without reflecting that he who has raised her up may also cast her down.

We allude here to the words of the Canaanitish woman whom Jesus led to answer him in words which should instruct both the present and the future : " Does not the little dog eat the crumbs which have fallen from his master's table ?"

The Church was founded to continue the work of the first Christians, and she began with zeal, self-renunciation, and courage ; but success made her torpid, and she grew accustomed to honour and greatness. She, who should have set an example to the children of the Lord, has sacrificed to Mammon. She has forgotten the humility of her Head, who instituted the Gospel law which she is called upon to teach ; and in her pride she repulses those who seek to open her eyes. The bandage which she has bound over them is thick and hard to tear ; but take courage, Spiritists, for it is the will of God that you shall succeed. The work will not be accomplished in a day, for each year of the centuries which have passed has added its own layer of obscurity. Consequently, the scales which conceal the light must be stripped off layer by layer.

The Lord sends his spirits, or angels, to aid you in this task. They will point out to you the means ; but you must be docile, and above all prudent, for if you are too hasty,

you will retard the recovery. Physicians, you have an important cure to effect, and therefore you must consult and work together, and restore the brightness of day to the Church, who would fain spread light around her, but who languishes in the darkness that she herself has made.*

The Lord created her pure, and he will purify everything in her which is corrupt. The temple of Christ is your planet; all men who practise his sublime and simple morality are its members, and its priests are all those pure hearts who strive to lead wandering spirits back to the Great Shepherd.

§ 113. Please to explain Matthew viii. 12—"But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Those who have received the word of God, and have not made such good use of it as they ought to have done, will be rejected, and will then clearly perceive the error into which they have fallen. How many such there have been, and still are, who are groaning over their faults, but who believed themselves saved simply because they believed that they had a right to absolve or to condemn, and have been weighed in the same balances in which they weighed others.

You know that the expressions "weeping and gnashing of teeth" are allegorical, and refer to the moral sufferings of the guilty spirit in the errant state. These sufferings are proportioned to his offences, and are inflicted on him solely for his moral improvement and progress. All references to future suffering refer exclusively to the moral sufferings of the guilty and repentant spirit, which are always and inevitably followed by re-incarnation.

LUKE, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 11-17.

The Widow's Son.

(11) And it came to pass the day after that he went into the city called Nain, and many of his disciples went with him, and a large crowd. (12) And when he approached the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she

* These words were medianimically dictated in May, 1862.

was a widow, and there was a considerable crowd from the city with her. (13) And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said, Do not weep. (14) And he came and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still; and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. (15) And the dead man sat up, and began to speak; and he delivered him to his mother. (16) And fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet has arisen among us; and the Lord hath looked upon his people. (17) And this report of him went forth throughout all Judæa, and into all the surrounding country.

§ 114. You know the connection which subsists between the spirit and the body when the latter is separated from its animating intelligence by sleep, swooning, or catalepsy. The spirit recovers a temporary and restricted liberty, but is connected with the body which it has left by an electric cord, which is the fluidic link of the perispirit, and which recalls it as soon as the necessities of human life require.

There is no material waking when actual death has taken place, and the immutable will of the Lord never forces the spirit to unite with corruption. As soon as the link between the spirit and body is broken, the matter begins to decay, even when it appears to human eyes that the organic life is not yet extinct. These effects exist, although your science is not yet able to demonstrate their symptoms and results.

In such cases as that of the widow's son, the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus, the link connecting the spirit and the body had not yet been severed. The bystanders supposed that they were really dead; but their death was only apparent. Jesus recalled the prisoner who had quitted his fleshly abode, and he immediately obeyed and returned. All such events, both in the Old and New Testament are to be explained in a similar manner.*

The widow's son returned submissively to his prison of flesh. The spirits whose concurrence was necessary in any of the works which Jesus was about to accomplish, and which were to be recorded in the Gospels for the instruction of mankind, were placed by their own desire, and under the circumstances required in the path of Jesus, when they accepted their mission, and were incarnated. Among these were the various

* See an article by the Translator (written before reading the present commentary) in the *Truthseeker* for 1875, vol. xiii. pp. 200, 201, 290.—
TRANSL.

persons whom "he raised from the dead," who were all submissive and devoted to his will.

The widow's son was in a completely cataleptic state. Total catalepsy is the only kind of insensibility which could present all the appearances of death for so long a time as to be taken for real. The Hebrews were not accustomed to use coffins, and Jesus touched the body in order to stop the procession. His powerful will, expressed in the words, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise," recalled the spirit. The body immediately awoke from its long sleep, and recovered strength and reason as soon as the spirit was recalled, by the beneficent magnetic influence which emanated from the Master.

The spirit of the widow's son was ready to return to his body at the command of Jesus ; but the vitality of the body had become greatly impaired through the absence of the spirit, and the increasing weakness of the fluidic link. It therefore needed the magnetic power of the Master to restore its strength and vitality immediately, by re-establishing the harmony of the vital forces.

No man in whom the spirit and perisprit have been completely separated from the body by real death, or the rupture of the fluidic link, can ever recover his corporeal human life by the spirit and perisprit returning to the corpse. When the spirit is thus released from the body, it returns to its former spiritual life, and can only return to corporeal human life through reincarnation, according to the laws of your world.

The immutable will of God would never compel the spirit to unite itself to the corruptible corpse which it has left. He never departs from the natural laws regulating spiritual action on your world and on all others. In all cases in which persons are said to have been "raised from the dead," whether in the Old or New Testament, you must understand that the spirit returned to the body, which it had not entirely abandoned. In all such cases it still remained connected with the body by the fluidic link of the perisprit, and actual death had not taken place. The supposed death was only apparent, and was the consequence of complete catalepsy, though it appeared to be real to human eyes.

The funeral procession of the widow's son was proceeding silently on its way when Jesus stopped it, and said to the mother, as he said to those who were weeping and lamenting in the house of Jairus, "Do not weep." When the procession halted, he said, "Young man, Arise," as he said to the daughter of Jairus, "Young girl, Arise!" After this, he withdrew.

None of the followers, or any of those who formed part of the procession, said a single word to Jesus in the presence of his disciples. No one said that the widow's son was dead, and it was therefore unnecessary for Jesus to give any explanation, which might be understood in future times, of the spiritual import of the event which had just taken place. Those who witnessed or heard of the event regarded it as a miracle, and they were intentionally permitted by the silence of Jesus to put their own interpretations upon it. It conduced to the acceptance of his mission, and to great results then and afterwards; and it was left to be explained by the present revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which Jesus foretold and promised.

Those who accompanied the procession, the disciples, the crowd which followed them, and those who heard of the event, all believed in the actual death and resurrection of the widow's son. They regarded him as dead, and as having been recalled to life by Jesus, in the literal sense which their ignorance, prejudices, and traditions led them to attach to the words.

But this belief resulted solely from human opinions and impressions; for Jesus said nothing about the real state of the young man. The Evangelists who recorded the fact, related the words and actions of Jesus, and also the human opinions, impressions, and interpretations relating to the event, which they themselves shared. Thus they recorded it in a manner which all could understand, and spoke of the widow's son as "a dead man" (v. 12), and "he who was dead" (v. 15).

The answer to the question as to whether the young man was actually dead or not, was left to human interpretations, until your own times. The present revelation explains the real state of him whom men regarded as dead, and the real

nature of the act performed by Jesus. The progress of human science, the study and observation of magnetism and magnetic somnambulism, and the guiding torch of spiritual science, enable you to understand the explanation.

We shall give you further explanations at the proper time respecting the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus ; but will make a few preliminary remarks here. In the case of the daughter of Jairus, the servants who came to meet the chief of the synagogue said to him in the presence of Jesus, his disciples, and the crowd, "Your daughter is dead ; trouble not the Master." But when Jesus came to the house of Jairus, he said to those who wept and lamented, "Weep not ;" and to the flute-players, and the crowd of people who were making a noise, "Withdraw, for the young girl is not dead, but sleepeth." Those present received his words with ridicule, "knowing," say the historians, "that she was dead." And yet this opinion of the ignorant crowd has prevailed over the express declaration of the Master to the contrary ! The disciples saw only a "miracle" in the act of Jesus, since they were unable either to explain or to comprehend it ; and their opinion lasted for centuries ; in fact, until your own times, when incredulity has attacked this opinion in its turn, and has rejected the fact, because it cannot explain it, and does not believe in the "miracle." The Church still teaches the "death" and "resurrection" of the daughter of Jairus in the literal sense which men attach to the words, by the return of the spirit to the corpse.

But it was necessary that these opinions should be held for a time, for they have contributed to the advancement of humanity. Jesus knew the state of intelligence and the necessities and aspirations of the period, and knew that this human opinion would prevail. He therefore provided for the future by saying, "The young girl is not dead, but sleepeth," and left the full explanation of the event, which was regarded as a miracle, till the time of the present revelation.

In the case of Lazarus, the language of Jesus was appropriate to the situation. He expressed himself in such a manner that his words were useful at the time, and prepara-

tory for the future ; and he left it to the present revelation to give you the full spiritual explanation of the event.

Jesus said, as in the case of the daughter of Jairus, "This illness is not unto death ; our friend Lazareth sleepeth, and I am going to awake him out of his sleep." He only said, "Lazarus is dead," in reply to the observation of his disciples, "If he sleepeth, he shall do well."

Lazarus was dead to the eyes of men, and all regarded him as dead, except Jesus. Jesus said that he was asleep, and that he would awaken him ; he did not say that he would resuscitate him in the strict sense, by the return of the spirit to the corpse which it had left. The sickness of Lazarus was not unto death ; and consequently death had not taken place.

We will defer for the present the full explanation of the words, "Lazarus is dead," and the cause of the human opinion of Martha, who believed, like others, that Lazarus was dead, and that his corpse was already beginning to decompose, because he had been dead four days.

During the earthly mission of Jesus, he arranged everything in the manner which would be most useful for the present, as well as for the future. At the same time, he prepared the foundation, elements, and means of the future explanations of his actions and words, in spirit and in truth, in such a manner that each age and period received as much truth as it was able to assimilate.

In reading the Gospels, you must be careful never to confound the words and actions of the Master with the human opinions, inferences, and interpretations which belong to the age when they were written, and the surroundings amid which Jesus accomplished his earthly mission. Never take the words of the Master literally, when they contradict each other, in trying to estimate the real character of his actions, or to ascertain the real idea underlying his expressions. In such cases, interpret his words in the spiritual sense, and take them as they should be understood, without separating them from each other, so that, when they are taken in their entirety, they shall form an harmonious whole.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 14–17. MARK,
CHAP. I.—VERSES 29–34. LUKE, CHAP. IV.
VERSES 38–41.

Cure of Peter's Mother-in-Law.—Healing the Sick.

Matth. viii. (14) And Jesus, coming into the house of Peter, saw his mother-in-law lying down sick of a fever. (15) And he touched her hand and the fever left her, and she rose up, and ministered to them. (16) And in the evening, they brought many demoniacs to him, and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick. (17) That the word spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, He has taken our infirmities and carried away our diseases.

Mark i. (29) And immediately on leaving the synagogue, he went into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. (30) And the mother-in-law of Simon was ill of a fever, and immediately they tell him about her. (31) And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. (32) And in the evening, when the sun set, they brought to him all those who were sick and those who were possessed with demons. (33) And the whole city was gathered together before the door. (34) And he healed many who were ill with all sorts of diseases, and cast out many demons, and did not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

Luke iv. (38) And he rose and left the synagogue, and went out into the house of Simon, and Simon's mother-in-law was laid up with a very great fever, and they besought him for her. (39) And standing over her, he rebuked the fever, and it left her, and forthwith she arose and ministered unto them. (40) And when the sun was setting, all that had any sick with various diseases, brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. (41) And demons came forth from many, crying out, and saying, Thou art the Christ, the Son of God. And he rebuked them, and did not permit them to speak, for they knew that he was the Christ.

§ 15. There were always physical diseases and infirmities to be healed, and subjugations, both corporeal and corporeal and moral, to be terminated. The means employed to cure diseases and to release the subjugated always served for the instruction of unbelievers.

Magnetic action was the agency which cured Peter's mother-in-law, as well as the other sick persons who were brought to Jesus at sunset. Jesus took the sick woman's hand, and his will gave this magnetic contact sufficient power to dispel the disease. You are not to suppose that Jesus employed different fluids specially appropriated to each disease which he cured. The fluids are nearly similar, and

the two principal classes are purifying and regenerating fluids, suited to act on the vital system when it has become diseased ; and strengthening fluids, fitted to restore the mechanical action to the muscles and nerves. Jesus always applied the necessary remedy to every case.

But you must not think that a magnetizer cannot act safely in attempting cures, in proportion to his elevation, purity, and magnetic faculties, when he has faith, and desires to do good, although he is unacquainted with the purifying or strengthening effects of the fluids which he employs. He condenses the fluids by his own vital force ; but he never works alone. The guardian spirits of humanity who assist him select the fluids, and dispose them so as to produce the desired effect, so far as it is permitted. They carry out his good intentions according to the designs of the Master.

With regard to the moral cures which Jesus effected on those who were subjugated, we have already explained (§ 74) that he drove away the evil spirits by his superior power, which inferior spirits were unable to resist when he wished to employ it.

Jesus did not permit the evil spirits to say that they knew him to be the Christ, for everything must come in due time. If he had been recognized earlier, the persecution of the Scribes, Pharisees, and authorities of the Church, would have begun sooner. You must not forget that the Master had the foreknowledge of events of which the evil spirits were ignorant, and he gave them orders in accordance with the object which he wished to attain.

Jesus did not display himself to the evil spirits clothed in the glory of the Holy One of God, the Lord and Master of your planet and its humanity. He simply showed them his spirit (compare § 14), but the mere force of his will was enough to cause them to recognize his power. When the evil spirits who departed from those whom they had subjugated, rendered them speaking mediums, and caused them to exclaim "Thou art the Son of God," they recognized in Jesus the signs of a superior spirit, and the superior spirits are, like all others, the children of the Almighty, and the

sons of the Most High. When they recognized Jesus to be the Son of God, they did not imply more than Jesus himself, with regard to men, when he called them "my brethren," and taught them to address the Lord God as "Our Father."

Those who attach special importance to this expression as applied to Jesus, know how slight their argument is. They dare only appeal to it with hesitation, and not one of them believes in his heart the doctrine which he lays down as an article of faith.

The apparent human life of Jesus, and his earthly mission, which was devoted to teaching and example, were the fulfilment of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "He has taken our infirmities, and has carried away our diseases." He descended among men to teach them to suffer in view of their regeneration; he cured the evils which he met with on his path, and, by way of teaching and example, he appeared to men to endure those which were heaped upon himself.

MARK, CHAP. I.—VERSES 35-39. LUKE, CHAP. IV.
VERSES 42-44.

Jesus in the Desert.

Mark i. (35) And rising up very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he went out and came to a desert place, and there prayed. (36) And Simon and those with him followed him closely. (37) And when they had found him, they say unto him, All are seeking for thee. (38) And he saith unto them, Let us go into the adjoining villages, that I may preach there also, for I came out for this. (39) And he was preaching and casting out demons in their synagogues throughout all Galilee.

Luke iv. (42) And when it was day, he went out and journeyed into a desert place, and the crowds sought for him, and came to him, and detained him, that he should not depart from them. (43) And he said unto them, I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities, for I was sent for this. (44) And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

§ 116. You must always remember that the human narratives of the Evangelists, although written under medianimic influence and inspiration, reflect the opinions held by the Apostles, the disciples, and the multitude respecting the humanity of Jesus. Jesus was not subjected to the material necessities of humanity, but merely appeared to human eyes to

be so. There was no occasion for him to rest at night, but his followers believed that he rose up very early ; and his activity was a lesson to them not to waste time in repose or personal indulgence. Whenever Jesus withdrew from the eyes of men, he disappeared, and retired to the superior regions ; but his followers thought that he had retired into the desert to watch and pray ; and this taught them that they should always be ready to appear before the Lord. In the present instance, Jesus retired to the superior regions during the night, but reappeared, and was seen going out very early in the morning, that his disciples and the multitude might know in what direction to follow to rejoin him. When Simon and his companions found him, he had already resumed his apparently human perispritic body.

The words which he addressed to the multitude when they wished to detain him, likewise contain a lesson for all the Apostles of the Gospel, and of the New Revelation. They teach them that they should never allow themselves to be detained anywhere after their task is completed, for their apostolical mission belongs to all their brethren.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 18–22. LUKE,
CHAP. IX.—VERSES 57–62.

The Disciples of Jesus.

Matth. viii. (18) And Jesus seeing large crowds around him, gave command to depart to the other side. (19) And one of the scribes came to him, and said, Teacher, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. (20) And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head. (21) And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. (22) And Jesus said to him, Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.

Luke ix. (57) And it came to pass that while they were going along the road, a certain man said to him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. (58) And Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes and the birds of heaven have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. (59) And he said to another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. (60) And Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their own dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. (61) And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee, but suffer me first to take leave of those in my house. (62) And Jesus said to him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

§ 117. In thus speaking, Jesus certainly did not teach men that they could not walk in his ways, and preach the kingdom of God (that is, show others the path of eternal life), without renouncing the necessities of human existence. He did not forbid men food or drink, or command them to absent themselves when duty called them to pay the last honours to one who was bound to them by love or friendship. He calls on no one to break or renounce his family ties, or to omit or neglect his duties.

Man should seek for the spirit ; but he often runs blindly against the letter. Those who comment on the words of Jesus have erred in admitting symbol or Oriental hyperbole in some cases and not in others. They have falsified or modified his ideas, according to the age, and have thus made his words teach enormities at which man himself should blush.

Always seek for the spirit veiled under the letter in the words of Jesus. You will always find them to contain a lesson of vast justice, love, devotion, and charity, and a light beaming ever more clearly on the path of progress. You will thus learn to understand all his sayings in spirit and in truth, according to the Spirit which quickeneth, and not according to the letter which killeth. The general design of the verses at the head of this section was to teach men to fulfil the duties imposed on them by the Master, before all things. Every word of Jesus might receive a separate explanation, for each includes some lesson or precept.

His reply to the scribe teaches men how little importance they ought to attach to the comforts of human life when they desire to follow the Master, and walk in his steps. Man should not resign himself to ease and repose. The motive powers of life are activity, energy, and confidence. Jesus taught men to renounce all things, and never to permit their private interests to receive an undue proportion of their attention.

When another disciple asked leave to go and bury his father, Jesus replied, "Let the dead bury their own dead ; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." But he did not say, "Cast the mortal remains of those whom you

have loved, and who were bound to you by love and friendship, to the dogs and vultures." Do you throw away the clothes which they wore, or the objects which they prized? Surely not.

Do not treat dead bodies worse than the trifles which remind you of those whom you have loved. Do not let them be profaned, for the spirit has been there, although it has departed. Bury your dead, lest their exhalations should corrupt the air; but do not turn the funeral into an act of superstition, or, still worse, an occasion of ostentation. How many think more of a grand funeral than of the memory of those whose bodies are carried along with so much pomp! Ah! let the dead bury their dead, but while you pay the covering the attention due to an object which the deceased has loved, love him who has left this dead body with perfect affection. Let your loving thoughts be given to him, and let your ceremonies consist of heartfelt prayers. Do not let your affection cool towards him who has left his body, as his affection has cooled towards the body itself. Go to your cemeteries, and there follow the descending progress of affection and remembrance. See the fresh flowers fading gradually until no trace of them is left, and behold the moss and parasites wearing away the rock, as the worm devours the corpse. You will then understand that it is not material death which attracts men. What is the dead body of man? A mass of matter which the worms destroy; a portion of the universal Whole which must be decomposed and recombined with it. Do not therefore attach a childish importance to these remains which belong to the earth. The spirit alone which animated the body does not perish; it alone sees, feels, loves, and suffers.

The *dead* of whom Jesus spoke are those who live only for the body, and not by or for the spirit. To these the body is everything, and the spirit is nothing. They have ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to understand; and yet they neither hear, see, nor understand, for they are unable to do either. Leave those who are thus dead to the spirit to themselves. They live for the body, and have no other consolation; let them make the most of this corruptible

mass ; but go you, and preach eternal life. Console, support, and exhort men, and lead them into the way of life, where all is light and perfume.

When Jesus said, "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God," he spoke to the disciple who asked permission to take leave of those who were at his house, before following him. Let not man, in seeking for the spirit, stumble against the letter. Many have accused Jesus of thus teaching heartlessness and the rupture of family ties, but how far was such a thought from his idea ! Do you suppose that Jesus, who was all love and devotion, would have taught egotism ? He said to men, "Do not look behind when you have entered on the right road, for you will always find some bond behind you to draw you back." Reflect well before setting out, and putting the plough into the furrow ; but as soon as you have done so, and know that it is turning up the soil where the good seed should fall, do not stop again, but march forwards.

As soon as these words were written, the medium was placed spontaneously under a new medianimic influence, and wrote as follows in a different hand :—

Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. Leave those who are incapable of seeing the light to themselves, and bear it first to those who desire it. Whoever has put his hand to the plough, and looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of God. No selfish or personal considerations ought to turn you back and lead you to abandon the work which you have to accomplish. You have begun to advance, therefore continue your course, for to stop is to withdraw from it.

We then spoke to the purified spirits who preside over this work, and the spirit who had just manifested, as follows :—"Deign to allow us to thank you for your goodness in desiring to enlighten us, and to give us light and truth. May God grant us grace to progress constantly towards that infinite love which leads to him, and towards that charity which makes itself universal in the vastness of its works." Then the medium wrote spontaneously in the same handwriting as follows :—

JESUS blesses you.

Then the medium wrote, in the same hand in which the former communications had been written :—

A spirit intermediate between Jesus and yourselves has manifested, and has transmitted to you the Master's word, like a representative authorized to sign for him. You may understand it better if we say, it is the Monarch's word transcribed by the secretary, but sealed with his arms. You know the relationship which exists between men and their spirit guides. The man of your planet is of too material a nature to enter into fluidic relations with spirits of a very superior order. Consequently the superior Head employs more or less elevated spirits, according to the extremes which he desires to connect, to transmit his words. His vigilant tenderness regards you all with equal eye, and his love takes notice of your smallest efforts ; but just as Jesus is elevated too high above the spirits who are your protecting guides, for them to receive his personal instructions, so also you require intermediate agencies between Jesus and yourselves. The spirit who transmitted the Master's words to you is one of those who receive his orders, and diffuse light and knowledge under his directions. May your gratitude be profound !

May the blessing of the Lord descend on those who endeavour to subject their nature to his laws. Patience, courage, perseverance, faith and love !

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN.

With the concurrence of the Apostles.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 23-27. MARK,

CHAP. IV.—VERSES 35-41. LUKE,

CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 22-25.

The Tempest calmed.

Matth. viii. (23) And when he entered into the boat, his disciples followed him. (24) And behold there was a great tempest in the sea, so that the boat was covered by the waves, and he was asleep. (25) And his disciples came to him and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish. (26) And he says to them, Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith ? Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a very great calm. (27) And the men wondered, saying, Of what nature is this man, that even the winds and the sea obey him ?

Mark iv. (35) And he saith unto them on the evening of the same

day, Let us cross over to the other side. (36) And having sent away the crowd, they took him as he was in the boat, and there were other boats with him. (37) And there arose a very great storm of wind, and the waves dashed into the boat, so that it presently began to fill. (38) And he was sleeping on a pillow at the stern, and they wake him up, and say unto him, Teacher, carest thou not that we perish? (39) And he arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind lulled, and there was a very great calm. (40) And he said to them, Why are ye faint-hearted? How is it that ye have no faith? (41) And they feared with great fear, and said to each other, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Luke viii. (22) And it happened one day that he went in a boat, and his disciples with him, and he said unto them, Let us cross over to the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. (23) And as they sailed, he fell asleep, and a storm of wind came down on the lake, and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. (24) And they came to him and awoke him, saying, Master, Master, we perish. And he arose and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water, and it ceased, and there was a calm. (25) And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they feared and wondered, and said to one another, Who then is this, who commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?

§ 118. You know that Jesus no more needed sleep than any other necessity of human life. His companions supposed him to be asleep, and it appeared to them that they awoke him. The fact was that he desired to act strongly on his disciples' imagination, and to develop their faith more and more by displaying his power over the elements. The spirits who rule over the waters and winds were obedient to him, like all others; and they prepared every thing to terrify the disciples of their Master, and afterwards quietly obeyed his orders when he commanded them to cease.

We cannot yet explain to you how the spirits produced the sudden squall or tempest, and then lulled it, for it would be beyond the present limits of your intelligence.

Every kingdom in nature is subject to the direction of spirits specially entrusted with its care. Every spirit makes use of the agencies which the Lord has put into his power. These effects are always based on the action of the spirit on the fluids. The collision of fluids causes you to feel the influence of the winds, and magnetic attraction raises the masses of water, which subside into calmness again when this attraction is reduced. Not that every wave of the ocean is subject to the action of a spirit who is commis-

sioned to move it, like a child's toy ; but the spirits who govern these effects concentrate the attractive fluids at the points where the tempest is about to rise.

Everything has a cause which we can explain, but many things must still remain obscure to you. Content yourselves with the little that the state of your intelligence permits us to teach you, and endeavour one day to obtain more by means of study, labour, and observation, which you should practise with unselfish humility of mind and soul, and with faith, love, and the desire of progress.

The spirits entrusted with the control of the various departments of nature, among whom are those who control the winds and waves, are purified spirits, specially appointed for the duty, and employing good spirits inferior to themselves, when their assistance is necessary. Know that everything in nature is due to magnetism, and the operation of magnetic attraction and impulse, under spirit action. God never entrusts his power except to those who have deserved it ; and he delegates the applications and workings of the immutable laws that he has established from all eternity for the control of human life and harmony, as well as for the accomplishment of his designs and providence, only to spirits whom he knows to be both capable and worthy.

§ 119. Human science enables us to foretell the place and time of meteorological and atmospheric phenomena. This has led some to regard tempests and shipwrecks as the result of blind force and necessity, and to see nothing but accident in the death of those who perish by shipwreck : and such persons necessarily deny the agency of God, and of the spirits to whom he has delegated his power, in the production of these phenomena.

Has human science also been able to determine who will fall victims, at least in appearance, to these effects ?

We say in appearance ; for, as we will explain presently, they are only voluntary victims, being led there by their choice of experiences, and by the influence of their own spirits, and all that has taken place is the necessary consequence of the experience or expiation which they have chosen.

Everything in the divine laws is great and wise ; it is only

yourselves, O men, whose proud capacity of comprehension is so insignificant.

Your science will one day enable you to foretell the exact moment of the occurrence of natural phenomena. Your moral, physical, and intellectual elevation will then be so great that you will no longer need to suffer any such trials or expiations as shipwreck. It is inevitable that this will take place, for everything in the divine work moves regularly forward.

A day will come when all the cases which surprise you to-day will become familiar to you, from your having attained a sufficient elevation; but spirit action will nevertheless continue to exist. If your science was able to destroy it, it would also destroy the existence of God, by saying, "We have foretold tempests, and consequently they take place by necessity. Natural phenomena are thus proved to be only the result of a blind Necessity, and not the work of a Supreme Intelligence, and of his providence. It is said that this is carried out by active and devoted spirits, who thus regulate and apply the natural laws which God has established from all eternity. God is said to act thus by his free and immediate will, in the sense that he acts in accordance with these laws themselves, which he directs, applies, carries out, and executes freely, for physical, moral, and intellectual progress in life and universal harmony."

This would be to admit the existence of laws, to predict and observe their use, application, and effects, and to deny the Law-giver who has established them, because he is invisible, like the agents whom he has commissioned to use and apply them, to regulate their action, and to carry them out according to the conditions, rules, and methods which he has placed at their disposal, and established for those laws. God is the Law-giver, and his agents are the pure spirits who approach the Fire of Omnipotence. They have also submissive and devoted agents in the good and superior spirits, according to the spirit hierarchy. This would be to admit the existence of a machine, to predict and observe the effects which the Maker intended it to exhibit, and to deny both

the Artificer who made the machine and the appointed agents who work it. God is the Artificer, and the spirits are his agents.

No, the course of nature is regular, and just as man is always warned of his approaching death by the circumstances or events which prepare, precede, and accomplish it, and is consequently led to expect it when it comes ; thus in the laws of nature, the course of all events is indicated by certain signs which you will understand in due time.

Tempests, like floods, atmospheric disturbances, and all the phenomena of nature, are guided by spirits appointed to the duty ; but they follow the course which the Lord has traced out for them to prepare, direct, and accomplish, by the methods which he has put into their power, according to natural law.

Although science will one day be able to fix the exact moment of natural phenomena, you must not expect to predict atmospheric phenomena with as much accuracy as the hand of a watch fixes the hour. You will often be deceived in your calculations, but you will always be able to foresee the approximate time ; and when human pride condescends to do so, you will be able to take needful precautions for the safety of your houses and crops, and to turn events previously regarded as calamities to the profit of humanity.

Nothing in nature is purposeless, and your ignorance alone hinders you from understanding it. There is one sense in which man is justified in styling himself the king of creation, for there is nothing secret which shall not be known, and nothing hidden which shall not be revealed, in proportion to man's physical, moral, and intellectual elevation, according to the slow but regular law of progress ; for the divine goodness has subjected everything to his empire. But he must learn to govern like his Lord ; like a father, and not as a tyrant. He must first break the chains of his brethren, and he will then learn to forge chains for the ocean. He must be always ready to share with his brethren, with his whole heart, and he will then learn to preserve his crops from the hail, the winds, and the scorching rays of the sun ;

in short, he must attain to moral perfection before he can effect the physical perfection of his planet.

The ages which pass so slowly over all, each bring you their share of intellectual and moral progress. Yes, moral; for notwithstanding all your imperfections, you are advancing towards that which is good. You are disposed to accept, even blindly, changes which might improve the condition of your species. We are now trying to remove part of the dimness which still clouds your sight, by the New Revelation, with the aid of the missionary spirits who are incarnated among you. When you see more clearly, you will tread the path of progress with a strong firm step, and you will then make gigantic advances. Courage, courage, good labourers! The Master will visit his vine, and return satisfied, for he will find his labourers at work. Take courage, and persevere!

Everything in nature must follow a regular course, and your science is still very far from being what it ought to become. The Lord has given man great powers, but he must show himself worthy to exercise them. Everything in the divine work is wise, and everything in nature has its purpose and conduces to the grand end through the action of the spirits of the Lord, according to his will, and under the control of his immutable laws. Everything, through all the phenomena of nature, contributes to the progress of your planet and all things therein; everything conduces to the progress of humanity, and to the accomplishment of your experiences and expiations, which are one of the elements and means of progress in this work. The men who perish in a shipwreck were led there by their choice of experiences, and the result would take place whether the cause was foreseen by man or not.

He who has chosen to die a violent death, preceded by the agonies and uncertainties which accompany the last moments of a shipwrecked man, and has to struggle at the last hour between submission to the Creator, resignation, remorse for past offences, and hope in the divine goodness; and the despair, blasphemy, and mad fury which some

exhibit in such moments of terror, will be led by the direction which he has given to his own spirit to choose one ship rather than another, to engage in some business which compels him to set out at a given time, or even to count on a lucky accident, chance, his good star, &c. He will set out because he regains knowledge of his serious duties in the spiritual state during the disengagement caused by sleep, and his spirit renews its resolution to lead his body to the place where they will both terminate their experiences—the body by returning to the general mass of matter, and the spirit by escaping from its slavery, and regaining its liberty. When such a resolution is renewed, the remembrance is lost in the waking state, and leaves behind it a vague impression, which constitutes the elements of what man calls inspiration ; the will which determines his actions.

Thus, like the man who perishes in a shipwreck, the man whose house is burned does not foresee the time, and the workman who toils in mines or quarries does not foresee the moment when he will be destroyed by an explosion or a fall of rock ; and yet they perish in the fire or in the explosion. Why is this ? Because, like the shipwrecked man, they have chosen to die a violent death, preceded by the sufferings and uncertainties which accompany death by fire or by explosion, and to struggle at this last hour between the conflicting emotions of submission and despair. They also, like the shipwrecked man, have been led to their fate by their own spirit. He who dies by fire has chosen one house rather than another before the given time ; and he whose calling leads him to work in mines and quarries, has also chosen to work in one place rather than another at the appointed time.

Those will perish by shipwreck, fire, or explosion, who have reached the end of their earthly experiences, and also because such was the trial or expiation which they themselves had selected.*

* Bunyan was on sentry duty one night at the siege of Leicester, when a comrade took his place at his own request, and was shot dead. Similar instances are innumerable.—TRANSL.

Those who are destined to escape death, because the end of their experiences has not yet arrived, will escape. Means of safety are provided for them under the influence of the guardian spirits. Do you not see two men falling together in the same manner, and under the same circumstances? One is killed by the fall, and the other survives, and you say, "He has been miraculously saved."

When all perish in a shipwreck, a fire, or explosions in mines, it is because they had all arrived at the end of their experiences, and had themselves chosen this trial or expiation. Do you not see many men die on your earth on the same day and hour?

Under whatever circumstances death takes place, it is always because the period for the termination of the earthly experiences of a man has arrived. All these events take place under the eyes of men without their seeking to investigate either the causes of the death, or the causes and influences which prepare the means of escape, whatever they may be, in such a manner that everything is accomplished which ought to take place.

Know that God never trusts events to what you call chance. Everything regarding the termination of your experiences and expiations takes place by means of your own spirit, and under spirit influence. Everything has its cause, and the guilty spirit often chooses the penalty of retaliation. He who has committed a wilful murder in a previous existence, may ask the goodness and justice of the Lord to permit him to expire in slow torture, when his agonies purify him, and reconcile him to him whom he had offended. What we have just said respecting the so-called inevitable moment of death, and its connection with the free will of man, must not be isolated from what we shall explain when we consider the Fifth Commandment.

In the present inferior condition of your planet, war, pestilence, and famine conduce to the progress of nations, for they contribute to the accomplishment of trials and expiations, and the development of civilization, science, and moral and intellectual progress, by opening up paths of activity,

and leading to the practice of devotion and charity. Those who fall victims to these calamities are voluntary sufferers, for they have chosen, as a trial, expiation, or mission, to be born, or to find themselves living under circumstances where they are exposed to what you call visitations of Providence. These are really scourges in the sense that they destroy great and small alike, and thus remind men that all heads are equal before the Divine Power, and that when they are once fallen, they all bite the dust. Therefore do not lament when you see a country suffering under public calamity, but say, "Blessed be the Lord, who extends his rod over the multitude, and weighs the value of his people in the balance ; who sends progress to the multitude, and peace to well-intentioned men."

Everything follows a regular course of progress in physical, moral, and intellectual order. Everything in nature is foreseen and carried out by the action of spirits entrusted with its care, according to the will of the Lord, and under the regulation of his laws.

Your Master stands towards your planet in the relation of God, from whom he receives direct inspiration and unlimited powers, and it was at his command that the tempest was raised and lulled, and a great calm followed, through the action of the guardian spirits who were under his control.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 28—34. MARK,
CHAP. V.—VERSES 1—20. LUKE, CHAP. VIII.—
VERSES 26—40.

*Legions of Evil Spirits cast out—Deliverance of their
Victims—The Swine driven into the Sea.*

Matth. viii. (28) And when he came to the other side, into the country of the Gadarenes, there met him two demoniacs coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no one could pass through that way. (29) And behold they cried out, saying, What is there betwixt us and thee, O Jesus, thou son of God? Art thou come here to torment us before the time? (30) And there was a herd of many swine feeding a long way from them. (31) And the demons besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go into the herd of swine. (32)

And he said to them, Begone. And when they came out, they went away into the herd of swine, and behold the whole herd of swine rushed down the precipice into the sea, and perished in the waters. (33) And the herdsmen fled, and went to the city, and related everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. (34) And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him they besought him to depart from their coasts.

Mark v. (1) And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. (2) And when they came out of the boat, a man from the tombs with an unpurified spirit met him immediately. (3) He had his dwelling in the tombs, and no man could bind him, no, not with chains. (4) Because he had often been bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been torn asunder by him, and the fetters dashed to pieces, and no one could overpower him. (5) And he was in the mountains and tombs throughout the night and day, crying out, and cutting himself with stones. (6) And seeing Jesus from afar off, he ran and did obeisance to him, (7) And cried with a loud voice, and said, What is there betwixt me and thee, O Jesus, thou son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not. (8) For he said to him, Come out of the man, thou unpurified spirit. (9) And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion, for we are many. (10) And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. (11) Now there was there near the mountains a large herd of swine feeding. (12) And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. (13) And Jesus immediately consented, and the impurified spirits came out, and entered into the swine, and the herd rushed down the precipice into the sea, (and they were about two thousand), and were drowned in the sea. (14) And the swineherds fled, and told it in the city and in the fields. And they went out to see what was done. (15) And they come to Jesus and see the demoniac who had been possessed by the legion, sitting clothed and sane, and they were afraid. (16) And they who saw it told them what had happened to the demoniac, and about the swine. (17) And they began to beseech him to depart out of their coasts. (18) And when he went into the boat, he who had been possessed besought him that he might be with him. (19) But Jesus would not permit him, but saith unto him, Go to thy house and to thy friends, and tell them what great things the Lord had done for thee, and hath compassionated thee. (20) And he went away, and began to proclaim in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him, and all wondered.

Luke viii. (26) And they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. (27) And as he went out upon the land, a certain man met him from the city, who had had demons for a long time, and wore no clothes, and did not dwell in a house, but in the tombs. (28) And seeing Jesus, he cried out, and prostrated himself before him, and said with a loud voice, What is there betwixt me and thee, O Jesus, son of the Most High God? I beseech thee not to torment me. (29) For he had commanded the unpurified spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times, and he was kept bound with chains and fetters, and he demolished the bonds, and was driven by the demon into the deserts. (30) And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion, for many demons had entered into him. (31) And he besought him that he

would not order them to go forth into the abyss. (32) And there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain, and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into these, and he permitted them. (33) And the demons went out of the man, and entered into the swine, and the herd rushed over the cliff into the lake, and were drowned. (34) And the herdsmen seeing what was done, fled, and went and carried the news into the city and the fields. (35) And they went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons were departed sitting clothed and sane at the feet of Jesus, and they were afraid. (36) And the eye-witnesses also told them how he that was possessed of the demons was healed. (37) Then the whole multitude from the surrounding country of the Gadarenes besought him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear, and he went into the boat and returned. (38) And the man out of whom the demons were departed besought him that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, (39) Return to thy house, and relate how great things God hath done for thee. And he departed, and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him. (40) And it came to pass that when Jesus had returned, the multitude received him gladly, for they were all expecting him.

§ 120. Material men require strongly material lessons to arrest their attention. You know the horror which the Jews felt for the swine, an animal which the laws of Moses had pronounced to be unclean.

Jesus wished to teach men how dangerous and repulsive these obsessing spirits were. He therefore permitted those who had so long obsessed this man in so cruel, violent, and extraordinary a manner, to frighten the swine who were feeding near. The witnesses, who believed that the spirits had actually entered the demoniac whom they had subjugated, and after leaving him had entered into the swine, were seized with horror, and then understood better the contempt which they ought to feel for the dangerous instigations to which all are liable who do not strive to follow the path which leads to safety.

Observe that the impure spirits were content with frightening the swine, and did not take up their abode in them. The obsessing spirit does not inhabit the man whom he has subjugated, but influences him in a fluidic manner, as we have already explained (§ 74), by keeping constantly beside him, and exerting a moral influence over him. Thus, the impure spirits who were assembled on the path of Jesus to obey his will, and to serve as instruments of the lesson which

he desired to give, frightened the swine, and drove them before them till they rushed into the lake.

Do not imagine that any common feeling, even of the most temporary description, is possible between the spirit and the animal. No corporeal subjugation ever takes place, still less substitution or possession.

We need not repeat the manner in which subjugation, possession, or substitution, are effected (cf. § 74). The influence of an obsessing spirit cannot be otherwise than material on animals, for it consists in striking them with stupor or terror.

The perisprit of the spirit cannot act fluidically on animals. No combination of fluids is possible, because their principles are not the same. But we could not explain this without entering into details for which the time has not yet come, for before man can understand them, he must engage in preparatory studies on the nature of fluids, and their effects and modes of action, according to the laws which regulate their employment, application, and distribution in each kingdom of nature; and you know that although God desires you to be aided, he also desires you to work.

When Jesus spoke to the obsessing spirits, who called themselves Legion, because there were many of them, he said, "Come out of this man." It is also said that Jesus permitted the impure spirits to enter into the swine. But this language was used because the time had not yet come to explain either the causes and effects of subjugation on men, or the controlling influence exerted by spirits on animals. These explanations were reserved for the New Revelation and were to be made at the opening of the era of Spiritism; and in the meantime it was necessary to speak to men in language appropriate to their understanding and ideas.

Do not notice the childish and futile criticism which accuses Jesus of having caused a loss to the owners of the herd of swine, by causing them to be driven into the lake, where they were drowned. Such criticisms belong only to material men, who do not understand the sense and object of the lesson which Jesus designed to give. What are

material interests worth when the safety of mankind is in question? But those who cannot free themselves from material ideas, notwithstanding their sincerity, may rest satisfied. The swine belonged to rich proprietors, to whom the loss was too trifling to be worth a thought; and even the swine-herds were not blamed, on account of the accident being obviously caused by the will of Jesus. The Lord never commits any injustice, and his wisdom takes everything into account. Everything has an object which it must necessarily attain for the good of humanity.

Do not trouble yourselves about the difference between the narrative of Matthew, who mentions two demoniacs, and those of Mark and Luke, who mention only one. There was but one subjugated man, but the discrepancy is of no importance, and nowise affects the events, and the instruction to be derived from them.

The man who was said to be "possessed by an impure spirit" was brought to the spot under the influence of the obsessing spirits, who were themselves obedient to the will of Jesus, in order that he might accomplish the work which he proposed. This man was subjugated both corporeally and mentally by a legion of evil spirits. Everything which is related of him was due to the effects of this subjugation. He suffered from the caprice of the evil spirits who had subjugated him, and this subjugation was both a trial and an expiation for him. He who has need of trials in your world has always sins to expiate, for trial and expiation go together.

This man was a medium for unconscious physical effects. The obsessing spirits acted by corporeal and moral subjugation, as we have already explained (§ 74), with the aid of the animalized fluids of their victim, but without his concurrence. When the subjugated man appeared before Jesus he was naked. The impure spirits had not actually stripped him of his clothing, but they had inspired him with a horror of all constraint. He suffered from their caprices, and could not endure to be clothed.

(Luke viii. 27, 29.)—The savage, habits of the man who

lived among the mountains and in the tombs, his crying and cutting himself with stones, and his breaking his bonds, were all due to the caprice of the legion of evil spirits. They arose from the bodily and mental subjugation of the victim, and from the constraint exerted to effect it. He was an unconscious physical medium, and it appeared to men that he performed these actions himself; but the evil spirits, acting in concert, exerted a sufficient force over him to compel him to do so, by means of his power as a physical medium, and by the fluidic action of their perisprits and their will upon his. Thus they maltreated and directed him according to their caprice.

(Luke vii. 4.)—You can understand that the evil spirits who surrounded him amused themselves by hindering the guards from carrying away their victim, or by preventing it by breaking the bonds. The victim made the movements, but the power came from the evil spirits, who gave their aid by causing him to undergo violent fluidic action, resulting from the combination of the fluids of their perisprits with the fluids of his.

(Luke viii. 29.)—Some translations pervert both the letter and spirit of the original text, and say, "He was carried away by the demon." You may, therefore, consider the word "driven" as figurative. He was violently urged against his will. Do you not often say of a man who is running very fast, "He is carried away by the wind?" Doubtless such an effect might have taken place, and you have had instances in your own days; but there was nothing of the kind here. It was a frantic career, which struck those who beheld it with terror. An aerial flight would have seemed rather to be an act of "heaven" than of "hell."

After these well-known and notorious events, the man, who was so furious that no one could go that road, came out of the sepulchres, prostrated himself before Jesus, and being a speaking medium, proclaimed in a loud voice before the people that Jesus was the Son of the Most High God. He spoke thus under the influence of the evil spirits who obsessed him, who were themselves controlled

by superior spirits. They expressed themselves through the mouth of their victim in such a manner as to prove to men the identity of the Christ ; for the superior spirits, by command of the Lord, permitted them to see the future, and the splendour of Jesus, who did not appear to them as a man, but as the purest among all the pure spirits who surrounded the Master.

When the evil spirits asked Jesus if he had come to torment them before the time, they alluded to the period when man should acquire sufficient knowledge of the causes and effects of subjugation to protect himself against it. A momentary prescience was given to these spirits, and they saw in one rapid glance the kingdom of the Lord established on your planet, and his powerful hand shedding light on men as the rays of the sun spread over the earth on a fine summer's day. The knowledge of the future then given to these impure spirits was only instantaneous, and was immediately effaced, as a ray of light appearing in darkness disappears at the same moment, and gives place to darkness again. The request which they made to Jesus, that he would not send them out of the country, arose from the vague attachment which some spirits feel for places where they have dwelt, either in their last incarnation, or in a previous one.

The impure spirits, still speaking through the mouth of their victim, also besought Jesus not to send them into the abyss. This expression was allegorical, and was of a nature to impress the multitude. The abyss signifies space, and space was the proper sphere of these impure spirits ; space, where the criminal wanders alone, condemned to darkness and to the burning anguish of his remorse, which you may be quite sure corresponds to the abyss which your material eyes have pictured as a fiery furnace devouring actual flesh without ever consuming it. The evil spirits, or "demons," earnestly besought Jesus that they should not be forced to enter upon this state of isolation, which may be said to morally kill the spirit, as it were ; but only for the purpose of alleviating his condition by leading him to repentance.

The guilty spirit, condemned to darkness and remorse, is isolated in space by the will of the Lord. He may be, and often is, condemned to a system of solitary confinement of which man can form no conception. He may be condemned to inhabit, as it were, the theatre of his crimes, or to rest in space in complete isolation, incapable either of action, of will, or of movement; without intercourse with any other spirit, and encompassed with thick darkness, which has the same effect on his organism (that is, on his spirit and his perispit) as a heavy and polluted atmosphere exerts on a man who is in the agonies of suffocation.

For the rest, you know that expiation is always appropriate and proportioned to the faults or crimes committed, and takes place under conditions intended to lead the guilty spirit to remorse, to awaken his conscience, and to prepare him for repentance by increasing his sufferings.

But you know that no spirit is condemned to serve as an executioner to his brothers, however guilty he may be. The visions of the criminal are all produced by the action of a powerful will, which condemns the spirit to see that which it is needful to place before its eyes until it repents. It is an effect of fluidic combinations, due to spiritual magnetism, which you will learn to understand when you are sufficiently advanced to begin the work which we wish to be undertaken by the medium on the fluids and their properties.

Although human magnetism has made so little progress at present, and has so much need of improvement, it may give you some idea of the fluidic effects of the powerful will of a superior spirit. You know that the human magnetizer can act on his subject in the somnambulic state by his will, and the influence of the magnetic fluids, in such a manner as to impress him with the reality of what is only a fiction. He can cause him to see and believe what he wishes him to see and believe (cf. § 31), even after his awaking. You may meet with such instances by study and observation, even in human magnetism. You may further imagine the power which a superior spirit may exert both

by spirit-magnetism, by his powerful will, and by the effects of fluidic combinations to produce visions, that the guilty spirit may see what he is condemned to see, and be impressed by what is merely a fiction as if it were a reality.

When the impure spirits said to Jesus, "Permit us to enter into the swine," they were impelled to speak thus by the overruling and controlling power of the superior spirits. As soon as Jesus had given them the permission which they desired, they went to the swine, and terrified them by an apparition which was visible only to them. This apparition drove them to the lake by its terrifying gestures, and caused them to plunge into it.

The impure spirits were not obliged to take the human form to frighten the swine. You know that the spirit can assume any appearance which it deems necessary to obtain its ends. An inferior spirit often assumes the form of a dangerous or hostile animal when it desires to cause terror, and this was the case in the present instance. But the apparition was only visible to the swine, or else the people would not have believed that the spirits had entered into them. If there had been a seeing medium in the crowd, the will of the impure spirits would not have enabled him to see them, or the appearance which they assumed. They only showed themselves to the swine because they were permitted to do so ; but they could not do more than this. Everything was accomplished according to the will of Jesus, and was proportioned to his desired object.

You need not wonder that the impure spirits were visible to the swine, and not to the people. Sometimes when two seeing mediums are present, one sees a spirit and the other does not. In such a case, the will of the spirit is the cause. In the case of animals, the will of the spirit is the sole agency, for we have told you that combination of the fluids of the spirit and the animal is impossible. But when a spirit desires to make himself visible to a seeing medium, he acts both by the power of his will, and by fluidic action. When a spirit acts upon an animal (compare p. 284), he can exert no corporeal subjugation, still less possession or

substitution ; but there is moral subjugation in the sense that the spirit can frighten the animal, strike it with stupor, and compel it to perform extravagant antics, which you may call material, but which are none the less striking to the relative intelligence of those who witness them.

The will of the obsessing spirit is alone sufficient to enable the animal to see, because the spirit of the animal is more ready to see than yours, and because the will of the spirit (no matter how inferior it may be) always predominates over that of the animal, unless the will of a superior spirit opposes it.

You must not think that a seeing animal is a medium, at least in the proper acceptation of the word, for it cannot in any case serve as an intermediary between the spirit and man. The animal has a faculty peculiar to itself, and sees without being a medium. Nevertheless, you can understand that in some cases the aptitude of the animal for seeing, chiefly shown by the terror which it experiences, may warn man of the presence of a spirit, when there is nothing either visible or tangible before him. Do not ask how the obsessing spirit acts on the visual organs of the animal to make himself visible to it. You would enter upon premature details, and each day's work is sufficient for itself. If you depart from the path which is traced out for you, you will load yourselves with a heavier burden than man is yet able to bear.

When Jesus permitted these unpurified spirits to enter into the swine, he permitted them to remain in the regions inhabited by men, and left them the power of approaching and coming in contact with humanity.

He gave them this permission that they might either remain with those who were liable to their obsessions and subjugations as a trial or expiation, or with those who were interested in the cure of their victims, that they might be benefited by their prayers, and led into the paths of reflection and moral reformation. Besides this, he desired that they should serve as means for human instruction, for these impure spirits did not remain inactive, and were driven away by the disciples of Jesus.

The man who was subjugated by this legion of evil spirits appeared to men, during their most violent attacks, to be suffering from mental alienation, and raving madness. He was then unable to control his actions, and lost consciousness of his existence ; but in less excited moments, when he was comparatively calm, he recovered consciousness of his condition. He became aware of the constraint to which he was subjected, and he suffered terribly ; and was thus punished for crimes committed in a previous existence. As soon as the "demons had gone out of him," and he was delivered from this moral subjugation, he recovered the use of his reason, and full liberty of body and mind. You have similar instances in your own days.

When the swineherds fled, they brought the news with them, and a multitude ran from the town and country to see what had happened. They found the man seated at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. The disciples of Jesus had given him some of their own garments, and as soon as he was released, he conformed joyfully to human customs.

"Seeing him sane, they were seized with fear." This man, whom no one could subdue, was calm and submissive before the Christ. His submission was enough to strike the multitude, for the symptoms which men regarded as raving madness, and which displayed themselves in strange, violent, and disorderly words and actions, were now replaced by calm reason, accompanied with liberty of body and mind. These phenomena were called "miraculous," because they could neither be understood nor explained.

Let not the incredulous critics of your own days deny the authentic facts which the Evangelists have transmitted to you. Let them not laugh, but study spiritual science. Let them learn and observe, without prejudice, but with humility and sufficient perseverance ; let them study the New Revelation, and they will understand and believe. Has not man the revelation and manifestation of the powers of the spirit under his eyes? Has he not instances of the power of even the inferior spirits, and of their action upon

fluids, in the physical effects which have been produced in all ages, and which are still produced in your own times, in various ways, upon man and his surroundings? Have no instances fallen under the observation of man of the powers of the superior spirits, who are the ministers of the will, providence, and justice of God? Has he no instances of their power over the fluids to control and execute the laws of nature in space, for the promotion of universal life and harmony? Has he not, under his own eyes, the revelation and manifestation of the power of the superior spirits over the fluids, and of the formidable and terrible effects of this power, in what you call judgments in human language? Do you not recognize these powers in the thunderbolt which overthrows your buildings, rives the solid oak, and strikes men dead? Or in the hurricanes, which break down and carry away your trees, and overthrow your dwellings? or in floods, which ravage, break down, and sweep away everything which impedes their passage? or in the tempest, which dashes your ships upon the rocks, and engulphs or shipwrecks them?

The man whom Jesus had delivered from this legion of evil spirits, begged to be allowed to go with him; but he said, "Return to thy house, and relate what great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath compassionated thee." The man then departed, and proclaimed all that Jesus had done for him, for he was destined to smoothe the way for the advent of the Lord. Jesus had worked a "miracle," which could be authenticated by many witnesses, and consequently he did not order the man whom he had released to conceal what he had done for him; but, on the contrary, he desired him to make it known. Under other circumstances he imposed silence on those who had had the good fortune to be freed from bodily or mental afflictions by him, because the work was not performed in public, and might have been disputed if he had appeared anxious to make it known; whereas it was reported quickly and surely under the appearance of mystery.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 1-8. MARK,
CHAP. II.—VERSES 1-12. LUKE, CHAP. V.
VERSES 17-26.

The Paralytic.

Matth. ix. (1) And he went into the boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city. (2) And behold, they brought a paralytic man to him, lying on a bed, and Jesus seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, Take courage, child; thy sins are forgiven thee. (3) And behold certain of the scribes said in themselves, This man blasphemeth. (4) And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said, Wherefore do ye ponder evil in your hearts? (5) For which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? (6) But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the paralytic) Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thy house. (7) And he arose, and departed to his house. (8) And the crowds who saw it wondered, and glorified God who had given such power unto men.

Mark ii. (1) And again he entered into Capernaum after some days, and it was reported that he was in a house. (2) And immediately many people gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door, and he preached the word to them. (3) And they come to him, bringing a paralytic, carried by four men. (4) And not being able to get near for the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was, and having broken through it, they let down the couch on which the paralytic lay. (5) And Jesus, seeing their faith, saith to the paralytic, Child, thy sins be forgiven thee. (6) But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, (7) Why does this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only? (8) And immediately Jesus knowing in his spirit that they thus reasoned in themselves, said to them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? (9) Whether is it easier to say to the paralytic, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy couch and walk? (10) But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the paralytic), (11) I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy couch, and go to thy house. (12) And he rose up immediately, and taking up the couch, he went out in presence of them all, so that they were all astonished, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it happen thus.

Luke v. (17) And it came to pass one day that he was teaching, and there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by. They were come out of every village of Galilee and Judæa, and Jerusalem, and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. (18) And behold men came carrying a man who was paralysed on a bed, and they attempted to bring him in and to lay him before him. (19) And when they could not find out how to bring him in through the crowd, they mounted upon the house, and let him down through the tiles with his little couch into the middle before Jesus. (20) And seeing their faith, he said to him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. (21) And the scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this who speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? (22) But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered, and said unto them, Why

reason ye in your hearts? (23) Which is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? (24) But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the paralytic) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy little couch, and go unto thy house. (25) And forthwith he rose up before them, and took up that upon which he had lain, and went to his house, glorifying God. (26) And amazement seized on all, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

§ 121. It is unnecessary to repeat explanations which we have already given. Jesus cured the paralytic in the same manner as he cured the centurion's servant (§ 110). This material cure was a wonderful thing, or a "miracle" in the eyes of the Scribes, or teachers of the law, as well as in those of the Pharisees and the multitude. You know that Jesus was always a spirit, though incarnated for the time in an apparently human perispritic body, and he read their thoughts. He then addressed them in language designed to teach men that he who possessed such power was above every intelligence; and thus he constrained them to admit his divine authority.

(Matth. ix. 8.)—Jesus appeared to the Scribes and Pharisees, as well as to the multitude, to be a man like themselves. These words were spoken among the multitude, and repeated by Matthew under medianimic influence, and had a hidden meaning, to be explained at the opening of the New Revelation, but designed to prepare men to understand beforehand that when they had attained the limit of perfection possible on your earth, they would also be enabled to realize among themselves the events which were called wonderful, but which are really natural, at the appointed time, according to the decrees of God.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 9-13. MARK,
CHAP. II.—VERSES 13-17. LUKE, CHAP. V.
VERSES 27-32.

Calling of Matthew.

Matth. ix. (9) And as Jesus went on from thence, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax-office, and saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. (10) And it came to pass that he was sitting in the house, and behold many tax-gatherers and sinners

came and reclined with Jesus and his disciples. (11) And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to his disciples, Wherefore does your Master eat with tax-gatherers and sinners? (12) And Jesus heard it, and said unto them, The strong have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. (13) But go and learn what that meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice ; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Mark ii. (13) And he went out again near the sea, and the whole multitude came to him, and he taught them. (14) And as he passed on he saw Levi, the son of Alphæus, sitting at the tax-office, and he saith unto him, Follow me. (15) And it came to pass that as he was reclining in his house, many tax-gatherers and sinners reclined with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many, and they followed him. (16) And when the Scribes and Pharisees saw him eating with tax-gatherers and sinners, they said to his disciples, Why does he eat and drink with tax-gatherers and sinners? (17) And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are strong have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luke v. (27) And after these things, he went out, and saw a tax-gatherer named Levi, sitting at the tax-office, and he said unto him, Follow me. (28) And he forsook all, and arose and followed him. (29) And Levi made a great feast for him in his house, and there was a large crowd of tax-gatherers and others who were reclining with them. (30) But the Scribes and Pharisees murmured at them to his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with tax-gatherers and sinners? (31) And Jesus answered and said unto them, The healthy have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. (32) I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

§ 122. Jesus taught men that they should never repulse those whom they regard as unworthy. The Lord may have planted a germ of virtue, which care may develop, even where you can see nothing but fraud or impurity. Therefore be indulgent towards your brethren, hold out a helping hand to the weak, and use all your efforts to lift up the fallen. In short, imitate your Divine Model ; seek out those who are sick, and use all your care to heal them.

Matthew, whom Jesus chose from among the tax-gatherers, was an exalted spirit, sent on a mission to aid the Master in the work for which he had descended to your world. When Jesus called him, he was inspired by his guardian angel and the superior spirits around, and obeyed the call at the very moment, and followed him. The great feast which he prepared furnished the occasion and opportunity for the lesson which Jesus designed to give men. Everything was arranged beforehand, and accomplished by order of the Lord

under the secret inspiration, influence, and action of the superior spirits, who were obedient to the will of the Master.

Matthew was the name which Levi, the son of Alphæus, preferred to retain when he became a disciple of Christ. He was also called Levi, and was generally known by that name. "Those who are well," said Jesus, "have no need of a physician, but they who are sick. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The man who is in good health has no need of a physician; and he who conscientiously follows the law of his God has no need of being saved, for he saves himself. Christ called to himself those who had to redeem the past. He called them to repentance; and was thus sent to those who had fallen.

Jesus also said to the Scribes, the Pharisees, his disciples, the publicans, and the sinners, "Go and learn what this meaneth, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'" The words of the prophet Hosea (vi. 6), "I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings," resemble those of the prophet Samuel (1 Sam. ii. 6), "The Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and lifteth up." These passages contain the hidden meaning of the words of Jesus, which the New Revelation will teach you.

We assure you in the name of Christ our Master, that whenever the guilty spirit repents, no matter what faults or crimes he has committed, there is not sacrifice (or eternal punishment) in store for the penitent, but mercy (or pardon) on two conditions, which are alone consistent with the infinite mercy and justice of God. Firstly, the penitent must expiate his offences after death in the errant state by mental sufferings, appropriate and proportioned to the faults or crimes which he has committed; and secondly, he must afterwards redeem and expiate the past, by progressing by means of new experiences, and reincarnation.

Yes, there is pardon wherever there is repentance. Jesus desired that mercy should arouse in man the feeling

of remorse for his fault or crime, and the desire of reparation, which results from repentance. Jesus calls men to repentance, and makes their expiation easier, and thus saves those who would otherwise have long remained impenitent.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 14-17. MARK,
CHAP. II.—VERSES 18-22. LUKE, CHAP. V.
VERSES 33-39.

Fasting—New Cloth—Old Vessels—New Wine—Old Wine.

Matth. ix. (14.) Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but thy disciples fast not? (15) And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber mourn so long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days shall come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast. (16) And no one putteth a patch of new cloth to an old garment, for the addition taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. (17) Nor do they put new wine into old wine-skins, for if so, the wine-skins burst, and the wine is wasted, and the wine-skins destroyed; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

Mark ii. (18) And the disciples of John and those of the Pharisees were fasting, and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and those of the Pharisees fast, and thy disciples fast not? (19) And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. (20) But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. (21) And no one seweth a patch of new cloth on an old garment, or else the new piece that filled it up taketh from the old, and the rent is made worse. (22) And no one poureth fresh wine into old wine-skins, or else the fresh wine bursts the skins, and the wine is wasted, and the bottles will be destroyed; but new wine must be put into new wine-skins.

Luke v. (33) And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and those of the Pharisees also, but thine eat and drink? (34) And he said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? (35) But the days shall come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. (36) And he spake a parable unto them, also: No man putteth a patch of new cloth on an old garment, or else the new maketh a rent, and the piece taken from the new does not match with the old. (37) And no one putteth new wine into old skins, or else the new wine bursts the skins, and is poured out, and the bottles are destroyed. (38) But new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved. (39) And no one drinking old wine wishes for new directly, for he says, The old is better.

§ 123. The explanations of the veiled teachings contained in these passages, all relate to the spiritual future.

The old garment, which an injudicious reparation would destroy, and the old wine-skins, which were unfit to contain new wine, because it would have fermented and burst them, represent mankind. But you, Spiritists, are the new wine-skins, and the new wine is poured out to you abundantly. Preserve it carefully, for it will bring forth good fruit. It will grow old and come to perfection in the wine-skins, and give strength, health, and life to those who are able to receive it.

The expression "bridegroom," as applied to Jesus, is derived from Hebrew ideas and customs. He who took a wife was honoured; and as Jesus is the head of the teaching which has sustained you in spite of all your wanderings, he is compared to a pure young man who lays aside his nuptial crown, and prepares to assume the government of a family. The "sons of the bridechamber" represent those who are nearest and dearest to the bridegroom.

(Matthew ix. 15.)—Jesus addressed these words to the disciples of John, and of the Pharisees; and they must be understood according to the Spirit which giveth life, and not according to the letter which killeth, that they may be comprehended in spirit and in truth. While Jesus was present with his disciples, he kept them in the path which he desired them to follow, and had consequently no need to impose penances upon them. He foresaw the abuses and wanderings which would speedily pervert his church and his children (that is, your humanity, and those who undertook to continue the work of the Apostles and of the first Christians). He foresaw the expiation which would be needful to repair their errors, the emblem of which, among the Hebrews, was fasting. The fasting which would be necessary for men to practise after the earthly mission of Jesus was completed, was not the material fasting practised by the disciples of John, and of the Pharisees. Jesus alluded to the expiations which men would be forced to impose on themselves to repair their faults; or to moral fasting. The Hebrews regarded material fasting as a penance intended to atone for the

venial offences of life. It was a reasonable ordinance, as we will presently explain, at a period when nothing but material laws could dominate over matter.

You should practise moral fasting by your remorse for the grievous offences that you commit against God every day. You break his laws, you are deficient in love and charity, and you give way to selfishness, envy, and other hidden vices which your pride and self-confidence often prevent you from detecting lurking in your heart. Ah, fast from these, and mortify your souls in order to purify them. Moral fasting is good for the guilty soul, and cleanses it from all impurity. The Lord requires nothing but moral fasting. This consists in never giving way to evil passions, however pleasant, and in voluntarily submitting to any humiliation for the good of others, or by way of example ; in never yielding to any act of culpable levity, or giving way to any kind of excess. Do not think that it is very painful for man to live in peace with God. Has he not the peace and satisfaction of his conscience, as well as bodily health and strength ? What is it that leads to the degeneration of the race, except the various bodily excesses that you indulge in ? What weakens your intelligence except your ill-regulated and wandering thoughts, and the immoderate desire of knowing prematurely more than man ought to know, and of possessing more than he is fitted to receive ? You are in society, therefore live in society ; be good, loving, and thus deserving of love ; but seek neither the material luxury which enervates, nor the ill-regulated knowledge which leads astray.

Jesus himself has told you that he did not desire to impose upon you the obligation of material fasting. It is not that which enters into the body of man which defiles him, because it does not go into his heart, but into his intestines, and is then cast out, but what defiles a man is that which comes from his heart. These are evil thoughts, words, and actions, the vices which degrade your humanity, and the infractions of the law of God condemned in the Decalogue, and in the words of Jesus which define all the law and the

prophets as the love of God above all things, and the love of the neighbour as oneself. Human commands have imposed on men the obligation of abstaining from food, or have given permission to take only certain kinds of food at certain times and on particular days. Such restrictions are useless for intelligent and earnest men. The Lord never required man to conform to these human commandments. Yet these restrictions had their use, though ridiculous in themselves. They set limits to excess of gluttony and luxury in an age when material laws only could control matter. And when the body was subjected to a rigorous regimen, the animal propensities were weakened, and were consequently withheld from being abused. By upholding these material regulations of fasting and abstinence, the Roman Church still remains in the age of the Scribes and Pharisees. She imposes a heavy burden on men which is no longer necessary; and as she refused to march with humanity, she has now been left behind. But everything takes place in order; God willed it thus, and his wishes are immutable.

Matthew ix. 16, 17; Mark ii. 21, 22, and Luke v. 36-39, are spiritual allegories. The men to whom Jesus spoke, and the succeeding generations previous to the new era in your own days, typify the old garment, which could not be mended with the piece of new cloth; and the old wine-skins, which would have burst if filled with new wine, because they were incapable of holding it. That is, they were incapable of receiving and preserving the New Revelation, which was reserved for a future age, when the time had come for the fulfilment of the text, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Time and reincarnation, which necessitate expiation, reparation, and progress, have now prepared the hearts and minds of men to become new vessels, fitted to preserve the new wine.

Ignorant and material men, confirmed in their traditions and prejudices, would have been crushed by too heavy a burden. They would either have rejected it, or would have been dazzled and blinded by too bright a light. They

needed first the language of parable, and the dominion of the letter according to human and material interpretations, to prepare for the advent of the Spirit by successive efforts of thought.

(Luke v. 38.) The new wine typifies the teachings of the spirits of the Lord, who come to prepare and to accomplish the end of the moral world of error and lying, and the end of your weakness and ignorance. They come to explain the simple and sublime law of Jesus, to lead you to understand it, and to develop its true spiritual meaning, by freeing the Spirit from the letter, and from all the false interpretations which men have given to it, and which have changed or falsified it, and prevented it, both heretofore and now, from bearing fruit. The new wine-skins are the true Spiritists who receive and practise these lessons; spirits who are purified, enlightened by Spiritism, and who will in their turn enlighten those typified by the old wine-skins, who cannot resist the fermentation of new ideas. Old wine-skins still exist. These are blind or interested men who derive their ideas from impure or falsified sources, and who seek to impede the work of human regeneration which forms that Church of Christ whose temple is your planet, and which all men (Jews and Gentiles) are alike called upon to join as faithful followers, by practising the law of love and charity. You know that the Church, as men have made it, must be regenerated. Therefore, Spiritists, it is yours to prepare the materials for her rebuilding, so that when the time has come to rear the edifice, the Lord's workmen may find the stones ready cut. The new wine and the new wine-skins will be preserved by the new faith, which is new in the sense that its course will be very different from that of the existing Church.

(Luke v. 39.)—You should understand the allegorical sense of these veiled words of Jesus, which were addressed to the new era now commencing. The old wine, which should be preferred, is that which is freed from any foreign substance, and which has rejected all impurity in the process of fermentation. It has been put into new wine-skins,

and has grown old in them. Consequently when you, the new generation, have allowed the development of the doctrine of Jesus which we offer you to ferment in your hearts, you can offer your brethren the old wine, which is better than the new. If you are new wine-skins, you should receive the new wine as it is brought you by the spirits of the Lord. Do not adulterate it or corrupt it by opposing the fermentation necessary to cleanse your hearts from all impurity. Any doctrine which is incompatible with the law of love and charity which Christ preached, and which he sends us to preach to you again, would hinder the new wine from growing old, and change and corrupt it in you, and lead you into folly. Such are the errors into which blind or interested men endeavour to plunge you, by offering you the new and adulterated wine, which ferments in some brains and drives them to madness.

Set an example to your brethren by practising the lessons of the spirits of the Lord, and the law of Jesus, which they explain to you in full. Live united by reciprocal and fraternal love and charity, and thus prepare for the advent of universal fraternity. Then will your brethren be moved by your example to say, "The old is better."

Yes; for the old will really be the old, though many regard it as new. Is it not the law which Jesus laid down for you that we teach afresh? Do we not send you back to him to seek for the wine, which still waits for men to taste it, after more than eighteen centuries? But it is new in one sense. At the present day it is appropriated by the New Revelation to the wine-skins which should contain it.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 18-26. MARK,
CHAP. V.—VERSES 21-43. LUKE, CHAP. VIII.
VERSES 41-56.

*The Daughter of Fairus—The Woman with the
Issue of Blood.*

Matth. ix. (18) While he was saying these things to them, behold a ruler came and did obeisance to him, saying, My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. (19) And

Jesus rose up, and his disciples followed him. (20) And behold, a woman who had had an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. (21) For she said within herself, If I can only touch his garment, I shall be healed. (22) But Jesus turned round and saw her, and said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath healed thee. And the woman was healed from that hour. (23) And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute-players and the crowd making an uproar, (24) He saith unto them, Withdraw, for the little girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they ridiculed him. (25) But when the crowd was turned out, he went in and took her hand, and the little girl arose. (26) And the report of it went forth into all that country.

Mark v. (21) And when Jesus had crossed over again to the other side in the boat, a large crowd assembled round him, and he was near the lake. (22) And behold there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue named Jairus, and when he saw him he fell at his feet, (23) And besought him much, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death; come and lay thy hands upon her that she may be healed, and live. (24) And he went with him, and a large crowd followed him and thronged him. (25) And a certain woman who had an issue of blood twelve years, (26) And had suffered many things from many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse, (27) Having heard of Jesus, came behind him in the crowd, and touched his garment. (28) For she said, If I can only touch his clothes, I shall be healed. (29) And immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. (30) And immediately Jesus, knowing in himself that power had gone out of him, turned round in the crowd, and said, Who touched my clothes? (31) And his disciples said to him, Thou seest the crowd thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? (32) And he looked round to see her who had done this. (33) And the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell at his feet, and told him all the truth. (34) And he said to her, Daughter, thy faith hath healed thee; go in peace, and be healed of thy plague. (35) While he was yet speaking, there came messengers from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying, Thy daughter is dead; why trouble the Teacher any further? (36) But Jesus immediately heard what was said, and saith to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not fear; only believe. (37) And he permitted no one to follow him, save Peter and James, and John the brother of James. (38) And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and much weeping and wailing. (39) And coming in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this tumult, and weep? the little child is not dead, but sleepeth. (40) And they ridiculed him. But he put them all out, and taketh the father and mother of the little child, and those who were with him, and goeth in where the little child was laid out. (41) And taking the hand of the little child, he saith unto her, Talitha, Coumi; the translation of which is, Little girl, I say unto thee, Arise. (42) And the little girl rose up immediately, and walked about, for she was twelve years old, and they were bewildered with great astonishment. (43) And he gave strict orders that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Luke viii. (41) And behold there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue, and he fell at the feet of Jesus, and besought him to come to his house. (42) For his only daughter

was about twelve years old, and she was dying. And as he went, the crowds thronged him. (43) And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, who had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, (44) Came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment, and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd. (45) And Jesus said, Who touched me? And when all denied, Peter and those with him, said, Master, the crowds throng thee and press thee, and dost thou say, Who touched me? (46) And Jesus said, Some one hath touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out of me. (47) And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and fell at his feet, and declared unto him before all the people why she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. (48) And he said to her, Daughter, be of good cheer, thy faith hath healed thee; go in peace. (49) While he yet spake, there came some one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, and saith unto him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Teacher. (50) And when Jesus heard it, he answered him saying, Do not fear; only believe and she shall be healed. (51) And when he went into the house, he permitted no one to come with him, except Peter and James and John, and the child's father and mother. (52) And they all wept and bewailed her; but he said, Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleepeth. (53) And they ridiculed him, knowing that she was dead. (54) But he put them all out, and took her hand, and called, saying, Child, arise. (55) And her spirit returned, and she arose immediately, and he directed them to give her something to eat. (56) And her parents were astonished, but he commanded them to tell no one what had happened.

§ 124. In the course of these events, Christ wished to console a father, to set an example of faith to the multitude, and also to continue the series of teachings which his earthly mission was designed to embody.

Christ cured the sick woman by means of his powerful will, as in other cases. He was enveloped in vitalizing fluids, and dispensed them to those who needed them. We cannot give you fuller particulars of the mode of this cure, for man is not yet capable of understanding the nature, effects, and modes of action of the fluids. Let it suffice you for the present that Jesus made use of vitalizing and restorative fluids at his pleasure. It may seem surprising that Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" but he desired to lead the woman to acknowledge her cure before the multitude, and thus to establish the "miracle" in the presence of all.

In the case of the daughter of Jairus, the spirit had not abandoned the body for ever, but was only absent until Jesus recalled it. It had permission to absent itself, that the body might lie in complete torpor, and present every

appearance of actual death to human eyes. All who saw her thought that the daughter of Jairus was dead. She was so in appearance, and her death was regarded as obvious and final; but she was really in a state of complete inertia and catalepsy, which deceived the most experienced eyes. There was total suspension of all feeling and of every vital movement. There was no movement of the pulse, no warmth, no breathing; she looked like a corpse, and lay in complete physical and material insensibility so great that even blows or wounds would have failed to elicit any movement or other sign of life.

(Mark v. 35-41; Luke viii. 49-54.)—But Jesus said, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." This was the fact. It was only sleep—natural, ordinary sleep. You can understand that since the absence of the spirit plunges the body into a deep sleep, the complete disengagement of the spirit produces a state of complete catalepsy. The spirit of the daughter of Jairus was only absent. She was permitted, and not commanded to leave her body, for the spirit needs no command to free itself from the body, but rather to return. When the bird escapes from its narrow cage, it does not desire to return to it. You may understand the position of the spirit by a comparison taken from human life. The soldier, absent on furlough, knows when his leave of absence has expired; and how much more the spirit under similar circumstances! If the spirit of the daughter of Jairus had forgotten or resisted, the superior spirits who surrounded her, and watched over her to see that her absence was prolonged for the exact period necessary for the work which Jesus intended to perform, would have obliged her to return. But this would have been rebellion on her part, and she could not thus have opposed the will of Jesus, for she had accepted this mission.

This state of complete catalepsy, which made men believe that she was dead, and that there was an actual resurrection in the sense which men attach to the word, took place because it had been thus decreed by the Lord, for the fulfilment of the mission of Jesus, and the results which it was

designed to produce, both in the present and future. Every remarkable event during the passage of Jesus on your earth was foreseen and provided for by the incarnation of spirits who were destined to aid in its accomplishment. Do you think that the sovereign Master of the universe could entrust anything to what you call chance or accident?

The spirit of Jairus' daughter had not abandoned her body, though it was completely disengaged, and the body was thrown into a deep sleep. The spirit was still bound by the fluidic cord of the perisprit, which unites the spirit to the body, though invisible to human eyes; so that life always existed and was maintained in the body, though suspended by a condition of complete catalepsy, which simulated real death to the beholders. Jesus said to those who surrounded the daughter of Jairus, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." By an effort of his powerful will he recalled the spirit to its prison, and restored health to the child's body by magnetic action. Upon this she awoke, and the child was cured; and in order to render the event still more striking, Jesus commanded them to give her something to eat. The presence of the flute-players was a Hebrew custom on similar occasions.

The report of the "resurrection" of the daughter of Jairus spread through the whole country, although Jesus ordered the father and mother and those present to say nothing about it.

You know that the crowd was not present, for you are told that Jesus left them outside. Jesus knew what was hidden in the future, and did not wish that his reputation should spread among the priests and Levites at that moment. They despised the ignorance and credulity of the people, and this (even where they did not suspect any imposture) prevented them from believing anything which they regarded as "miraculous" (that is, as impossible) which rested on popular report. It would have been different if the fact of the "resurrection" of the daughter of Jairus had been certified by Jairus himself, who was one of the rulers of the synagogue, and a just and highly esteemed man. If any one had questioned Jairus about the popular reports, he

could have easily evaded the question. But nothing of the kind happened, for the priests and Levites did not trouble themselves much about anything that did not concern them personally, especially with regard to popular rumours, in which they put no belief.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 27-31.

The Blind Men Cured.

(27) And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying out, and saying, O Son of David, have compassion on us. (28) And when he came into the house, the blind men came to him, and he saith unto them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. (29) Then he touched their eyes, saying, Let it be unto you according to your faith. (30) And their eyes were opened, and Jesus strictly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. (31) And they went out, and spread abroad his fame through all that country.

§ 125. Jesus effected these cures like others which he had previously performed, by the action of his will and magnetic power, by directing fluids on the eyes and organisms of the two blind men, which were appropriate to the nature and cause of the blindness with which they were afflicted.

If the spirit who suffers from physical blindness, either from birth or afterwards, is only condemned to it for a time, he will find the light of which he has been deprived, on his passage through life. Such cases are rare; but as humanity becomes purer, the shorter and milder will such expiations become; and men will grow more and more able to use those means to mitigate them which the Lord has placed in their hands, though they are still unknown to you. Blindness (and we may add deafness and dumbness) can be removed by magnetism, from whatever cause it arises, provided that the spirit has only a temporary trial to undergo, and has borne it in such a manner as to obtain its mitigation from the Lord. If he murmurs, or does not bear his chastisement with patience and resignation, it may be prolonged, and in this case the means of removing the evil are withheld from him.

Man may obtain similar results accidentally, by the power

of his will, and by magnetic action. But he cannot do this unless great purity gives him great power, when he is aided by superior spirits, who select and place at his disposal the fluids which are suited to the results which he desires to obtain. This is a treasure which is reserved for you, and which you ought to acquire, for profane hands (or those unworthy of such a favour) can only attain it imperfectly. Man can only acquire this purity and power, and the aid of the superior spirits, by purifying and elevating himself. If a spirit is only condemned to physical blindness for a time, he will ultimately meet with incarnate spirits who are commissioned to put an end to these temporary trials or expiations.,

In order that man should be able to cure blindness, deafness, and dumbness, and all other human diseases and infirmities, with the same certainty and precision as Jesus, it would be necessary for him to elevate himself, and also qualify himself to understand the nature, effects, and active properties of the various vitalizing, strengthening, restorative, purifying, and regenerative fluids which are needed to destroy the causes of diseases and infirmities, whether these arise from disease in the organism itself, or from some external cause. The fluids act by instantaneously destroying extraneous substances much more completely, and under much more favourable conditions, than by a surgical operation ; and thus they cure diseases or infirmities arising from a nervous or paralytic cause.

Any infirmity which visibly modifies the ordinary existence of man is a trial or expiation. Blindness, either temporary or permanent, according to the degree of guilt, is imposed on him who has refused to aid his brethren, or has abused his powers, and is doomed to suffer the penalty of retaliation. He must live in dependence, and endure the privations imposed upon him by the absence of those faculties which were his strength or pride in a preceding existence.

Jesus forbade the two blind men to speak of what he had done for them, because he did not wish men to suppose that he desired to obtain notoriety by human means. He who performs such works, and forbids it to be made known,

cannot be regarded as a charlatan, or as an ordinary man, who desires to make a reputation, and to attract men to him for mercenary ends. Men were then similar to what they are to-day. Under some circumstances, Jesus appeared to shroud himself in mystery, that the fame of the great deeds which he performed might thus be increased. All phenomena which were beyond the laws of nature as then known, were intended to serve a moral purpose. But all were not prepared to accept them under the same conditions; some required publicity, while others lent a more favourable ear to what was related to them as a mystery. The chief art of the physician is to appropriate the remedy to the nature of the disease.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 32-34. LUKE,
CHAP. XI.—VERSES 14-20.

Case of Dumb Possession—Blasphemy of the Pharisees.

Matth. ix. (32) And as they were going out, behold they brought to him a dumb man, possessed with a demon. (33) And when the demon was cast out, the dumb spake; and the crowds marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. (34) But the Pharisees said, He casteth out demons through the ruler of the demons.

Luke xi. (14) And he was casting out a demon, and it was dumb; and it came to pass that when the demon was cast out, the dumb spake, and the crowds wondered. (15) But some of them said, He casteth out demons through Beelzeboul, the ruler of the demons. (16) And others, testing him, sought of him a sign from heaven. (17) But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and a house divided against a house, falleth. (18) And if Satan be divided against Satan, how shall his kingdom stand? For ye say that I cast out demons through Beelzeboul. (19) And if I by Beelzeboul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? By this shall they be your judges. (20) But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, is not the kingdom of God come upon you?

§ 126. The evil spirit rendered this man dumb by a fluidic action upon the organs of speech, and his victim was consequently said to be possessed. In the case of a blind or deaf man, the obsessing spirit often paralyzes the sight or hearing by directing a current of the fluid enveloping him on these organs, and temporarily depriving the patient of their use. Or he paralyzes the voice in the same manner, and inflicts a temporary dumbness on his victim. Jesus commanded

the obsessing spirit to depart, upon which the fluidic action which caused the dumbness ceased, and the dumb spake.

The subjugation and consequent dumbness from which this man suffered were a trial and expiation. Always seek for the opposite side of punishment, which will show you the fault which the punishment is designed to correct. When the dumb man felt the need of expression, and torrents of eloquence arose in him, although he was condemned to keep silence, he expiated an abuse of language. He had been an orator, who had helped to lead the people into serious errors, and was consequently doomed to this expiation; but only for a time, for he had borne his punishment with patience and resignation, without murmuring, and Jesus delivered him from it.

The priests and Pharisees brought an accusation against Jesus which is very similar to that commonly urged against Spiritists. Do they not accuse you also of being in league with evil spirits? And do they not still say that it is the devil who preaches the love of God, and the renunciation of worldly things as the means and instruments of all evil thoughts and passions? Is it not the devil who is still accused of teaching you unlimited charity towards your brethren, horror of everything which might lead you into evil, and unrestricted pardon of all insults and injuries, no matter how serious?* You see the conclusions which you may draw from the charge thus made against the Just One. Follow his steps; his answer is complete, and it is likewise applicable to you.

(Luke xi. 19.)—Jesus alluded to those who should walk in his steps by seeking to purify and elevate themselves, and should cast out "demons" by prayer and fasting.

The true Spiritists are those children of men who purify themselves, and raise themselves above their fathers by moral fasting and prayer. They thus become their natural judges, and still drive away demons.

* These words were medianimically dictated in February, 1863,

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 35–38.

Sheep without a Shepherd.

(35) And Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and infirmity among the people. (36) And seeing the crowds, he pitied them, because they were desponding, and wandering like sheep without a shepherd. (37) Then he said to his disciples, The harvest indeed is much, but the labourers are few. (38) Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he may send forth labourers into his harvest.

§ 127. Men were abandoned to themselves, and required to be re-united under a law which they could follow; for the law of Moses (except the Decalogue, and the command to love God and the neighbour) consisted of material regulations, both from the human point of view, and still more by the traditions through which men had hidden the law of God under a bushel. It had thus become a burdensome yoke, just as the law of the Church oppresses you at the present day; for everything in it which goes beyond the law of Jesus, is of human origin, and consists of human commandments and interpretations, which have altered or falsified his simple and sublime law by unwarrantable traditions.

The multitude was great, and as Jesus had only a short time to remain among men, he entreated his disciples to gather round them all who were able and willing to preach the pure morality which he taught. He was a watchful master, and needed shepherds to send to gather his sheep from all quarters.

We repeat that everything has its cause. Both as regards those who carried on the work of Moses, and as regards the Church, which was commissioned to continue the work of Jesus, everything took place as was needful, according to the period, and the variations of human intelligence, as influenced by human reason and free-will, struggling under the powerful impulse of progress. Everything has its cause in relation to the ages, and every phase of humanity receives development and progress proportioned to its intelligence, progressively and successively, at each era, and by a new

revelation at the time appointed by the Lord. The reign of the letter has now performed its part, and therefore “kills ;” for the hour has come for the advent of the Spirit which giveth life.

A new era is opening in your days ; and Jesus, as at the time of his earthly mission, has looked upon all nations, and has taken pity on them, for they are loaded with evils, and wander like sheep without a shepherd. We come to you in the name of Christ, and by the commandment of the Lord, to repeat the words which he addressed to his disciples, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few ; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send labourers into his harvest.”

Assemble round you all earnest men who are able to preach the pure morality taught by Christ. He is a watchful master, and has still need of shepherds to send to all parts of the earth to gather together his sheep. New and faithful labourers, you who are true Spiritists, the Master’s new disciples ; go forth and teach the nations under the guidance of the spirits of the Lord, who come to communicate with men, and bring them the New Revelation—not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. Explain to them the law of the Master in spirit and in truth, which is the New Revelation taught by the spirits of the Lord, and the heavenly virtues from which men have wandered. Exhort your brethren, both by teaching and example, to practise virtue, duty, work, love, and charity, in material, moral, and intellectual order, and thus to practise human fraternity. Recall the wandering sheep to the fold. They wander in the deserts of error or lying, and fall a prey either to intolerance, fanaticism, superstition, and religious despotism, or to incredulity and materialism. These evil influences bring them under the sway of pride, selfishness, avarice, cupidity, envy, jealousy, sensuality, intemperance, or luxury ; and in short, subjugate them to the vices and bad passions which degrade your humanity.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 2-4. MARK,
CHAP. III.—VERSES 13, 14, 16-19. LUKE,
CHAP. VI.—VERSES 12-15.

Names and Calling of the Apostles.

Matth. x. (2) And these are the names of the twelve Apostles ; First, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother. (3) James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother ; Philip, and Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew, the tax gatherer ; James, the son of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, who is called Thaddæus. (4) Simon, the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

Mark iii. (13) And he goeth up into the mountain, and calleth whom he would, and they come to him. (14) And he appointed twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach. (16) And he gave Simon the name of Peter ; (17) And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James ; and he called them Boanerges, that is, the sons of thunder. (18) And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphæus, and Thaddæus, and Simon the Canaanite ; (19) And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

Luke vi. (12) And it came to pass in those days that he went out to the mountain to pray, and passed the night in praying to God. (13) And when it was day, he called his disciples to him, and chose twelve from among them, whom also he named Apostles. (14) Simon, whom he also named Peter, and Andrew his brother ; James, and John, Philip, and Bartholomew. (15) Matthew, and Thomas, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon who is called Zelotes ; Judas, the brother of James ; and Judas Iscariot, who also was the traitor.

§ 128. Men believed that Jesus went up into the mountain to pray, and passed the night in praying to God ; but in reality, when he was out of human sight, he retired to the superior regions to watch over the affairs of your globe, and to issue the Sovereign Master's commands. In the morning he again rendered himself visible and tangible. He then called his disciples, and chose the twelve Apostles from among them.

The names which Jesus gave to certain Apostles related to their individual characters and missions. Among the twelve was Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus, and who was a spirit of great intelligence ; but when he asked to assist Jesus, he assumed a mission beyond his strength, and a heavier burden than he was able to bear, and failed. In due time we shall tell you how he came to demand this mission, why it was entrusted to him, and the reason of his failure.

LUKE, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 17-19.

Descent from the Mountain—Cures.

(17) And he went down with them, and stood in a level place, and a crowd of his disciples, and a large multitude of people from all parts of Judæa and Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases by him. (18) And those who were troubled by unpurified spirits were healed. (19) And all the multitude sought to touch him, for power proceeded from him and healed them all.

§ 129. You have already received full explanations (§ 74) relative to the cure of diseases and the casting out of obsessing spirits, and we need not repeat them here. You also understand the nature of the power which proceeded from Jesus. It was the fluids which he shed upon the patients by means of his will and magnetic power, more especially on those who approached him.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 1, 5-15. MARK,

CHAP. III.—VERSE 15 ; CHAP. VI.—VERSES

7-13. LUKE, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 1-6.

Instructions given to the Apostles.

Matth. x. (1) And calling to him his twelve disciples, he gave them power over unpurified spirits, that they might cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and infirmity. (5) Jesus sent away these twelve, and commanded them, saying, Go not away into the path of the Gentiles, and enter not into a city of the Samaritans ; (6) But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (7) And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is at hand. (8) Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons ; freely ye have received, freely give. (9) Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your girdles ; (10) Nor pouch for your journey, neither two coats, nor sandals, nor staff ; for the labourer is worthy of his living. (11) And into whatever town or village ye enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide until ye go thence. (12) And when ye come into the house, salute it. (13) And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it ; and if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. (14) And whoever will not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. (15) Verily, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city.

Mark iii. (15) And to have power to heal diseases, and to cast out demons.

Mark vi. (7) And he called the twelve to him, and began to send them forth by two and two, and he gave them power over the

unpurified spirits. (8) And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; neither pouch, nor bread, nor copper in the girdle. (9) But to be shod with sandals, and not put on two coats. (10) And he said unto them, Wherever ye come into a house, there abide till ye depart thence. (11) And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city. (12) And they went out, and preached that men should repent. (13) And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

Luke ix. (1) And he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to cure diseases. (2) And commanded them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. (3) And he said unto them, Take nothing for the journey, neither staves, nor pouch, nor bread, nor silver, nor have two coats apiece. (4) And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. (5) And whoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. (6) And they went through the villages preaching the good news, and healing everywhere.

§ 130. Jesus sent his disciples to preach first to those belonging to his own nation, humanly speaking, to strengthen family, fraternal, and patriotic ties. He forbade his disciples to take anything with them, to teach them that they were missionaries of the Lord, and should leave to him the care for worldly things, and attach no importance to material prosperity. He desired them to salute the houses where they were received, and to shake the dust from their feet where they were repulsed, that they might be convinced that the Master followed them everywhere, binding what they bound, and loosing what they loosed.

Jesus worked on the human imagination of his disciples by human means, in the positive instructions intended for the men to whom he spoke. They also relate figuratively to the mission of all those who, like them, are commissioned to bear the word of the Lord from door to door. We say figuratively, because they were equally addressed to future generations, who might be living under similar conditions. The words were spoken prophetically, if you will, for the promise was intended to be fulfilled in all ages. Although there have been faithless shepherds, there have also been others who have faithfully tended their flocks, and have themselves practised the morality which they taught, with

the heart, and not with the lips only, and thus qualified themselves to bind and loose both in earth and heaven. The disciples were called upon to disseminate the truth, as Spiritists are required to do at the present day. Set forth on the path, and follow the disciples of Christ. They have prepared the way for you ; follow them bravely.

§ 131. What is meant by the power of the Apostles and their successors to bind and loose on earth and in heaven ?

The true successors of the disciples of Jesus can obtain the same privileges, provided they can attain to the same purity. Thus, those among you who are true Spiritists, and exert every effort to raise yourselves towards the Lord, can bind and loose on earth that which shall be equally bound or loosed in heaven. But the true interpretation of the words is as follows :—Man alone is incapable of dictating to the Lord the course which he must follow, and of pronouncing judgment to him ; but when the incarnate spirit has arrived at a certain degree of elevation, he can and ought to understand the will of the Supreme Judge beforehand. Consequently, he is enabled to perceive the judgment which will be passed upon human actions ; and according to the sincerity of repentance, the mercy with which the Judge will treat offenders. It is in this sense that you should understand these words, which human pride has turned into an arbitrary action* and a shameful traffic,† for those who abused it well knew that they were incapable of executing it, and now feel it more than ever.

In availing ourselves of the expressions “to bind and loose,” we have used terms employed in the Scriptures, and which we shall afterwards specially explain to you. The faithful disciples of Jesus were elevated spirits, who were never swayed by any feeling of personal animosity, and judged the spirit and not the man justly. They were enabled to estimate the characters of those whom they addressed,

* By claiming the power of absolving or condemning, by granting or refusing absolution, and by remitting or retaining sins, not by way of declaration, but as a judicial sentence.

† By the sale of indulgences.

by inspiration, under spiritual influence. Consequently, if they found men to be humble and upright, they blessed them, and exhorted them to follow the path which they pointed out to them; and Jesus approved of their conduct. But if they met with backward spirits, whose experiences were far from being completed, and who disregarded their words, they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and departed. Spirits of a superior order do not sympathize with guilty and hardened spirits; and the Lord permitted the weight of as painful an expiation as necessary to fall upon them.

But the Church fell into error, and applied to herself the words which Jesus addressed to spirits incarnated on a mission. She believed herself to have inherited this infallibility, and that the Holy Spirit had come to set his seal upon it. She assumed that she received the inspiration, aid, and protection of superior spirits by command of the Lord; but she overlooked the necessity for holiness, virtue, and moral elevation. Consequently, she attempted to use weapons which she was unable to wield, and wished to retain the key of the abode of all purity in hands which were less pure than those of the Apostles, and were sometimes soiled. She has rejected the elect, and admitted the rejected; and in her wilful blindness has plunged herself deeper and deeper into the darkness which arises from pride and self-confidence. Yet she will awaken, and then the dream with which she has been amusing herself will vanish in the radiance of the new dawn. The trumpet of the Last Judgment will sound in the ears of the Church from the four corners of the globe, and the angels of the Lord will appear in their glory—not as it is understood in erroneous interpretations, but in the glory of purity; and the disciples of Jesus, again reincarnated to finish the work which they have begun, will yet come to “bind and loose” on earth, and the Lord will “bind and loose” in heaven; for they will be commissioned to do this, as formerly, and the judgment will not be a nullity.

Take courage, children of our Church, the Church of the Lord! The time is approaching when the disciples and

their Master will again appear among you ; when your unsealed eyes shall behold the Just One in the clouds of heaven ; and the angels, or purified spirits, shall descend among you, to extend their brotherly arms to you, and wield a still greater influence over you. Raise your songs of joy, and rejoice and again rejoice, for the time is approaching.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN.

With the concurrence of the Apostles.

§ 132. What did Jesus mean by his directions in Matth. x. 5, 6?

His first object was, as we have said, to strengthen the ties of family, fraternity, and country in the eyes of his contemporaries, and of mankind in general. Besides, he did not yet design to strike at the prejudices of the Jews, who believed that they were the only nation chosen to receive the blessings of the Lord. They would have exclaimed against the sacrilege, if they had seen the disciples of Jesus preaching repentance and the love of God to those whom they considered to be excluded by the Father of all men from their rightful share of the inheritance. The mission to the Gentiles was proclaimed afterwards, at a fitting time. The Samaritans were an heretical sect of the Jews, and the Gentiles included all who professed a different religion from the Jews.

What is the meaning of the words, "Go ye and preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand?"

The kingdom of God is near, whenever men accept the means of attaining it. Christ taught men those human virtues which would shorten the series of their earthly trials ; and therefore the kingdom of heaven was preached to those who followed his teachings. At the present day, even more than at that period, Christ says to the true Spiritists, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand ;" for you are no longer shown devious paths to reach it, and you cannot possibly mistake it any longer. He shows you through the spirits of the Lord, who bring you the New Revelation, the one

straight path which you ought to follow. He now points out clearly the obstacles which have hitherto impeded you, saying, "Avoid them. I will stretch out my hand to enable you to overcome them." He shows you how you can renew your failing strength by prayer, love, and faith, practised in sincerity, and not with the lips only. He shows you Faith enlightening your path with a divine torch, and raises the veil which has so long hidden that blessed light which gives sight to the blind. He shows you the hope of the place of rest which awaits his docile and submissive children, and holds out his hand to lead you to it. Finally, he opens the gates of the sanctuary, and shows you the powerful and vivifying love of your God, which salves your sores and heals your wounds, and he shows you your God standing before the threshold of the celestial dwelling. Christ calls to you, saying, "Come, all ye whom I have called from the four quarters of the world ; come to enjoy rest and happiness here."

Do not misunderstand the meaning of these figurative expressions. It is not difficult for you to comprehend them. The place of repose which awaits you is infinite space, where happy spirits dwell in eternal activity, and enjoy the happiness of the elect, to which all men are called, and which all ought to attain. Rest and happiness denote the calmness enjoyed by the spirit who has arrived at the end of his trials, and who may be compared to an exhausted traveller who arrives at a place of rest, where he enjoys calmness and refreshment after his fatigues and the heat of the sun. But you know that work is the eternal law for the spirit who has arrived at his resting-place, as well as for him who is still passing through his trials, and he does not rest in eternal inaction and contemplation. He labours in space, as the workman and servant of the Father, who is always working, and who creates, has created, and will create throughout eternity. But the work of the spirit who has arrived at the end of his trials is a very different thing to him from what it is to you. To him work is joy and boundless happiness, the fulfilment of his promised blessed-

ness. Work to us is a thousandfold sweeter than is the indolent repose of your existence to you.

§ 133. What is the true spiritual meaning of the following passages : Matth. x. 1 and 8 ; Mark iii. 15 ; and Luke ix. 1 ?

The disciples of Jesus were elevated spirits, incarnated on a mission, who had accepted the severe conditions of the first phase of their human existence which preceded their calling, that they might concur in the work of redemption. They were aided in their labours by the superior spirits, who continually accompanied them, and neutralized the influence of the flesh over the spirit, by joining their faculties to those which they themselves possessed. Hence resulted the great works which the Apostles were able to accomplish. The disciples of Jesus accepted a human existence, of which the first portion was passed amid such humble and ordinary surroundings, to give greater emphasis to the transformation of the ignorant tax-gatherer or fisherman into the inspired man who spoke all languages, and worked "miracles" in the eyes of astonished nations.

Jesus consequently gave his Apostles power and authority to heal all diseases and infirmities, restoring health to the sick, "raising the dead," cleansing the lepers, and driving away the evil spirits, who are called indifferently demons and impure spirits. He gave them this power by granting them the assistance, support, and co-operation of the superior spirits, who were themselves assisted by the pure spirits, who exerted an immediate power over all evil spirits, and had power to heal all diseases and infirmities, as well as (to human eyes) to raise the dead. The Apostles were mediums ; or, in other words, intermediaries between the superior spirits who assisted them, and men. They spoke and acted with the aid of their medianimic faculties, under spiritual influence, in order to aid in the work of redemption.

When they cast out evil spirits, or released men from their corporeal or mental subjugation, they commanded the obsessing spirits to quit their victims, in the same words which Jesus employed, "Depart from this man," and the obsessing spirits were instantaneously driven away by the

will-power of the superior spirits, aided, if necessary, by that of the pure spirits. In order to restore health to the sick, to cleanse the lepers, and to cure all diseases and infirmities, the Apostles laid their hands on the patients, or anointed them with oil. The cure was effected by the magnetic action of their human will, and at the same time the superior spirits combined their will with the Apostles' by means of spiritual magnetism, and dispensed, under their hands, the fluids adapted to the desired effects, and to the cure which they wished to accomplish. Although the Apostles anointed several patients with oil under medianimic influence, it was only to render the cure more intelligible to men. They had no need to have recourse to any material or external methods to effect the cure, for the hand of the human magnetizer, or the will of the Just One, could as easily have directed the fluids with which the oil was charged into the organism. When they used olive oil thus, they employed the means at their disposal to show men that anything may serve for the accomplishment of the will of God, if faith is present.*

You must not misunderstand the command of Jesus to his Apostles, to "raise the dead." We have already told you that the immutable will of God never compels the spirit to unite itself to the corruption of a corpse. It was necessary for the success of the mission of Jesus that he should make a strong impression on the imagination of the backward and material men of that age, and conform his language to their beliefs and prejudices, in order to prepare them and subsequent generations to receive the New Revelation at the time appointed by the Lord, when the necessary progress should have been accomplished. When Jesus said to his Apostles, "Go and raise the dead," he made use of human expressions, which were understood and comprehended. There was no expression to denote

* A friend of the Translator's, a well-known medical man in London, not belonging to any heterodox school of medicine, finds anointing with oil to be an exceedingly powerful and efficacious remedy in febrile and inflammatory cases, more especially in the diseases of children.—TRANSL.

the cataleptic state, and the return of the spirit to the body with which it was connected by the fluidic link of the perispirit. The ancients were anxious to rid themselves of sources of infection, and burned or buried their dead as soon as the signs which were supposed to denote the cessation of life manifested themselves. Many expiations by fire or hunger were thus accomplished in ages where human ignorance served to expiate the crimes committed in previous existences. The cataleptic state was almost unknown to the ancients, but some more advanced minds had a vague notion of it, although they did not comprehend it either scientifically or spiritually. But the Apostles, the Disciples, the multitude who followed Jesus, and the bulk of the Scribes, Pharisees and priests, knew nothing of this.

The Evangelists, who were inspired historical mediums, reproduced the words, "Go and raise the dead," under medianimic influence and inspiration, as Jesus pronounced them. They used the words at their disposal to relate the facts, but without knowing the secret thought of Jesus, which was hidden under words which were left open to the human interpretations which they, or other men, put upon them. We have already explained that all cases of "raising the dead" to human eyes, whether in the Old or New Testament, were due solely to the cataleptic state. All the men who were brought to life after they were considered dead were in this state, and had not broken the link which unites the spirit to the body. They were thought dead by men, and would really have died but for the aid of the superior spirits who lent the assistance of their powerful will and magnetic power either to the prophets, who were unconscious of their aid, and, like other men, regarded the "resurrection of the dead" as the direct work of God himself; or to the Apostles, who were also ignorant of their assistance, and considered the "resurrection of the dead" as the direct work of the Master himself. In the case of the Prophets, as well as of the Apostles, the pure and superior spirits acted under the direction of Jesus; for you must always remember that he is the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet and

its humanity. He watched over its formation, and has directed its progress since ; and he will lead your planet and yourselves to perfection.

§ 134. What is the meaning of the words, " Freely ye have received, freely give ?"

In the thought of Jesus, these words related chiefly, but not exclusively, to the present. The medianimic faculties of the Apostles, and the aid and concurrence of the pure and superior spirits, were the means by which they were to accomplish their mission, to proclaim the good news, preach the kingdom of God, heal diseases and infirmities, " raise the dead" to the eyes of men, and drive away the evil spirits. Their medianimic powers, and the aid and concurrence of the good spirits, were the free gift of God.

When Jesus said to his Apostles, " Freely ye have received, freely give," he taught them that divine gifts should never be made the object of traffic or speculation, or the means of material human existence. He taught them that they should have but one motive in the accomplishment of their mission, and should be influenced in thought and heart, and in their words and actions, solely by the love of God and of their neighbour, by humility, and the most perfect disinterestedness.

These words are also addressed to those mediums who are called to be the interpreters of the good spirits, and their intermediaries to men. They are addressed to all those Apostles of the New Revelation who are inspired by the spirits of the Lord, and are called upon to preach the law of Jesus, and to explain and develop it in spirit and in truth. Christ still calls upon you who are Spiritists or mediums to-day, through our teaching, freely to give, as ye have received freely, and thus to walk in his steps. God gives everything freely to you as he gave to the Apostles, for the accomplishment of your mission.

§ 135. What were the exact words pronounced by Jesus, and recorded in *Matth. x. 9, 10* ; *Mark vi. 8, 9* ; and *Luke ix. 3* ?

" Take neither pouch, nor bread, nor gold, nor silver, nor

money in your girdles, nor two coats, but take a staff to sustain you on the journey, and put sandals on your feet, that you may be able to support the march."

§ 136. What is the intention of these words?

By giving these directions to his Apostles, Christ taught material men to despise earthly wealth, and to rely on the goodness of the Lord. The lesson which Jesus designed to convey to you, and to the men of your own times, in speaking words addressed also to the future, was this : Do not attach your life to things which do not last, but to those which do not perish. Do not seek to lay up stores of perishable erudition and knowledge in advance, but rather to instruct yourselves in that which leads to eternal life. We do not advise you to neglect the cares and studies which relate to human existence, for it has its exigencies, to which you must submit, and which it is your duty to fulfil.

But you ought not to make this the sole end of your life; gather the bread which sustains the body, both for yourselves and for your brethren who have none ; but seek first the bread of life. Gain the knowledge necessary to develop your intellect, but, above all things, strive to obtain the precious instruction needful to elevate your spirit.

§ 137. How are we to understand Matth. x. 11-13?

Upon entering the house of the just man, the disciples of Jesus invoked the blessings of the Lord, and consequently the protection of the good spirits on him who had received them. But if the human estimate was false, and the man whom his brethren called just was a hypocrite and liar, he might impose on men, but could not deceive God. In such a case the blessings, instead of descending upon him, rested upon him who was worthy. They abandoned the wicked heart to abide with him whose heart was pure.

The just man is he who endeavours to walk in the ways of the Lord, and who uses every effort to abide in them. The just man is he who practises to their full extent the virtues imposed upon man to lead him to God. The just

man is he who possesses true charity, who is mild and humble, and hides his words and actions. He is one who humbles himself before men, and even endeavours to humble himself in the secret thoughts of his heart; for if you are charitable and trust in yourselves that you have done a worthy action which very few others would have done, your merit is very slight. The just man is he who is filled with active love, and who returns to the Lord as much as he possibly can of what he has received from him. He supports his brethren, and the wicked as well as the good, for it is equally a charity. The just man is he who does good, without egotism or subsequent regret, not only without expecting the thanks of the grateful or the praise of the indifferent, but even without thinking of the reward which he will receive from the Master. The just man is he who possesses the strong and steadfast faith which nothing can shake, and which is proof against all attacks. Yet such faith is gentle towards others, and does not seek to compel them to come over by force, but seeks to win them gradually by the force of example, and the practice of good works. Such faith should make men say, "Why have I not his faith?" This is the just man before God.

§ 138. What is the meaning of Matth. x. 14, 15?

These words were not only addressed to the disciples of Jesus, but to his disciples of the new era, which was then future. Those to whom the Lord has sent light, and who refuse to receive it, are more guilty than those who are plunged in darkness, and who have received no direct assistance to raise them from it. Do not stay with the former, nor waste your time in preaching to those who are unwilling to listen to you, but bestow your efforts rather on those who are prepared to enter upon the new path.

Your time is precious; go then, and labour always upon the vine of the Lord. It stretches before you like a hedge, bordering the path; but all the shoots are not good. When you have sought to improve those which appear to you to be sterile, and find that they bear no fruit, in spite of your

efforts, abandon them ; for their time is not yet come ; and pass on to others, which under your fostering care shall develop the productive grapes which give strength and life. Do not lose your time. Work with zeal at all times ; but march onwards as you work, for you have a long road to travel before reaching your goal.

Yes, at the day of judgment, the land of Sodom and Gomorrha, which typify the guilty spirits plunged in darkness who have had no direct aid to raise them, will be judged with less severity than "that city ;" or the guilty and rebellious spirits who have refused to receive the light which the Master has sent them by his disciples ; or than those who refuse to receive the light which the Master is still sending by his new disciples, the Apostles of the New Revelation.

It is indeed so ; for he who has rejected all the aid which has been given him for his improvement, is a spirit who is hardened in evil ; and consequently his trials and expiations will be long and painful. He must endure eternities of suffering corresponding to eternities of faults. That is, he must endure moral suffering and tortures appropriate and proportioned to his faults, and to the degree of his guilt, during the errant state after death, at the close of each successive existence, and must then be incarnated in the lower worlds of trials and expiations, and all this must be repeated over and over again in the case of the rebellious spirit, until he has borne his trials well, and has ceased to rebel against the law of reparation and progress which is designed to purify him until he is fitted to take his place among the good spirits. He is then incapable of evil, and only capable of good. We employed the term eternities in allusion to your expression of eternal punishment, but you will easily perceive that the term is only figurative ; for the only eternity that does or can exist is God.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 16–22. LUKE,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 11, 12.

Aid granted to the Apostles.

Matth. x. (16) For behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves ;* be therefore wise as serpents, and guileless as doves. (17) But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and will scourge you in their synagogues. (18) And ye shall be brought before rulers and kings on account of me, as a testimony to them and to the nations. (19) And when they deliver you up, do not be anxious about how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. (20) For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. (21) And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child, and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall put them to death. (22) And ye shall be hated by all men on account of my name, but he who abideth until the end shall be saved.

Luke xii. (11) And when ye shall be brought before synagogues and magistracies and authorities, do not be anxious about how or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; (12) For the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that hour what ye ought to say.

§ 139. Although these words of Jesus apply to all ages and to all earnest men, yet they were addressed principally to the Apostles, in view of physical persecutions. They warned them of the fate which awaited them and their imitators, both at that period, and during the ages which should follow the completion of the earthly mission of Christ, until the period when intolerance, fanaticism, ignorance, superstition, proud and greedy ambition, and religious despotism should cease to be supported by rulers and magistrates. Then the secular arm should cease to sacrifice victims by torture and the stake ; and should give place to liberty of conscience in regard to the lives of men, and the right of free inquiry, which is already proclaimed among you, and acknowledged by truly civilized nations.

(Matth. x. 16, 21).—Jesus thus warned the Apostles of the physical persecutions which they would have to undergo,

* After quoting this passage in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. iii., Clement of Rome adds the following words, which are not improbably genuine : “ Peter answered and said, What if the wolves shall tear in pieces the sheep ?—Jesus said unto Peter, Let not the sheep fear the wolves after death.” Clement then quotes Luke xii. 4, 5 ; but apparently not as forming part of the same passage.—TRANSL.

and of those persecutions which would rise up in the country, in the family, and even in the most secluded corners of the domestic hearth. And you also, Apostles of the New Revelation, must expect to have to struggle against moral, if not against physical persecutions, like all those who arouse the envy of their fellows by being raised above them. Your age is still governed by the love of money, dignities, and honours, material pleasures, superstition, and perverted religion. Generally speaking, therefore, men only envy those around them whom they consider raised above them in a material point of view, by fortune or intelligence in respect to worldly things. But do not deceive yourselves. Sarcasm and ridicule often mask an instinctive feeling of envy ; and those who laugh at you feel in their hearts that you are walking more surely than they, and that you will attain the goal sooner.

You have already experienced persecutions, and you will have to experience others.* Firstly, the Scribes and Pharisees of your own age will pursue you with hatred and insult, and bring against you the same charges which the Pharisees of former times brought against Jesus—namely, being in league with the devil, or being charlatans or madmen. Secondly, materialists and unbelievers will mock and ridicule you. Men are so constituted that, rather than make an effort to reach the summit of a mountain, and breathe the pure and invigorating air, they prefer to mine at its foot, at the risk of being crushed by falling rubbish. Consequently, every intelligence above that of the masses, of whatever nature, which is made the instrument of new moral and intellectual truth, and of fresh progress, but which opposes the current human prejudices, ideas, interests, and passions, is exposed to the persecutions of ignorance, cupidity, or pride.

Jesus added, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." In order to ensure the triumph of the divine morality which the Apostles taught, it was needful

* Since this was written, Spiritists and mediums have been subjected to fine and imprisonment, at intervals, both in France and England.—
TRANSL.

for them to make use of every means at their command, and yet to preserve their purity of thought and action. You should not imagine, Spiritists, that you must always speak in the same manner to ensure the triumph of your principles. The main art of the preacher and advocate is to adapt his language to the intelligence of those whom he addresses. Consequently, if you confine yourselves to a single undeviating line of conduct, you will succeed with some, and will offend others. Be therefore wise as serpents. You make no victim, and do not harm the unhappy man whom you touch ; but you have to deal with proud and susceptible spirits. Advance with prudence, and lead men to admit the force of your arguments, and allure them by your example, in such a manner that when they understand that you seek to win them over, it shall no longer be possible for them to resist the holy influence of practical morality. But in order to attain this end, you should never employ any means but those which gentleness and simplicity permit. Exercise authority over yourselves alone, and let your victims be only those of your boundless love. In this sense, therefore, be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

(Matth. x. 18-20.)—The Apostles were men who had risen from the people, without education or culture. If they had not possessed this confidence in inspiration, they would not have dared to proceed ; and their mistrust of themselves would have paralyzed their efforts. But as they were sure of being supported by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they were able to advance boldly against all obstacles. Their latent knowledge became developed, the assistance of the spirits of the Lord strengthened them, and the work which was accomplished was much more striking and remarkable to the masses, as no one knew whence came these men who spoke foreign languages fluently, pleaded their cause and that of their brethren with so much eloquence, and showed knowledge and ability in everything of which no one could have supposed them capable. We do not say that each of them possessed all knowledge, but each possessed special acquirements derived from his preceding existences.

They were inspired, clairaudiant, or speaking mediums, according to the circumstances and necessities of their position. When they were inspired, the mechanism of their speech was their own ; and the thought alone was given them. When exceptional circumstances made it necessary, they were rendered speaking mediums, and became as it were the instruments of the superior spirits who guided them, and who acted fluidically by the influence of their perispit upon their organs of speech, and thus controlled them to say what was needful to be said.

But the Apostles were elevated spirits on a mission, and were peculiarly fitted for communion with the superior spirits ; and this rendered their medianimity different from yours. Your medianimity has not yet reached its full point of development, which you do not even comprehend.

What happens in some cases to the orator whose language changes under the inspiration of the moment, and who has prepared himself to deal with his subject from one point of view, but finds himself irresistibly drawn to develop it under another? You call it the inspiration of genius ; but what is genius ; if it is not the inspiration of the spirit who comes to his assistance, and lends him his temporary aid, making him an inspired medium, though frequently unconscious of the spiritual influence which acts upon him? The expressions which Jesus used in speaking to his disciples, "the Holy Spirit," "the Spirit of your Father," signifies the superior spirits ; higher intelligences sent by the Father to direct them. These expressions were designed to make them understand the elevated character of inspiration ; and as Jesus did not design to reveal the spiritual hierarchy to men, he could only attribute inspiration to its primary source—God, the Father.

The Lord does not inspire men immediately, but he sends his spirits to direct them ; and the incarnate spirits who attended Jesus on his mission were spirits who were themselves already elevated, and consequently assisted by still more elevated spirits. Hence the divine inspiration flowed to them more directly. "The Holy Spirit," and "the

Spirit of your Father" are, as you know, terms applied to the pure, superior, and good spirits whom the Father sends to guide or to inspire those who are destined to effect the triumph of the truth. Thus the words which Jesus addressed to the Apostles were also applicable to all earnest men who should make themselves the champions of the truth, in faith and humility, both at that time and in future.

You can and have already experienced this support which is lent to the weak when it is necessary for them, not to make them illustrious, or to captivate the attention, but when it is needful to establish an important truth. At the present day, Spiritists, the Holy Spirit will teach you what you ought to say, and the Spirit of your Father speaketh in you, for the Lord sends his good spirits to guide and inspire you, when you speak to men with humility and faith, on behalf of the triumph of truth, and for the propagation of the law of Jesus, and of the New Revelation, which is designed to explain and to develop it.

(Matth. x. 22.)—We say unto you, Spiritists, in the name of Christ : You will be the object of the hatred and insults of men whom interest, pride, and the spirit of domination and intolerance lead to cling to the past, which is crumbling away, but which they vainly desire to uphold. You will also be exposed to the sarcasm and ridicule, and sometimes to the insults of men, whose unbelief, ignorance, sensuality, and material appetites, separate them from the paths of the Lord, and who reject spiritual science and the New Revelation with contempt and prejudice, without sufficient preliminary examination by theoretical and experimental study. You can already estimate the truth of these words. Imitate the disciples of Jesus. The true Spiritist, who is faithful to the voice of the Master, and who, walking in the steps of the Apostles, shall persevere to the end, shall be saved ; for he shall take his place among the good spirits according to the degree of purity and elevation which he has acquired.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 23-27. LUKE,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 1-3 ; VI. 39, 40.

*Fly from Persecutions—Imitate Jesus—Promise of the New
Revelation—Nothing hidden from God—Blind
Leaders of the Blind.*

Matth. x. (23) But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another, for verily I say unto you, You shall not have finished the cities of Israel until the Son of Man shall come. (24) The pupil is not above his teacher, nor the slave above his lord. (25) It is sufficient for the pupil to be as his teacher, and the slave as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzeboul, how much more shall they call those of his household ! (26) Fear them not, therefore, for there is nothing concealed which shall not be revealed, nor hidden which shall not be known. (27) What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim on the housetops.

Luke xii. (1) In the meantime, when there were gathered together myriads of the multitude, so that they trod one upon another, he began to say to his first disciples, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. (2) For there is nothing covered which shall not be revealed, nor hidden, which shall not be known. (3) Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light, and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

Luke vi. (39) And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind guide the blind; shall they not both fall into the ditch ? (40) The pupil is not above his master, but every one who is made perfect shall be as his master.

§ 140. The words of Jesus relating to physical persecutions chiefly applied to the Apostles and their imitators, until the time when liberty of conscience and free inquiry should be granted to men without risk of life. The prophecy of the coming of the Son of Man applies to the period which the Lord has appointed to succeed the revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which ushers in the new spiritual era of the Christianity of Christ ; and to the new mission of the Apostles and their imitators, which should precede the advent of Jesus, which he predicted during his earthly mission, but under very different circumstances. Consequently these words relate to the present and future throughout all ages.

You should imitate your Leader. The master is not greater than the servant, when the servant raises himself to the elevation of his master. We allude to moral elevation ;

therefore act like your Master, and practise the morality of Jesus, which will lead you to the summit of eternal happiness.

(Matth. x. 23.)—Those Spiritists who are called upon to propagate the faith, and extend the New Revelation among truly civilized nations, will only have to encounter moral persecutions. In relation to them, these words signify, Do not struggle against obstacles ; and if you have rebellious and hardened spirits to deal with, leave them for a time, and turn to others, to reclaim them.

The cities of Israel denote allegorically all the nations of the earth, just as those whom Jesus addressed were spirits who had been purified by time and successive expiations and reincarnations, and were about to fulfil their destiny.

Christ will yet manifest himself to men when the time has come. He holds three missions from the Father ; his Father and your Father ; his God and your God. The two first are to prepare for the physical progress of your earth, and the physical, moral, and intellectual progress and regeneration of humanity ; and the third is to complete his work by leading you to perfection.

He fulfilled the first by his earthly mission, and in the state of an invisible spirit, with the aid of the Holy Spirit ; that is of the pure, superior, and good spirits working under his direction. The second is the new era, which is opened before you by the spirit revelation, the era of the Spirit of Truth, who comes to lead the generations of men to truth, to teach them all things, and to announce things to come. This will be effected by his Messiahs, or special envoys, and by errant or incarnate missionaries.

He will come to accomplish the third mission at the appointed time, in the character of the Spirit of Truth, as the completion and sanction of the Truth, to show you the truth without veil. He will then manifest himself to men in all the power and majesty of his perfect and immaculate purity, and surrounded by the pure, superior, and good spirits who have prepared and led you on to the time when you will be at once capable and worthy to receive the Master, and to sustain the Truth without a veil.

Yes, everything must be fulfilled. Jesus has trained the infancy of man ; now he trains and is about to develop the intelligence of mature age, and in a short time he will come to gather the fruits of his labours, and to receive those of his disciples who shall have profited by his lessons. But do not expect that this will take place immediately ; for we do not count by years and ages in eternity, as you count the minutes, hours, days and years, of your human existence.

(Matth. x. 24, 25.)—All social conditions are equal before the eternal Lord, and consequently the master is not above the servant. He alone is most worthy who practises with humility the law of love which is taught you, for only he who practises the Master's morality can be the Master's equal in morality.

Let men clearly understand the principle, object, and consequences of the divine law of reincarnation. It will teach them that human life and the conditions of society are a trial or expiation for each of them. Let them understand that trials and expiations are appropriated by the plurality of existences to the faults committed in previous incarnations, according to the degree of guilt, and with a view to purification and progress. Thus, for example, the harsh and haughty master of yesterday, however exalted or powerful he may have been on earth, either in public or private, but who has failed in his experiences as a master, is the slave, servant, or attendant of the next day. The learned man of yesterday, who was proud or materialistic, and abused his knowledge and intelligence to lead men astray, and to pervert the masses, is the blind man, the idiot, or the madman of the next day. The orator of yesterday, who has gravely abused his eloquence to lead men or nations into great errors, is the deaf mute of the next day. The man of yesterday, gifted with health, strength, and physical beauty, but who gravely abused his faculties, is the sickly, infirm, scrofulous, or deformed sufferer of the next day. The successive bodies are adapted to the trials or expiations to be suffered ; and incarnation

takes place under the conditions and surroundings requisite for their accomplishment. This will show you why two children of the same family are born into such different and opposite physical, moral, or intellectual conditions, owing to the difference of experiences, and the difference of advancement acquired by previous existences. Let men never forget that the nearest and dearest friend of the past may be, and often is, the stranger or foreigner of the next day, and that they may meet him at any moment, and receive or repulse him.

Let men remember this, and practise the law of love, knowing that human life and the conditions of society are both a trial, and the means of mutual support and assistance in the ways of reparation and progress. Let each share his material or intellectual possessions with others, and let him who gives to a needy brother give his aid freely and cheerfully, whether with his arm, his purse, his intelligence, or his advice, and especially with his example. Then the words of Jesus will be fulfilled in their entire meaning, among a reciprocal and united fraternity, "It is enough for the pupil to be as his teacher, and the servant as his master."

(Luke vi. 39.)—The blind who leads the blind is he who, instead of practising the law of love, and teaching it by word and example to him whom he guides, confines himself exclusively to teaching external and material practice, and binds a thick covering over his pupil's eyes which prevents his perceiving light and truth. They will both fall into the same ditch, and will both be subjected to expiation, but the blind leader of the blind is more guilty than him whom he has misled, and will have more to expiate.

If you would guide your brethren, begin by examining your own conduct, for it should be irreproachable. If you would give advice, begin by practising what you preach, and by abstaining from what you condemn. Then teach the way by walking in it faithfully, without ever turning aside, and you will be one of the disciples of Jesus.

(Luke vi. 40.)—Jesus, the model of all perfection, thus tells you himself that the teacher is not above his pupil, but

that the pupil can become the equal of his master. If so, is it not because the pupil shall have followed the traces of the Master without deviating from them, walking step by step in the course opened to him, always following the movements and direction of the leader who guides him? Ought not these words of humility to fill you with encouragement, and the hope of one day acquiring perfect purity, and thus imitating him who was sent to you as the most perfect type of humanity? Ought not this to sustain your courage, renew your strength, and encourage you to march on and on for ever?

(Matth. x. 25.)—These words of Jesus applied in his thought both to the time then present, and to the future, and to yourselves. Jesus was not understood by those who saw his works; and those who endeavour to revive the recollection of them at the present day, and to follow his steps, will be misunderstood at first, like him, and caricatured; but patience and perseverance will triumph over malignity and calumny.

(Matth. x. 26.)—Notwithstanding the efforts of the enemies of the Just One, his sublime doctrine traversed the ages, always increasing in the number of its adherents, though not in their sincerity and practice. Even so, you will attain your end at the present day, whatever efforts are made to oppose your advance. The New Revelation has come to continue the work of Jesus, through the Spirit of Truth, by progressively opening ever wider and wider, space and the future before progressive spirits, and nothing should remain concealed which men ought to know. Man has now reached a point where his knowledge must rapidly increase.

(Luke xii. 1, 2.)—These words of Christ were addressed to all who should become his disciples, especially at the era of the New Revelation. Both your thoughts and actions should always be pure before God. What does it avail you to deceive men by the empty semblance of virtue, if he who probes the heart and reins sees nothing there but hypocrisy? Nothing is concealed from God, and nothing ought to remain hidden from men. Man will read the book

unfolded before his eyes, both in the past or future, but he must first be able to comprehend it. Do you give Homer in Greek to a child who can scarcely spell English? Will you ask a man who cannot tell the difference between day and night to predict storms?

You know that the spirits of the Lord should teach you, but you must first be sufficiently intelligent to understand them, and sufficiently advanced in elementary studies to prepare you for classes of philosophy. What you are able to bear is always given to you, and will be progressively given to you as you are able to bear it.

Jesus addressed himself only to a limited number of minds who were capable of comprehending him. He could not have preached his system of morality openly without stupefying his hearers, and as it were paralyzing their good intentions; while his disciples, who were men living among their brethren, could shed the light on different points at once, without so much alarming the feeble spirits whom they addressed.

Jesus spoke only in parables to the multitude, in order to prepare them to receive his instructions without loading them with a burden too heavy for their weakness. If he had preached his sublime morality in clear and precise terms, he would have terrified most of his hearers. When they saw the gulf between their present ideas and the new ones which he offered to them, they would not even have attempted to pass it. The advantage of these parables to Oriental minds was that every man could interpret them in the manner most suitable to himself. Jesus rendered men familiar with the new doctrines, which were still concealed from them, and the disciples were charged to tear gradually away the veils which hid the light from their darkened intelligence, though always under the dominion and veil of the letter.

May the new Apostles of Christ, who are called upon to propagate the New Revelation, imitate the disciples of Jesus! Rend away, one by one, the veils which hide the light from the darkened intelligence of the men of your own age. Have patience and perseverance, and we will help you.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 28-31. LUKE,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 4-7.

Fear God alone, for nothing can take place without His will.

Matth. x. (28) And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul ; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. (29) Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father? (30) But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. (31) Fear not, therefore ; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke xii. (4) And I say unto you, my friends, Fear not them who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. (5) But I will show you whom you shall fear : fear him who after death hath power to cast into Gehenna ; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. (6) Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? (7) But the very hairs of your head are all numbered ; fear not, therefore ; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

§ 141. The language of Jesus was always appropriate to the time, and to the state of intelligence of those on whom he wished to make a deep impression. His disciples were alarmed at the trials and dangers of their mission, and he taught them not to fear men, and to shrink from no danger or persecution proceeding from men, but to fear God only. When he said that two sparrows are sold for a farthing, but that not one of them is forgotten before God, and added, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered ; fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows," he inspired them with the boundless confidence which man should feel towards his God. He raised them in their own eyes by teaching that they were of much more importance in the eyes of the Lord than those humble creatures which men despised at that time, because they did not understand that everything proceeds from the same principle and the same will.

Jesus was the first to tell the Hebrews that the omnipotent goodness of God stoops to these humble creatures. He prepared them to understand that although the humanized spirit is, as you say, the lord of creation, nothing in the universe moves or exists or happens except by the supreme will of God, whose paternal eye regards the mite as well as the lord of creation.

The words of Jesus were addressed to all men, both in the present and future. They must be explained to you in spirit and in truth; all the errors of the Church have originated in mistaking the letter for the Spirit.

These words were designed to show that the conduct and sentiments of men should be guided by the will of him who rewards and punishes, and whose infinite love watches unceasingly over the least of his creatures. They were also designed to strengthen the confidence which man should feel for his Creator, whose infinite intelligence soars above the universe, perceiving all details in the mass, and yet never viewing the mass apart from the details. In expressing ourselves thus, we wish to make you comprehend the vastness of the gaze of the Creator, who watches over and embraces everything in his infinite gaze, without making any distinction, like you, between the vast Whole of the universe and the thousand details which compose that Whole. Everything in the most secret recesses is unveiled before his eyes; and yet he always beholds the Whole at once.*

(Matth. x. 28; Luke xii. 4, 5.)—The only object of these words in a spiritual sense is to withdraw man from the love of himself, and to fix his attention on that within him which cannot perish. This intelligence is born of God, and proceeds from him; and setting out from the infinitely little to attain the infinitely great, must return to him in individuality and immortality.

Those who have mistaken the letter for the spirit have considered Gehenna to be a material and limited locality; a hell resembling the pagan Tartarus, and like the common cesspool which King Josiah established near Jerusalem, where the Jews threw all the refuse of the city, and corpses to which burial was denied; and where fires were continually kept burning to consume such impurities.

* It may, perhaps, help us to form a better conception of the omniscience of God if we remember that if we raise our eyes to the heavens, we see the fixed stars *at one and the same moment* as they were from three years to thousands of years ago; whereas the intelligence of the First Cause must grasp the universe, as it exists at any given moment, as one vast Whole.—TRANSL.

If we free the spirit from the letter, Gehenna is an allegorical expression with a complex signification. Gehenna is space, where the guilty spirit endures appropriate moral sufferings or tortures, in the errant state, proportioned to the faults or crimes which he has committed. Gehenna also means the primitive and other inferior worlds of trials and expiations, to which guilty spirits are condemned by incarnation or re-incarnation. Both soul and body dwell there, in a state which is a Gehenna to the guilty spirit, just as the sufferings of the errant state are a Gehenna.

Do not fear men, and when it is needful to sacrifice your body for the safety of your soul, do not tremble before those who kill the body, and can do no more ; but fear God, who can cast you after death, if you fail in your trials, into the Gehenna of moral suffering in the errant state, or into the Gehenna of reincarnation on the earth, or on other inferior worlds of trials and expiations ; for it is thus that he exerts his justice for your improvement and progress.

Man should only regard his body as a covering, and as the means of the purification of his spirit by trials and expiations. Consequently, if there is any danger of the divine emanation which inhabits the body, the soul, being lost or even injured, man should sacrifice his perishable envelope without regret. The spirit proceeds from the Lord, and owes its existence to him, and is only worthy in his eyes by its nearness to himself. It is the guardian of its envelope, and should preserve it from all stains ; but if it is called upon to choose between the loss of the purity of its spirit and the loss of its body, it should sacrifice its body to preserve the purity of its soul. If, in any danger, the life of the body is set against that of the spirit, or if the spirit is called upon to choose between purity and progress, and the guilt which would lead it into moral death, let it allow the vase to be broken to permit the spirit to escape, and ascend like a fragrant perfume to the feet of its Creator.

(Matth. x. 29 ; Luke xii. 6.)—Is not God the Infinite Goodness whose gaze embraces all his creatures in one glance ? Is he not the Omnipotent Will which controls the

universe? And does not everything which happens take place by his permission?

Nevertheless, do not imagine that his infinite greatness stoops to all the details of your insignificant existence, but his power directs all things, and the spirits who watch over the arrangements of the worlds from their formation, even to the minutest details, only act according to the superior impulse which they have received, and which is communicated from one to another until it reaches yourselves. It may thus be said that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His will.

Do not imagine that this explanation compromises your free-will in any sense. The action of the spirits who work under the powerful guidance of the Sovereign Master in nowise affects this prerogative of all spirits, whether incarnate or not. Free-will is the divine eternal emanation of the Lord, which he entrusts to all his creatures. It is the sacred fire which we ought to train to give an account of itself at the great Source whence it was drawn.

(Matth. x. 30.)—If these words of Jesus were interpreted literally, they would lead to the negation of free-will, and to fatalism; but they are allegorical. Man is free to perform an action or not; but the principles and consequences of this action are regulated by the immutable and eternal laws of Nature, which his act calls into operation. Nothing happens to man which has not been foreseen by the infinite wisdom of the Lord, who, nevertheless, permits the events of human life to take an orderly course, according to the use which man makes of his free-will. Although man is accessible to secret good and evil influences, which are incessantly striving to act upon him, and is forced to struggle between good and evil, he nevertheless possesses free-will; his own personal will: and in virtue of this he possesses the faculty of doing good or evil. After his death everything is taken account of in his thoughts, words, and actions, whether good or evil.

The infinite love of the Lord watches unceasingly over his creatures, and whatever happens to man during his

earthly existence, the care of the Lord is extended over him, through his good spirits. Not an act of his life nor a secret thought of his heart escapes him, and when the hour of reckoning has come he will be sure to find the page exactly filled up in his book of life. The Lord never abandons any of his children, and he never forgets any good action, and never leaves any evil action unpunished.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 32–36. LUKE,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 8, 9, 49–53.

Jesus came not to bring peace, but a sword.

Matth. x. (32) Therefore every one whomsoever who shall acknowledge me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father who is in the heavens. (33) And whoever shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in the heavens. (34) Do not think that I came to send peace on earth; I am not come to send peace but a sword. (35) For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a bride against her mother-in-law. (36) And a man's enemies shall be those of his own household.

Luke xii. (8) Verily I say unto you, Every one who shall acknowledge me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. (9) And he who shall deny me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. (49) I am come to send fire upon the earth, and what do I desire but that it should be already kindled. (50) And I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I distressed until it shall be ended! (51) Think ye that I came to give peace on earth? Nay, verily, I tell you, but rather division. (52) For from henceforward, five in one house shall be divided, three against two, and two against three. (53) The father shall be divided against his son, and the son against the father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother, the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

§ 142. These words of Jesus are plain enough in themselves, and have been verified by experience.

(Matth. x. 32, 33; Luke xii. 8, 9.)—He who follows the divine law which Jesus revealed to men, with simplicity of heart and humility of mind, in truth, good works, love, and fraternity, confesses Jesus, and therefore follows the path which alone leads to salvation. Jesus, the divine model for men to copy, leads the obedient man who has thus chosen the right path to the goal.

But he who follows opposite courses, and falls into the ways of pride, selfishness, and hypocrisy, and the other vices

and passions which debase humanity, wanders from the goal. He renounces the Good Shepherd by misunderstanding his law and doctrine, and the Good Shepherd cannot admit him among the good spirits, or present him to the King of Kings. He is then denied until he has acknowledged Christ by returning to his path, and practising the sublime morality of which he is the personification.

(Luke xii. 49, 50.)—Jesus came to send fire upon the earth, for the backward men of the age at which he fulfilled his earthly mission were in the bondage of abuses, prejudices, and traditions, which his doctrine was intended to supersede, and which were upheld by the Scribes and Pharisees, and the proud and avaricious priests. He wished that the fire of the teaching and example of faith, hope, disinterested abnegation and devotion, and of love and charity, should be kindled. He wished that men should gather round him to practise his teaching and example, and to disseminate it among the multitude. He expressed his ardent desire to receive the baptism with which he must be baptized, and to sanctify his mission by his crucifixion, which should cause it to bring forth fruits for all, and should prepare for the future advent of the New Revelation.

(Luke xii. 51-53.)—As Jesus brought progress to backward spirits, he provoked a conflict between those who wished to enter upon the new path, and the idle or hardened spirits who wished to remain stationary. He foresaw the divisions which would arise among men, even in the family circle, in the course and fulfilment of progress. It has been and must still be thus; therefore be prepared; for if you were all ripe at the time of harvest, it would be useless to make a selection among you, and to bring you the rays of this living light to complete the ripening of the harvest, upon which the spirits of the Lord are at work.

(Matth. x. 34, 35.)—Jesus foresaw future events, and the hatred and enmity which would arise even among the nearest of kin, and under the same roof. He foresaw the blood which would be shed in his name; and foresaw how badly his law and doctrine would be comprehended in the

future, and how it would be perverted by the substitution of a false and blind law for the love, charity, and fraternity which he had proclaimed to men, as including all that they had to do with the Law and the Prophets. He foresaw the massacres, and the bloody and fratricidal struggles which would arise in his name among men to whom he had said, "You are all brethren." He foresaw the tortures, and the *auto-da-fés* which would be kindled in his name by intolerance, fanaticism, superstition, and dominant ambition.

Yes, from the first martyr to the day of universal peace, which is yet to come, Jesus took account of all the torrents and blood which would be shed. These are evils no doubt, for they show how backward the spirits of your world were and still are ; but they are necessary evils, for blood gives birth to regeneration. Does not the actual state of things show you that the universal peace which should reign on earth is still far from shedding its civilizing benefits upon you ?

During the era of the New Revelation which is opening before you, the spirits of the Lord, like Jesus on his earthly mission, are come to send fire on the earth, and not to bring peace, but division. In truth, Spiritism is still the presence of Jesus among you, and it is still his influence which urges man to progress, and opens up a path which will lead him more quickly to it. Finally, when the Master shall come to separate the darnel from the wheat, and to complete the work upon which we are engaged, there will still be division among you, for whatever progress you may have made, there will still be backward spirits. There is thus always division among men, which will stimulate progress until the day when Jesus shall have finished his work, and completed this separation ; when all the rebellious and wilfully blind spirits shall have been cast down to worlds where they can purify themselves. Then only will the mission of Christ become a mission of peace. After having hitherto been the king of justice, he will then be king of peace.

Use all your efforts, Spiritists, to hasten the arrival of

the new era by smoothing away the difficulties which are met with on all sides. Work ardently to clear away the weeds which choke the vine of the Lord; enlighten the darkened intelligences, and sustain the weak, and aid your brethren to attain the same point as yourselves, that all may see the light, and be equally enlightened.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 37-39. LUKE,
CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 25-27.

*Family Love—Duty to be accomplished before all things—
Patience and Resignation in worldly trials.*

Matth. x. (37) He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (38) And he who does not take up his cross, and follow me, is not worthy of me. (39) He who would gain his life shall lose it, and he who shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.

Luke xiv. (25) And great crowds went with him, and he turned to them, and said, (26) If any one cometh unto me, and does not hate his own father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. (27) And whoever does not lift up his cross, and follow me, cannot be my disciple.

§ 143. These verses have often been commented upon, but have been misunderstood by those who were unable to make allowance for the epoch, the surroundings, and the intelligence of those to whom Jesus spoke. They have stopped at the letter without seeking for the spirit, and have been misled by expressions which have less force in Hebrew, and which the translators have rendered inaccurately.*

You must first endeavour to understand the true spiritual meaning of these words of Jesus, and the lesson which they were designed to teach. Man should have no other personal interest than the future of his spirit, and if any human tie is liable to turn him aside from the path which he ought to follow, he should break it.

But do not suppose that Jesus intended to preach selfish mysticism and indifference—far from that. Man may love

* It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that Jesus did not speak Greek, and that the Greek Gospels themselves do not give us his exact words.—TRANSL.

God above all things, and yet, moved by the strongest motives, which are really identical, fulfil all the obligations imposed on him by his duties to his family, whatever differences of opinion may divide the father from his son, or the mother from her daughter. Man can and ought to fulfil all his human duties with the most scrupulous exactness. But Jesus desires that you should never permit any feeling whatsoever of favour or human interest to make you false to the law of love which he came to preach. Do not commit any unworthy action to please any one whom you love on earth, for then you deny your Master, who will deny you in his turn.

(Matth. v. 37.)—He who commits an action contrary to the teachings of Jesus, to please father, mother, son, or daughter, is unworthy of him, and cannot be his disciple. Jesus is the personification of his moral doctrine, and consequently of faith. Could this pattern of love condemn family affection? You cannot think so; but he spoke of its abuse. However strong may be the affection which a man feels for those near and dear to him, it should never lead him to commit any culpable action, for if some were held to be excused by their motives, many others would believe themselves to be absolved from the guilt of a bad action the moment they could shelter themselves behind the plea of devotion to their family.

Jesus practised the commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother," as a lesson in the eyes of men; but he also reminded them that he must fulfil his duty above all things. Remember the reply which he gave to Mary when she and Joseph returned to Jerusalem in search of him, and found him in the Temple among the learned men (vol. i. § 47, pp. 84–86).

(Matth. x. 39; Luke xiv. 27).—He who does not accept the trials which he meets with during his human life, with resignation and even with gratitude, cannot be the disciple of Jesus. Jesus accepted them by way of teaching and example to men, for he was not obliged to suffer any. Therefore every one should submit to his trials for his own advancement.

(Matth. x. 39).—Jesus addressed these words to his

disciples as a caution. He desired to teach them that, whoever should fail in his mission, and abandon the accomplishment of his work to save his human life, should lose his spiritual life ; whereas he who did not shrink from death, and suffered it in the fulfilment of his work, would gain eternal life.

In a more general manner, and with reference to all ages and to all men, these words expressed the thought that the life of the spirit is the only real existence. But if, during incarnation, the spirit commits a guilty action to preserve his body, he loses his spiritual life, because he will be obliged to recommence his trials in a new incarnation ; whereas he who sacrifices his body when failure in his trials was otherwise inevitable, will receive the reward of the trials which he has thus successfully surmounted, in a better world.

(Luke xiv. 26).—The word hate is a stronger expression than that used by Jesus himself. Jesus sowed seed to germinate in a dry and infertile soil. Do you suppose that he could have spoken to the men of that age, and especially to the Hebrews, in such terms as you would use now? And do you suppose that some centuries hence, your descendants will find nothing to object to in words which you now accept with admiration?

Do not try to throw the clothing of one nation over the shoulders of another. Let each retain his defects, and what is fitting for him. You pretend to admire the ancient authors ; and you permit their mode of speech to pass current, although it is so different to your own ; but yet you do not like this to have been the case at the time when Jesus appeared among you ! Nor did he speak to learned men who were accustomed to the elegancies and refinements of language, but to a backward, material, and hardened race, who needed strong language and striking examples before they could comprehend. It was only the abuse of family affection which Jesus condemned in these words ; for this is injurious and misleading to man above all things. Man should devote himself to his family, and zealously fulfil all his duties ; but

he should not make a religion of it. He should not sacrifice the interests or happiness of those who are equally his brethren in the sight of God, to his love for his relatives ; for this would be a species of selfishness. Jesus was filled with love and devotion for all, and used expressions which were calculated to impress his hearers more strongly, that he might release them from this selfishness, and lead them to comprehend that the future of the spirit is the only interest which man should feel, and that the true disciple of Jesus should never allow family affection, or the desire of preserving his human life, to lead him into any action contrary to the teachings of the Master, and to the moral doctrine of which he is the personification.

LUKE, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 28–33.

Reflect before Acting.

(28) For what man among you, wishing to build a tower, does not first sit down to calculate the expense, and whether he has sufficient to complete it ? (29) Lest having laid the foundation, and not being able to finish it, all the beholders begin to mock him, saying, (30) This man began to build, and is not able to finish. (31) And what king, marching out to make war against another king, does not first sit down to consider whether he is able with ten thousand to encounter him who is marching against him with twenty thousand ? (32) And if not, while he is still far off, he sends an embassy to ask for peace. (33) Thus, therefore, every one of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.

§ 144. (Verses 28–30).—Before entering upon a new course, you ought to be sure that you have sufficient energy and strength of will to persevere in it. It is not good for a man to stop short when he has begun to follow the path of progress. When he is freed from his earthly envelope, he will perceive that he has lost his time, and will bitterly regret it, for he will perceive what progress he might have made by persevering, and how much still remains to be done ; for indecision only increases the difficulty.

(Verses 31 and 32).—Let no one attempt great things, unless he has the requisite strength. Let him wait and train himself, and study and work to improve himself, rather than waste his time in fruitless efforts.

(Verse 33).—In order to follow the path of progress and universal charity, you must detach yourselves from material objects, and regard them only as a means of benefiting and relieving your brethren. To renounce what you have does not mean that you should throw it away or squander it, but that, instead of attaching yourself to it, you should only value it for the good which it may enable you to accomplish.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 40–42 ; XI. 1.

He who fulfils the law of Love and Charity will be rewarded.

x. (40) He who receiveth you receiveth me, and he who receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. (41) He who receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward ; and he who receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. (42) And whoever shall give but a cup of cold water to one of the least of these, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall by no means lose his reward. (xi. 1.) And when Jesus had finished appointing his twelve disciples, he sent them thence to teach and preach in their own cities.

§ 145. Let us sum up the meaning of these words, which Jesus designed to encourage his followers both at that time and in future. He who has faith in God, and who endeavours to fulfil the law of love and charity, keeping eternal life in view, will obtain the reward of the faithful.

Verse 40 was addressed to the Apostles : " He who receives your teachings, receives mine ; and he who receives mine, receives the teaching of Him that sent me."

Verse 41 is figurative. He who acts from a praiseworthy motive will receive the reward of his intention.

You may regard verse 42 as a lesson to all men. The good which you do is always accounted to you, no matter how unimportant the action, or how mean the person whom you assist or relieve.

LUKE, CHAP. X.—VERSES 1–12, 16.

Mission of the Seventy Disciples.

(1) And after these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face, into every city and place where

he was about to come. (2) Then he said to them, The harvest is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he should send labourers to his harvest. (3) Go forth; behold I send you as sheep into the midst of wolves. (4) Carry neither purse nor scrip nor sandals, and salute no one by the way. (5) And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. (6) And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; but if not, it shall return to you. (7) And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they offer, for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Do not pass from house to house. (8) And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat what they set before you. (9) And heal the sick among them, and say unto them, The kingdom of God has come nigh unto you. (10) And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go out into its streets, and say, (11) Even the dust of your city, which cleaveth to us, do we wipe off against you; but know ye this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. (12) But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in that day than for that city. (16) He who receiveth you, receiveth me; and he who rejecteth you, rejecteth me; and he who rejecteth me, rejecteth Him that sent me.

§ 146.—The instructions which Jesus gave the Seventy Disciples are the same as he gave to the Apostles. We have already explained verses 2 and 3 (§ 122), and verses 3-12 (§ 124 to 132), and need not reconsider them. Nevertheless, there are some special points which we must mention here.

Jesus said to the Seventy Disciples: "Salute no man by the way." You must seek for the Spirit beneath the letter. These words imply: Do not go out of your way or stop short; pursue your end until you have attained it.

By "the son of peace" (verse 6), Jesus meant men who were disposed to follow the new path, which would lead them more rapidly in the way of the Lord. The peace of the Disciples is to be understood in the same sense. It implies their faith and knowledge, which would stand them in good stead whenever they found themselves among unfriendly surroundings.

"Do not pass from house to house." Jesus thus recommends his disciples to persevere, as they would thus obtain results which would be lost by too frequent changes.

(Verse 7.)—The disciples of Jesus dispensed food for the spirit, and received food for the body. Man does not live by the spirit only, and must submit to the necessities of the

body ; but the disciples stopped to fulfil a need, and freely gave what they had freely received. This is a very different thing from the demands of men who call themselves disciples of Jesus and successors of the Apostles, and who, on pretence that the labourer is worthy of his hire, traffic in the things of God by taking payment for their prayers, while they seek after wordly prosperity, effeminacy, luxury, and the feasting of life. They live thus at the expense of their brethren, and uselessly appropriate the daily bread of many families. Every man who would become a disciple of Jesus, whether priest or father, Jew or Gentile, should seek for what he needs, but never for luxury. If a man seeks for more than he requires, he ceases to be a disciple of the Master, who when on earth taught men, both by preaching and example, to practise humility, disinterestedness, self-denial, devotion, charity, and love towards their brethren.

(Verse 16.)—This applies to the Apostles and chosen Disciples, who always acted with the aid of the Holy Spirit, or the superior spirits, who constantly accompanied them on their mission. They faithfully echoed the teachings of their Master. They repeated and practised them, and thus taught their brethren to whom they were sent, both by preaching and example. Men have used these words to claim the right of life and death over the soul. They did not understand that no one entrusts a labourer with work that he is unable to accomplish ; and that it does not follow that because the father is skilful, the son should be equally so. When Jesus sent his chosen disciples to spread his Gospel, and to bless or improve, he did not give the right to any one who wished to assume it, and although a stranger might cast out demons in his name, it was always necessary that his name should be invoked with ardent faith, humility, love, and charity.

Jesus said to his disciples, Go and carry my Gospel into all the towns and villages. Go to preach the good news, for the torch of truth is put into your hands. Kindle all intelligences at its ardent fires. Let the light beam forth,

but woe to those who refuse to recognize it, for the darkness around them will grow still denser. Do not condemn those who repulse you, but shake off the dust of your feet. That is, leave them, without accepting anything from them, not even the dust which has gathered on your feet. Their lot will be heavier than that of Sodom and Gomorrah, for you offered them the light, and they closed their eyes ; and you gave them words of peace, and they closed their ears against them.

Those who have applied the command of the Master to bind and loose to themselves, have forgotten that he desired them not to take two coats, or two pair of shoes. In this case, as in all others, each took only what he required, without troubling himself about anything more.

When Jesus gave this power to his disciples, he forbade them at the same time to think of their personal welfare. He forbade them either to receive anything in return for their instructions and prayers, or to give themselves up to any kind of self-indulgence.

How have those acted who have interpreted or applied the Master's words to themselves ? How have they dared to transgress his wishes on this point, from the time that they believed themselves heirs of the powers which Jesus conferred on his disciples ? They have passed their lives in sloth and luxury, binding and loosing from the elevation of their throne, and preaching self-denial and abstinence from the midst of luxury and abundance. They have washed the feet of some poor wretches, and (in their humility) have allowed their own to be kissed.

Shame on the man who does not understand that the only way to fill a throne is to base it on the example of an austere and humble life, by trying to follow the steps of Christ in everything, and to imitate his Apostles and Disciples by practising the lessons and the moral doctrine of the Master ! How much greater would have been the power of those who call themselves the successors of the Apostles, how much more persuasive would have been their words, and how much more would they have been listened to,

obeyed, and respected, if they had preached by their own example the virtues that they recommended with their lips, in mockery of the poor, to whom they preach renunciation of worldly wealth ! But our present task does not lie in this direction, for sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. The virtues which will attract men will seat themselves one day, active and benevolent, on the summit of the mountain.

Only those who endeavour to follow the steps of Christ in everything, and imitate his Apostles and Disciples by seriously practising the Master's words, teachings, and moral doctrine which they profess, are entitled, no matter whether priests or laymen, Jews or Gentiles, to call themselves Disciples of Jesus, and heirs of the Apostles, and apply his words to themselves (verse 16).

At the present day these words apply especially to the new disciples of Jesus who are called upon to proclaim the New Revelation under the guidance and inspiration of the spirits of the Lord, and to preach and develop the law, teachings, and morality of Christ in spirit and in truth. Be, therefore, the true descendants and successors of the Apostles, by walking constantly in their steps, and by the constant practice of duty and virtue ; and never permit the white robe of your soul to be soiled by any impurity.

LUKE, CHAP. X.—VERSES 17–20.

Return of the Seventy Disciples.

(17) And the Seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in thy name. (18) And he said unto them, I beheld Satan falling like lightning from heaven. (19) Behold I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. (20) But do not rejoice for this, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in the heavens.

§ 147. Verse 18 is figurative. Whenever you struggle with any form of evil in the interests of universal love and progress, the evil will be cast into the bottomless pit, and its fall will serve to enlighten you. Whenever you venture on an unknown and difficult path, with a view to the progress of humanity and the good of your brethren,

advance bravely. The venomous reptiles upon which you tread will not raise their malevolent heads, or turn against you ; your foot will crush them, and they will slink away in shame at their defeat. The Lord protects those who work zealously at the work which he has given them to do.

Never feel any pride in what the Lord permits you to accomplish. Let it be your only aim and ambition to gain the promised reward. Rejoice if your labours allow you to hope for it, but be not vain. Those who walk sincerely in the ways of the Lord may rejoice, for their names are written in heaven. The Master always grants the labourer his hire ; and if you feel that your works are good, you also feel that you will receive the reward. You may all experience the same joy as the Master's disciples, for he sends you also to labour at the work, and you will succeed in everything you endeavour to accomplish in his name with confidence and sincerity, with the sole object of aiding in the progress of humanity.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 2-6. LUKE,
CHAP. VII.—VERSES 18-23.

John sends his Disciples to Jesus.

Matth. xi. (2) And John hearing in the prison the works of Christ, sent two of his disciples, (3) And said to him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? (4) And Jesus answered and said to them, Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. (5) The blind see, and the lame walk ; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear ; the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. (6) And blessed is he who shall not be offended in me.

Luke vii. (18) And John's disciples related all these things to him. (19) And John summoned two of his disciples, and sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he who should come, or do we look for another? (20) And the men came to him, and said, John the Baptist sent us to thee, saying, Art thou he who should come, or do we look for another? (21) And in that hour he cured many of diseases and scourges and evil spirits, and gave sight to many blind. (22) And Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and relate to John what ye have seen and heard. The blind see, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them. (23) And he is blessed whoever shall not be offended in me.

§ 148. John had heard rumours of the actions of Jesus, but was not certain if it was really him whose coming he

had heralded. He had heard reports of a man named Jesus, but as he might be only a skilful impostor, he sent two of his disciples to him to assure himself of his identity.

Jesus said, "Unto the poor the Gospel is preached." These words were spoken rather with a view to the present than to the future. The poor were neglected and uncared for. Nobody troubled himself about them ; and Jesus spoke thus with a view to relieve this miserable class, that they also might share in the intellectual progress of humanity. If you regard the expression "the poor" in a general sense as applying to all ages, the words imply, "The Gospel is preached to all," whoever they are, who desire to hear it, and feel the need of benefiting by its teachings. Jesus added, "Happy is he who shall not be offended in me." Whoever rejects the morality of Christ, rejects Christ. Happy is he who accepts his precepts, and practises them ; for he progresses, and need not fear to be rejected.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 7-15. LUKE,
CHAP. VII.—VERSES 24-30 ; CHAP. XVI.—VERSE 16.

Mission of John.

Matth. xi. (7) And when they were gone, Jesus began to say to the crowds, about John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see ? A reed shaken by the wind ? (8) But what went ye out to see ? A man wearing soft garments ? Behold, they who wear soft clothing are in the houses of the kings. (9) But what went ye out to see ? A prophet ? Yea, I say unto you, and one greater than a prophet. (10) For this is he of whom it was written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. (11) Verily, I say unto you, Among those who are born of women there hath not arisen one greater than John the Baptist, but the least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he. (12) And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of the heavens suffereth violence, and the violent seize it by force. (13) For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. (14) And if ye wish to accept it, this is Elijah who should come. (15) He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Luke vii. (24) And when the messengers of John had departed, he began to say to the multitudes about John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see ? A reed shaken by the wind ? (25) But what went ye out to see ? A man clothed in soft raiment ? Behold, they who wear fine clothing, and live in luxury, are in royal palaces. (26) But what went ye out to see ? A prophet ? Yea, I say unto you, and one greater than a prophet. (27) This is he of whom it is written, Behold

I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. (28) For I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there is no greater prophet than John the Baptist, but the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. (29) And when all the people and the tax-gatherers heard this, they justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. (30) But the Pharisees and the lawyers disregarded the will of God, not having been baptized by him.

Luke xvi. (16) The law and the prophets were until John ; from that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every one presses into it.

§ 149. Jesus thus gave his testimony to the mission which John had already accomplished, and announced his new and future mission. He thus laid the foundation-stone of the edifice of regeneration, which is rising, although but slowly. The bodily and corporeal appearance of Jesus to the eyes of men is pointed out to you as the foundation of the future progress of his ideas. They are winning their way very gradually, but they are laying aside the material covering which hampered them, and they are rising more and more towards spiritual regions. We are working at the continuation and completion of the great work of Jesus, under the eyes and the direction of the Master.

(Matth. xi. 9, 10.)—Jesus expresses himself thus because John was an advanced spirit, and more elevated than the prophets. If you estimate the ages which had passed since the period of Elijah, you will understand that in making a comparison between the time when the prophets had appeared and the time when Elijah was reincarnated as the forerunner of Christ, a vast amount of progress must have taken place. At the present time Elijah will yet be more than the Elijah of the Hebrews. When he shall accomplish his spiritual mission, his passage on your earth will not be manifested by austerity of mind and habits, but by power and science.

Nothing is stationary in creation, and moral progress stops only in the bosom of God. It continues to advance until the moment when it reaches its final limit, by the moral progress acquired at the feet of the Eternal ; but intellectual progress, or universal knowledge, is indefinite ; and when the spirit has become perfect he derives it directly from God, whom, however, he can never equal.

(Matth. xi. 11.)—In speaking thus, Jesus desired to make a strong impression upon the material and backward men to whom he spoke; and by representing John as so great on earth, and yet inferior to the least in the kingdom of God, to lead them to aspire towards this kingdom, and to desire to attain it by hearing and remembering the words spoken by the Baptist and the Master, and by following the paths which were thus pointed out to them.

The difference made between John incarnate and John as a spirit relates to the bondage of matter. No matter how elevated the spirit, it always suffers from the influence of the body which confines it; and therefore the Lord does not judge the actions of his children by the same measure that you do. You often cry anathema for human faults which arise from the organization of the machine, and close your eyes to the far more serious faults arising from wanderings of the spirit. John humanized was naturally less than John as a spirit, and when Jesus made a comparison between him and the least in the kingdom of the heavens, he desired to teach men the difference between the free spirit and the spirit imprisoned in a body. Jesus also affirmed, indirectly, and under a veil which was to be raised by the New Revelation, that he himself was superior to John, and above humanity.

(Matth. xi. 12.)—These words are figurative, and were designed to teach the Hebrews that those who only pretended to attain the kingdom of the heavens were incapable of entering it; but the guilty spirit never enjoyed, and never will enjoy, celestial happiness as long as he remains unchanged. Jesus said, "The violent take it by force," because the Scribes and Pharisees only pretended to attain the peace of the Lord by ostentatiously performing a law which they broke in their hearts; and when they arrogated to themselves all the favours of God, did they not take the eternal dwelling by force, to the eyes of the ignorant multitude? They made no real effort or attempt to attain it. Most of them resembled your philosophers, your strong-minded men, and your professed believers, who believe in nothing.

They misled the multitude, claimed for themselves the honours and profits of the world, and also usurped the happiness and peace of heaven, as it seemed to their poor blind dupes.

“For all the prophets and the law prophesied till John;” and no one has listened to the prophecies. No one has really sought to win the celestial home, although all have usurped it in thought.

The tax-gatherers were the inferior officials who obeyed the chiefs of the synagogue, received taxes, and performed those offices which brought public odium upon them. They were among the humblest, and received the word of John, and consequently the baptism of penitence, with the bulk of the people. The Pharisees were the proud sectaries who followed the most difficult ordinances of Moses with the sole object of showing their superiority to other men. The doctors of the law were those who loaded burdens on the shoulders of other men, which they themselves would not attempt to lift with one of their fingers. The Pharisees and doctors of the law took refuge in their pride, and rejected the word of John. They rejected the favour which God had designed for them by disregarding the opportunity which he had given them of entering upon the true path which leads to him. The baptism was an emblem, but the word of John was the means.

(Luke xvi. 16.)—This is a figurative expression, implying that no one seriously attempts to do what is needful for success. The kingdom of God is preached from John to your own days; but like those to whom Jesus spoke, everyone endeavours to make himself a kingdom of the earth, and to seize the kingdom of heaven by violence, or, in other words, make it a means of success by hypocrisy or anathema; but no one endeavours to penetrate into it, and to dwell there.

(Matth. xi. 14, 15.)—Jesus said this to call special attention to his words, both in the present and in future, as containing a hidden meaning; for Elijah, who was to come, had already come. Jesus was gifted with prescience,

and all future ages were unrolled before his eyes. These words should attract your attention now, as they did when they were spoken. All those who have begun the work must complete it. Do not suppose that John has ceased to work for the progress of your planet and its humanity, since his earthly mission as the Forerunner of Christ. He still continues his task, and his mission of Forerunner, in the spiritual world.

Now, that the new era opens before you to prepare and fulfil the advent of Jesus, the Spirit of Truth, as the completion and sanction of the Truth, he still comes to prophesy among you in the state of a spirit. Open your ears and hearts even to-day to his preaching, and listen to Elijah, who cries again to the people, the tax-gatherers, the Scribes and Pharisees, and the doctors of the law of your own days, and to all men, "Repent, repent, for the hour of judgment is at hand. Death may strike you at any moment, and deliver over your guilty spirit to expiation in the errant state, and then to the anguish and pain of reincarnation. The hour of judgment approaches, for the time is not far distant when your planet shall be submitted to purification by the separation of the wicked from the good, and when the spirits who have remained till then guilty, rebellious, and wilfully blind, will be cast down to the inferior worlds, where they will have to expiate their offences for long ages. Awake, awake, lest you be taken by surprise, and purify yourselves, for robbers endeavour to press into the celestial dwelling, and none will be received into it but the elect. You are all called upon to be the elect, for the Lord knows nothing of the elect and reprobate, according to your false human interpretations. Nothing impure can approach him; and the elect cannot and do not signify any but pure spirits; and spirits cannot attain to purity and perfection without passing through all the degrees of progress which lead to the summit. Therefore purify yourselves, for you may all become pure and perfect; and then, and then only, will you be of the elect, and attain to the heavenly home by approaching the Fire of Omnipotence."

Elijah—John the Forerunner—will yet reappear among you. His presence will be the signal for immense progress, both in morality and science. His future mission will be to enlarge the circle of your ideas and knowledge, by strengthening in you universal love, and the charity which flows from it.

We are not permitted to tell you the exact period when these things will be accomplished, but the time is approaching, and we refer you to what we have said in § 2, vol. i. p. 8. When you can trace the life of a man from his earliest infancy, step by step to the furthest limits of his life, without ever finding any spot or weakness in him ; when he can raise his pure forehead to heaven without ever having had to blush for any bitter recollection ; when his lips shall preach a morality to you which will be sanctioned by all his actions, even the most secret ; then you may say : “This is a superior spirit on a mission ;” and if such types of character become frequent among you, you may say : “The moment is approaching when the Forerunner shall come to announce the good news to us, and to prepare us to enter upon the spiritual life which will enable us worthily to receive the messenger of the Lord ; Jesus, the Spirit of Truth, coming as the completion and fulfilment of the Truth.” Then will phenomena be repeated upon your planet similar to that of the appearance of Jesus on his earthly mission, by purely perispritic, though tangible incorporation, under a bodily human appearance.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 16–19. LUKE,
CHAP. VII.—VERSES 31–35.

John and Jesus only comprehended by the Children of the Lord.

Matth. xi. (16) But to what shall I compare this generation ? It is like little children sitting in the market places, and they call to their companions, and say : (17) We have played the flute to you, and you have not danced ; we have wailed to you, and you have not lamented. (18) For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon. (19) The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, the friend of tax-gatherers and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Luke vii. (31) And the Lord said, To what shall I compare the men of this generation? And what do they resemble? (32) They are like little children sitting in the market-place, and they call to others, and say, We have played the flute to you, and you have not danced; we have wailed to you, and you have not lamented. (33) For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and ye say, He hath a demon. (34) The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, the friend of tax-gatherers and sinners. (35) And Wisdom is justified by all her children.

§ 150. Jesus thus, in language appropriate to the men whom he addressed, taught them how their rebellious minds rejected all evidence seeking for any explanation for his mission except the goodness of God, and not even yielding to the evidence which he offered them.

"But wisdom is justified of her children." These words applied to the future of the men who had seen, but had not comprehended. Centuries have developed their spirits, and you understand better now. The wise, the children of Jesus, are those who understand truths that the blind have rejected.

(Matth. xi. 18.)—John the Baptist dwelt apart from men. His abstemious life astonished the Hebrews, who sacrificed everything to their material appetites. The people wondered at the retired life of contemplation and abstinence which he imposed upon himself; and as they could not understand how any man could willingly choose such a life, they thought he was driven into the desert by an obsessing spirit. But John fulfilled his mission by teaching and example, as the commencement of the penitence of which the baptism on the banks of the Jordan was to be the emblem; while his preaching prepared men to enter into the paths of the Lord.

(Matth. xi. 19.)—Jesus, on the other hand, lived among men, to exhibit love and charity towards all. He familiarized the virtues which he preached, that they might be better understood. He practised them among the out-cast classes, to show proud men that their first duty is to help those who are, or whom they believe to be, inferior to themselves. He ate, as it appeared to men, at the table of the poor man, whom he taught to enjoy the true flavour of his bread; he slept, to human eyes, under the tax-gatherer's

roof, to show him the calm which springs from a pure conscience; he sailed with fishermen to inspire them with a contempt for death, based on faith and on eternity; he lived the life of a poor man among men, but not with the proud; and the proud accused him of finding pleasure in the lowest society of the period.

Are you altered, you who repeat the words of Jesus, that he is not come to heal those who are well, to save those who are not lost, or to encourage those who do not despair?

Are you altered? Are you ready to enter the hut of the tax-gatherer, and to sit down at his table, that he may forget the difference between you, and see only a man like himself, but wiser and better, and be ready to receive the lessons of probity and disinterestedness which you can give him? Are you ready to hold out your hand to those who have been living a bad life, and to say to them, "Brethren, you are following a bad course: come and lean on me. I do not fear the marks of degradation upon you, but my hand shall wipe your face, open your darkened eyes, and show you the light which shall lead you out of the dangerous road into which you have wandered. Brethren, come with me; I will find a place for you; raise yourselves, and little by little you will learn to overcome this ocean of degradation which is ready to overwhelm you."

Men and Spiritists, follow the example of Jesus, and take no heed of the proud Scribes and Pharisees of your own day. You do not live in solitude like John; follow the example of Jesus, and eat and drink at the table of the poor and of the outcast, for you will then bring them a portion of the nourishment which shall sustain them in future ages; the bread of life, which feeds the soul, enlightens the mind, and purifies the heart.

LUKE, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 36—50.

The Sinner at the feet of Jesus.

(36) And a certain Pharisee invited him to eat with him, and he went into the house of the Pharisee, and reclined there. (37) And behold, a certain woman in the town, who was a sinner, having heard that he

was in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment. (38) And stood at his feet behind him, weeping, and began to moisten his feet with tears, and to wipe them with the hairs of her head, and she kissed his feet, and anointed them with oil. (39) And when the Pharisee who invited him saw it, he said to himself, If he were a prophet, he would know what sort of woman it is that touches him, for she is a sinner. (40) And Jesus answering saith unto him, Simon, I have something to say to you. And he saith, Teacher, say on. (41) A certain money-lender had two debtors; the one owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. (42) And when they were unable to pay, he absolved them both. Tell me therefore which of them will love him most? (43) And Simon answered and said, I suppose he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast judged rightly. (44) And turning to the woman, he said to Simon, Seest thou this woman? I came into thy house, and thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she has washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. (45) Thou gavest me no kiss, but from the time I came in, this woman hath not ceased to kiss my feet. (46) Thou didst not anoint my head with oil, but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. (47) Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much, and he to whom little is forgiven, loveth little. (48) And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. (49) And they who sat with him began to say to themselves, Who is this who forgiveth sins also? (50) And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

§ 151. The event related here is an illustration of the power of repentance over the destinies of man. The sinful woman was not pardoned because she washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, and poured the perfume over them, but because the action arose from her profound and sincere repentance for her faults, and from the boundless hope and faith which she felt for him at whose feet she knelt.

She was a woman of loose character, and humbled her beauty by wiping those feet with her hair over which she had shed tears of repentance; and she also sacrificed the perfumes which she had employed to increase her attractions. These perfumes were sanctified by the contact of the Most Holy; and the sinner was cleansed from her faults by her readiness to sacrifice these luxuries, the only sacrifice in her power. This was, in fact, the renunciation of her former disorderly life, and implied the sincere promise of future reparation.

Do not mock the sinner at the feet of Jesus, but, like her, come all, without exception, to pour out before him the enervating perfumes which destroy you, and you shall hear

words of peace, consolation, and love from his mouth ; for to him alone has the Almighty Father given the power to bind and loose on earth and in heaven. The Apostles obeyed the Master, and were his chosen agents, inspired and guided by superior spirits, when they also bound and loosed on earth and in heaven.

We desire to call your attention to a few other points. Why did the Pharisee Simon invite Jesus to his house, and make him recline at table ? And how could a woman of bad character find her way into the room ?

The Pharisee wished to test Jesus, and to discover his vulnerable point, and he could only hope to succeed by forming a closer acquaintance with him. Even the introduction of Mary was a snare ; for otherwise she could no more have entered the Pharisee's house than a loose woman of your own time could enter yours without your permission.

In speaking to Simon (verses 41-43) Jesus made use of a wholly material comparison, in order to be understood by a materially-minded man. The Pharisees were not only proud, but greedy and avaricious ; and Jesus wished his proposition to be understood and appreciated by a man of such a character. He to whom most is forgiven will surely be the most grateful ; but he will not be forgiven merely because he asks for forgiveness, and his prayers must be fervent and reiterated ; for the Lord does not forgive the debt of him who is ready to contract fresh ones, but to him only who will be able to walk firmly in future, without wandering from the straight path.

The words spoken by Jesus (verses 44-47) when he turned towards the woman, had reference to the respective motives of Mary and Simon. He read the thoughts of the Pharisee, and knew why he had received him into his house.

(Verse 48.)—He then said to the woman, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." This forgiveness was not what the human Church makes it. There was deep and sincere repentance, which would be followed by reparation ; not severe, or inflicted as a punishment, as in the case of hardened criminals, but made joyfully and cheerfully, for the purpose of recovering

lost progress, and returning through pardon to the love of the Lord.

Jesus also said, "Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace." Her eyes were opened to her own conduct by her faith in Jesus. She compared the spotless life of the Master with the many stains upon her own ; and this made a deep impression on her, and urged her to implore forgiveness at the feet of one whom she regarded as a celestial messenger.

Human interpretations are altogether astray respecting the words spoken by Jesus to the Pharisee : "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, because she loved much."

When Jesus said that Mary would be pardoned because she loved much, he spoke of love from a charitable point of view. Although Mary was a loose character, she had yet a heart which felt for the sorrows of those around her. Her nature was weak and sensitive, and she had been led into an immoral life by the very excess of her love for her family, to whom she gave the greater part of her gains. Her charity was great, and no unfortunate ever implored her pity in vain. Her very fall had been an act of devotion ; and you were not told this before. It still happens that some are accused of encouraging vice under pretext of devotion to poor parents ; and this is really the origin of many vices which you drive away in shame ; whereas advice or assistance might have the same effect as the holy words of Jesus.

Mary was a weak spirit, and desired to struggle against her weakness. She had asked for too severe a trial, and failed at first, but came forth afterwards stronger and braver, not in the eyes of men (for they never pardon, though they have so much need of pardon themselves) but in the eyes of him who explores the heart, and who sees no difference between the guilty though concealed thought, and the accomplished act.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 20-24. LUKE,
CHAP. X.—VERSES 13-15.

The Impenitent Cities.

Matth. xi. (20) Then he began to reproach the towns in which most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. (21) Woe to thee, Chorazin, woe to thee, Bethsaida, for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they might have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. (22) Moreover, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. (23) And thou, Capernaum, who art exalted to heaven, shall be brought down to Hades, for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it might have remained until to-day. (24) Verily I say unto thee, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in that day than for thee.

Luke x. (13) Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida, for if the mighty works that have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they might have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. (14) Moreover, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. (15) And thou Capernaum, who art exalted to heaven shalt be cast down to Hades.

§ 152. These words relate to the condition of the spirits who were incarnated at that period. When Jesus said that Tyre and Sidon would have repented in sackcloth and ashes if they had seen the miracles which had been performed in Chorazin and Bethsaida, he made use of material images, appropriate to the minds of that age. The repentance of the spirit consists of bitter remorse for its faults, and subsequent expiation ; but everything is moral. Would it have been possible to make such material beings as even the first Christians understand that moral penitence would be enough to atone for a fault in the sight of God? They saw nothing in their transgressions but the outward act, and consequently could only admit a material reparation. Judge otherwise, dear pupils. Fix your attention on the spiritual act, and do penance for this. Then you will commit no material actions in future which might offend the Lord. Let the spirit rule your body, and the submissive flesh will become an obedient instrument, suited to render the purification of the spirit easier and more rapid.

Jesus said that the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon would be dealt with more severely than those of Chorazin and


Bethsaida, who had received the light, and had rejected it; and that it should be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the judgment than for Capernaum. The crimes of Sodom tended most to the degradation of matter, while those of Capernaum tended towards the rebellion of the mind. Jesus only made this comparison between Sodom and Capernaum to teach men that the most serious of all crimes which deserve punishment are those committed by the intellect. Your Father knows the weakness of your material organism, and its wanderings are only punished in proportion to the participation of the rational spirit. Capernaum had received light, had witnessed miracles, and had proudly rejected everything; whereas Sodom, a town sunk in the debasement of matter, would perhaps have risen above its brutal passions at the Master's word, and if it had beheld the miracles, would perhaps have accepted the light, listened to the voice of repentance, and renounced its crimes by giving the spirit predominance over brutal instincts.

Do not be surprised at Jesus saying that Sodom *might* have remained till that day. You know that Jesus was in direct and constant sympathy with God, and was doubtless possessed of prescience of the future, as well as knowledge of the past. If he said "it *might* have remained," it was because he did not wish to appear to men to pronounce upon the actions of Him whom no human being can fathom; for you must always remember that Jesus was to appear to the Hebrews as a man like themselves, and did not appear to them to arrogate the judgment of God.

When Jesus said of Capernaum, "Thou who art exalted to heaven" (thou who hast been flooded with light, and hast proudly rejected it), "shalt be cast down to Hades," he made use of expressions appropriate to his hearers. By Hades he alluded covertly to the sufferings of guilty spirits, first in the errant state, and afterwards during reincarnation on your earth, or on still lower worlds of trials and expiations. Hades signifies the conscience of the guilty, and any place of expiation. It is no fixed locality. The errant

spirit suffering in space is really, wherever he is, in Hades, as Jesus said allegorically ; or as you say, in hell, for he always finds himself in a place of continual tortures. The incarnate spirit is also in hell, when he is imprisoned in flesh in the lower worlds of trials and expiations, and endures those physical and moral sufferings or tortures which are the secret penalty derived from his preceding incarnation, and relative to what his previous existences have left to be repaired.

Jesus alluded to the day of judgment when speaking of Tyre and Sidon and the other cities. He made use of a figure, or a comparison, and his words are to be understood as follows :—"I tell you that the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida will be judged more severely than those of Tyre and Sidon who present themselves together before the Supreme Judge, and that those of Capernaum will be judged more severely than those of Sodom, who present themselves together before the Supreme Judge." You must take account of the figurative style ; the necessities and requirements of the age ; its prejudices, and the state of its intelligence ; and the need of veiling the truth until your own days, when the New Revelation has come to free the spirit from the letter, to prepare men to become the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth. The thought of Jesus was veiled at the time, but in speaking of "the day of judgment," he did not allude to a "last judgment," as the Church says, when every offence, from the beginning of time, will be recalled. The inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, Chorazin and Bethsaida, Capernaum and Sodom, and all other guilty spirits who have dwelt on your planet since the origin of man, have suffered judgment after death, at the termination of each existence ; for they have suffered expiation in the errant state, and subsequent reincarnation. Among the guilty spirits belonging to the various towns of which Jesus spoke, some have finished their expiatory trials, and others have greatly advanced. Only a few will await the period of the renovation of your planet without having attained the object of their desires.



There will be no "last judgment," as the Church calls it ; but during the last days of your material era, the rebellious spirits will be cast down into the inferior worlds, and only those who have arrived at the degree of perfection which they ought to attain will be permitted to remain on your earth, and advance with it in the path of progress. But this is not the idea of the last judgment which man has pictured to himself under the influence of false human interpretations due to the influence of the letter. The guilty spirits will be removed gradually, and the earth will be purified in a way which will be almost imperceptible to you ; for its renovation will not be the result of a violent shock, but of continued progression.

You are still in a material era at present, since you are subject to the empire of matter, and your planet is adapted to fulfil the conditions necessary for your existence ; but the time will come when the earth which supports you will follow the same progress as your bodies, and will become essentially elevated, purified, and etherealized. The stronger becomes the power of your spirit, the more will your material necessities become reduced, and just as there is a vast physical difference between yourselves and the first men who were cast upon your globe (matter, life, and material organs belong to matter, and spirituality to spirit), even thus is your globe destined, like all others which are suspended in space, to follow a progressive course till the day when its transformation shall have been completed, when you will live spiritually and fluidically on a fluidic world, as men freed from matter.

The period of the renovation of your planet will be that when the spirits who still remain rebellious will be gradually drafted off from your world to the inferior worlds when they leave the former, and when what you call public calamities will thin the population, that it may renew itself more rapidly.

The physical life of your planet will follow the same progressive course as the spirit, which will owe its physical progress, in harmony with that of your sphere, to its moral

and intellectual progress. Everything which has been and will be formed in space and eternity is regulated according to the immutable laws of nature, which God has planned and established for the progress of the forming spirit, or spiritual essence, and for that of those spirits who have failed, and thus been subjected to human incarnation. Thus your planet has arisen from impure fluids, and has progressed until it has arrived at its present material condition. From this it will progress continually to a less and less material state, until it finally arrives, by various transformations, at its fluidic state, when the earth and its humanity will be freed from all the impurities of matter.

Every shock and displacement of your planet tends to bring about this transformation. You can understand that when the earth is required to fulfil other functions, it cannot occupy the same position in space. Ages pass away, and these displacements are effected little by little, and at length your planet will rise to her place in the regions of the ethereal fluids, among which you will be required to live; and another, passing in its turn from the centre of formation, will come to perform the present functions of your globe. At the last period of transformation, when your planet is prepared to pass into the purely fluidic state, and when your humanity is ready to pass into the condition of pure spirits, Jesus will appear, as he himself has predicted to you, clothed with all his power, and in all the majesty and glory of his perfect and immaculate purity, and will come to show you the truth without veil; to lead you to the Fire of Omnipotence, and to cause you to know the Father.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 25-27. LUKE,
CHAP. X.—VERSES 21-22.

The Wise and Prudent and the Infants.

Matthew xi. (25) At that season, Jesus answered and said, I praise thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast concealed these things from the wise and quick-witted, and hast revealed them

to infants. (26) Verily, O Father, for thus was it fitting in thy sight. (27) All things have been given over to me by my Father, and no one knoweth the Son but the Father, nor doth any one know the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son is willing to reveal him.

Luke x. (21) In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in his spirit, and said, I praise thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast concealed these things from the wise and quick-witted, and hast revealed them to infants. Verily, O Father, for thus was it fitting in thy sight.

(22) And turning to his disciples, he said, All things have been given to me by my Father, and no one knoweth who is the Son, but the Father, and who is the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son is willing to reveal him.

§ 153. (Matth. xi. 25, 26 ; Luke x. 21.)—Jesus sought to encourage his disciples, lest they might be alarmed at the task which was imposed upon them. The work of the Lord is entrusted to the simple and innocent, the weak and the small, not in your sense, but in the sense in which you should understand these words. It is entrusted to those who put their trust in the Lord, and have faith and confidence in him, and not to those whom men call strong-minded, who will not admit the truth of anything but what they believe themselves to have discovered, demonstrated, and taught ; and who, in their pride, deny the aid and influence of spirits, and attribute everything to the sole power of their will and intelligence. The truth will long remain hidden from them, for they resemble too rich land, which produces large crops of weeds, which stifle the good seed scattered there by the wind. Such men must exhaust their strength in useless efforts ; for the superabundant soil must exhaust itself before the good seed can draw thence its needful support, without being choked by superfluity.

Jesus taught men that the Lord does not choose those who enjoy abilities which men admire, but those who are simple in heart, humble in mind, and trustful and loving. The wise and prudent, and the infants of whom Jesus spoke, are those who appear thus in the eyes of men, but the judgment of God is different from that of man.*

(Matth. xi. 27 ; Luke x. 22.)—In these words Jesus

* Swedenborg says the angels of the inmost heaven appear as little children.—TRANSL.

alluded to his own elevation and mission as the protecting and guiding spirit of your planet and its humanity. Jesus alone among the men to whom he spoke was able to comprehend the infinite greatness of God. This was due to the will of God, who had given him the remembrance of his origin, which is extinguished by matter ; and the knowledge of the future, which human eyes do not possess. Jesus, being a pure spirit clothed with a tangible perisprit, was the only one among men who had not undergone human incarnation in the same sense as yourselves. He was always a pure spirit, notwithstanding his corporeal human appearance, and could therefore comprehend his God, and likewise his own nature.

The words, "All things have been given me by my Father," relate to the direct communion existing between the Lord and his messenger. Owing to this direct communion, all things were constantly placed in the hands of Jesus by his Father. The remainder of verse 27 was designed to teach men that they can know nothing of heavenly things, which are extra-human, and belong to the other world, except by revelation. The words allude to the revelation which the Spirits of the Lord now bring you by his command at the time fixed by him for the commencement of the new era. They will teach you who is the Son, for they will teach you the spiritual origin and position of Jesus, and the doctrine personified by him, by explaining and developing, in spirit and in truth, the words, teachings, and moral doctrines of the Master, and the meaning of the revelations and prophecies which he pronounced during his earthly mission.

These words also allude to the future revelation which Christ, the Son, will bring you at the time which he predicted. He will then show you the unveiled truth, and instruct you "who is the Father."

The spirits of the Lord are teaching you "who is the Son ;" endeavour, therefore, to walk in his steps. Prepare yourselves, by making yourselves worthy and capable by an

active and sustained advance in the path of moral and intellectual progress, to receive the Master, who will teach you "who is the Father."

He who does not comprehend either the greatness or the justice of God, does not know him. He who limits his power, and contracts it to his human intelligence, does not know him ; and therefore it is only he who receives and accepts the revelation who can say, when he receives it, that he knows his God in proportion as he has thus been progressively revealed to him.

The New Revelation teaches you "who is the Son," and thus prepares you to make yourselves worthy and capable of knowing "who is the Father ;" for it enables you to understand your past, and to look forward to your future. Do you not know, Spiritists, that the Lord has given you a task to accomplish which your sins have rendered difficult, but which, by indefatigable exertions, you will succeed in accomplishing, and that you will then receive your reward by returning to Him from whom you have sprung ? Do we not lift the veil of the past spontaneously whenever it is necessary ? And have not these details of your former existences which we have thus given you awakened in you the remembrance of your origin, which matter has obliterated ? Are not those aspirations towards perfection, with which we constantly seek to inspire you, the lifting of a corner of the veil which hides the future, and which we raise to show you God on his immutable throne, waiting till his repentant children return to his feet, to complete the task which he has entrusted to them ?

The man who desires to understand needs no explanation when he has entered on the spiritual path with sincere faith and love. He who receives and accepts the New Revelation, may understand his past and future, because he knows whence he comes and whither he goes ; under what conditions he is living on the earth, what he should do, and what he should avoid ; and according as he does it or not, what will await him and happen to him after death.

He may comprehend his past. Does he not actually know that he has failed, and has therefore been humanized, and sent to the lower worlds of trials and expiations, where he has begun the work of his reformation, and must continue it on earth by toil, humility, disinterestedness, charity, and love, according to material, moral, and intellectual order? Does he not know that although matter has obliterated in him the remembrance of his previous existences, he may yet discover traces of them, when enlightened by the torch of Spiritism, and by carefully studying the bent of his conscience, thoughts, words, and actions, as well as of his evil tendencies and instincts; and thus ascertain what he ought to repair, expiate, avoid, and acquire, in his present existence?

He may know his future. Does he not actually know that when he has completed and finished his trials or his task, according to the will of God, in the lower worlds of trials and expiations, he will take rank among the pure spirits, and will then only have to advance gradually in the errant state, and through successive reincarnations, either on a mission in the inferior worlds, or in the superior worlds, until he has attained to perfection, which alone can lead him to God?

MATTHEW, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 28-30.

The Easy Yoke, and the Light Burden.

(28) Come hither to me, all ye that are weary and burdened, and I will relieve you. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

§ 154. Follow the path which has been traced out for you. Jesus has shown you the road which can alone lead you to eternal happiness; and let every sorrowing soul seek his aid. Every man, however great his sorrows or sufferings, will find in him the Great Physician who can heal all wounds. He is the light of your minds, and enlightens the

darkness imposed on you by the flesh. For your sakes he became a man, to your eyes ; and suffers with you, and like you. Your tears flow from his eyes, and his heart sympathizes with your sorrows. He sends spirits to you, who can lighten your sufferings ; and what does he ask of you in return for so much love and devotion ? Does he require any sacrifice from you ? Is it to his glory ? It has attained its summit ! Is it your love ? All the spirits of the Lord esteem it happiness to bow before him ! He only asks you to toil for your own happiness, under his directions ; he stretches out his hand to you, and even upholds him who refuses it.

O come unto him ! His yoke is light ; he does not lay it upon you, for you are at liberty to receive or to reject it, and he does not use violence, like men, to compel you to follow his ways. He does not command you to believe or die ; but tells you, " In Me there is life."

Follow his holy advice, and walk in his ways ; and, whether you call yourselves Christians, Jews, or Muslims, whatever may be your external worship, or to whatever earthly nation you belong, come ye all to Him. He leads the sheep to green pastures, where no devouring wolf has ever appeared ; he leads them to the superior worlds, inhabited by pure spirits, and to the fluidic worlds, where spirits dwell who have attained to perfection.

You who are weary and burdened by the weight of sufferings caused by your trials, come to Jesus, and he will relieve you. Will you not find the pattern of courage and resignation in him ? Is it not his sweet, simple, and persuasive language which renews your sinking courage, and gives you balm which you can apply to your wounds ? Is it not Jesus himself who anoints them, and upholds you with his mighty hand, to help you to overcome the obstacles against which your weakness feels itself unable to struggle ? Take his yoke upon you, and learn of him that he is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls ; the progress you make will lead you to perfection ; for you will purify yourselves by following his morality. You will acquire peace of

mind by freeing yourselves from your impurities ; for the moment your soul has nothing more to expiate, it will enter into the rest of the Lord. But by this you must understand active rest, full of good works and great deeds. It is not rest in your sense of the term, except as being the end of sufferings and expiations.

The yoke of Jesus is easy, and his burden is light. He who follows Jesus with his whole soul does not bear a heavy yoke, for his morality is easily followed by any one who lays aside the narrow views of humanity.

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