

If someone does not make a sufficient effort, so that he does not even inherit the place below Perfection, he should undergo proper treatment in the quarters of the 'sick' or he should be fattened with the 'milk of the children'. By keeping those commandments that have been given to all people let him become a 'blessed one',<sup>3</sup> in other words, an Upright one. In the case of someone who has fallen from Uprightness, it is necessary for his good works to exceed his evil works in number if he wants to be rescued from hell and be saved, instead of slipping down and sinking into torment. If he does sink into torment after all, at least his agony will be a little more endurable.

2. To those who want to become Perfect, our Lord has said the following:

- To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; pray for him and be Perfect.<sup>4</sup>
- If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.<sup>5</sup>
- If anyone takes your coat by force let him have your cloak as well.<sup>6</sup>
- Love him who hates you, bless him who curses you, pray for the one who harms you and persecutes you.<sup>7</sup>
- Say: 'Our Father (c.29) in heaven, forgive us as we have forgiven'.<sup>8</sup> This is because Jesus said, 'When you are

3. Mt 25:34  
 4. Lk 6:29; Mt 5:39  
 5. Mt 5:41  
 6. Mt 5:40  
 7. Lk 6:27  
 8. Mt 6:9,12; Lk 11:2,4

offering your confession to God, forgive your brother, be reconciled to him and then offer your gift'.<sup>9</sup>

- Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not and you will not be condemned.<sup>10</sup>
- And who made me a chief or a judge over you?<sup>11</sup>
- Yet if I do judge, my judgment is true.<sup>12</sup>
- I have not come to judge the world, but to teach them in lowliness, to save them, and to be an example to my disciples, that they should do as I do.<sup>13</sup>

3. To those who want to become Perfect, I teach this:

- A good tree bears good fruit.<sup>14</sup>
- Overcome evil by doing all kinds of good to everyone.<sup>15</sup>
- I have no support for my head on earth.<sup>16</sup>
- Imitate me and abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.<sup>17</sup>
- By this all people will know that you are my disciples, that you love one another.<sup>18</sup>

(c.32)

- A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you.<sup>19</sup>

9. Mt 5:23ff  
 10. Lk 6:37  
 11. Lk 12:14  
 12. Jn 8:16  
 13. Jn 3:17, 9:39  
 14. Mt 7:17

15. Rm 12:21  
 16. Mt 8:20  
 17. Jn 15:10  
 18. Jn 13:35  
 19. Jn 13:34

□ Bless and do not curse.<sup>20</sup>

□ Do not call one another fool, or empty-head, or idiot, or odious fellow.<sup>21</sup> For if you do that, you will not attain Perfection.

4. Whoever curses, gets angry, or finds a fault in himself but does not eradicate it, will not attain Perfection.

□ Whoever does not leave everything, take up his cross and follow me (that is, my way of life), is not worthy of me.<sup>22</sup> That means, he will not inherit the kingdom of heaven together with those who do take up their cross.

□ Whoever looks back is of no use to me.<sup>23</sup> That means, whoever abandons these major, gentle, and renunciatory commandments, descends to the minor ones.

□ Whoever hates his life, loves me.<sup>24</sup> This refers to whoever does not love the life of this transient world.<sup>25</sup>

□ Everyone who finds his life will lose it.<sup>26</sup> That is, he who weans it, but lets it fast from the world.

(c.33)

□ Whoever does not forgive seventy times seven is not worthy of me.<sup>27</sup> That means that whoever demands reparation for even small injuries will not become Perfect.<sup>28</sup>

□ Whoever does not wash the feet of his enemies—as I did to Iscariot—because he knows that they will hand him over to death is not worthy of me.<sup>29</sup> That means that he will not

20. Rm 12:24

21. Mt 5:22

22. Mt 10:37ff; Luke 14:26ff

23. Lk 9:62.

24. Jn 12:25; literally, 'he who hates his soul (=himself)'.  
*one's willingness*

25. 1 Jn 2:15; 'life' also in Syriac.

26. Mt 10:39

27. Mt 18:21

28. Mk 6:15

29. Jn 13:3-15

become Perfect and become my brother, my mother, my sons, and my sisters.<sup>30</sup>

□ Whoever does not go to whoever needs him, as I went to John (the Baptist) who needed me, will be no disciple of mine.<sup>31</sup> That means, he will not be great.<sup>32</sup>

□ Everyone who humbles himself will be exalted, but everyone who exalts himself will be humbled.<sup>33</sup> That is so because (to exalt oneself) is an abomination before God.<sup>34</sup>

□ Give to him who begs from you. That is to say, whatever you possess.<sup>35</sup> If you possess earthly goods, give from out of them. And if you possess heavenly goods, then give from out of those to him who asks for it. Otherwise there will be material envy in the case of someone who holds back material goods, and spiritual envy in the case of someone who holds back the Word from a person who is capable of it.<sup>36</sup>

5. Pray and do not lose heart, that you may not enter into temptations and afflictions.<sup>37</sup> (c.36)

□ [Saint Paul said:] To keep me from boasting of the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to afflict me, to keep me from saying 'I have been highly exalted' or 'I have achieved very much'.<sup>38</sup>

□ Do not be anxious about what you shall eat or what you shall drink.<sup>39</sup> That means: do not work for the sake of your own belly.<sup>40</sup> *but do send others, ... do not give this as excuse to not work.*

□ Those who keep these commandments and who are born

30. Mt 12:49; 2 Co 6:18

31. Mt 3:14

32. Mt 20:26

33. Lk 18:14

34. Lk 16:15

35. Lk 12:33-34; Mt 6:19-21

36. Cf. 1 P 3:15

37. Lk 18:1, 22:40

38. 2 Co 12:7; Jr 9:24

39. Mt 6:25; Lk 12:22

40. Rm 16:18

again, are like the wind that blows where it wills.<sup>41</sup> That is, they are in heaven with our Lord, and there is no power that can overcome them, because they have conquered in the fighting without, in that they have no strife or battle with humanity; and they have discarded the fear within<sup>42</sup> in that they only fight against sin and not against their brothers, the sons of Adam, even if the latter kill them. Therefore, they have delivered their will and liberty from him who wants to subject them to slavery;<sup>43</sup> they see the Lord himself in the Spirit, in this world as in a mirror, and when they have departed from their bodies, they will see him face to face,<sup>44</sup> as from glory to glory.<sup>45</sup> For they closed their eyes and shut their ears to wickedness, seeing the King in his beauty in distant lands.<sup>46</sup> (c.37)

6. Count everyone better than yourself and become all things to all people.<sup>47</sup>

□ Everyone who does not follow in my footsteps,<sup>48</sup> and does not enter into the house of tax collectors and prostitutes to teach them, as I have done to set you an example,<sup>49</sup> will not become Perfect.

□ Let all people know your forbearance; greet everyone with a holy and pure kiss.<sup>50</sup>

□ Blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are those who make peace with everyone.<sup>51</sup> They are the ones who not only reconcile their own enemies, but also help to settle the disputes of other people with their enemies. Thus they obtain the trees of the paradise above the heavens. Adam was al-

41. Jn 3:8

42. 2 Co 7:5

43. Ga 5:1; Col 3:5; Rm 8:21

44. 1 Co 13:12

45. 2 Co 3:18

46. Is 33:17

47. Ph 2:3; 1 Co 9:22

48. 1 P 2:21

49. Mt 9:10; Lk 15:1

50. Ph 4:5; Rm 16:16

51. Mt 5:8ff

lowed to eat of these trees<sup>52</sup> and enjoy them, before he obeyed the Evil One, and so was thrown out of paradise; its gates were shut in his face, not to reopen until Jesus decided to do so. For he broke down the wall of hostility,<sup>53</sup> and reconciled himself to the creation, making peace between what is on earth and what is in heaven by the blood of his Cross.<sup>54</sup>

7. Now the large trees of the spiritual paradise, of which those who keep the major commandments eat, are the following: faithfulness, abstinence, (c.40) lowliness, love, hope, truthfulness, and holiness in our Lord.<sup>55</sup> These are the things they eat and enjoy with our Lord.

Finally, I must say that no one should call any food common or unclean, as Simon (Peter) did.<sup>56</sup> These commandments, and other similar ones elsewhere in the New Testament, have been given to the one who wants to become Perfect. This person must use these commandments,<sup>57</sup> and abandon the others that are 'vegetables and milk',<sup>58</sup> in the same way as a child gives up [sucking] the milk of his mother as it gradually grows stronger. Then, instead of 'accuse your brother in court' and 'consider him as a Gentile',<sup>59</sup> the opposite is valid: 'judge not',<sup>60</sup> and 'forgive him whenever he sins against you'.<sup>61</sup>

The minor commandments, and other similar ones that have been given, are like the milk of the children and the vegetables of the weak; their effect is that a person does not grow up and is never healed. For this reason, I have taken special care to expound them, because there are people who want to become Perfect, but find themselves surrounded by the Evil One who out-maneuvers them with

52. Gn 2:16

53. Ep 2:14

54. Col 1:20

55. Ga 5:23; Ep 2:22

56. Ac 10:14; cf. Mk 7:14-19, Ga 2:12

57. That is, the major commandments.

58. That is, the minor commandments.

59. Mt 18:17; cf. Ga 2:14

60. Mt 7:1

61. Lk 17:4

means, go to the sons of your own people and preach to them. Again: 'When you enter a village, ask who is worthy in it, and stay with him'.<sup>6</sup> 'Do not greet anyone on the way.'<sup>7</sup> 'When anyone does not receive you, shake off the dust from your feet as you are leaving, and it will be easier for Sodom on the Day of Judgment than for that town.'<sup>8</sup>

Are not these things, which our Lord said, contrary to the major commandments? After all, he himself said, 'Count everyone else better than yourself',<sup>9</sup> and 'Whenever you visit pagans at home, eat what they put before you'.<sup>10</sup> These two phrases seem to contradict each other: 'Visit pagans at home' and 'Do not go on the way of pagans'. (c.108) Our Lord really gave both these commandments. But he himself did not even ask first who was worthy before coming to stay. No, he stayed with bad people, so that the Pharisees murmured against him, because he always ate and drank with sinners, publicans, and prostitutes. 'Those who are healthy do not need a healer,' he said, 'only those who are entrenched in doing evil.'<sup>11</sup> Those words go further than the saying: 'Enter with him who is righteous and worthy'.

5. The Apostle also, while being 'all things to all people'<sup>12</sup> himself in order to be able to counsel all people, commanded others not to mix with sinners in the way he himself did. For what would have happened if people who could not tell good people apart from bad had mixed with bad people? For this reason our Lord and the Apostle gave their disciples those commandments because of their weakness, which was the result of their immaturity. Just as when one who gives bread to a baby and seeing that he cannot eat it and is tormented by hunger, immediately gives him milk, which his physical capacity allows, with the result that he can now suck happily—thus did our Lord and the Apostle.

6. Mt 10:11  
7. Lk 10:4  
8. Mt 10:14

9. Ph 2:3  
10. Lk 10:8  
11. Mt 9:11ff

12. 1 Co 9:22

Because the disciples were truly children and had not yet grown into the knowledge of perfect disciples and were outwitted by clever speakers, they were afraid to visit pagans at home. In those days there were very many pagans. The Jews who feared (c.109) the Lord avoided the pagans as much as they could. For the Lord slew those sinners among them who visited pagans at home and who imitated them, forsaking Him and adoring idols. Because they had no power to resist, evil drove them to its way of thinking as soon as they looked to the pagans.

*Before one  
is strong, one  
must avoid  
the situations  
that would be  
harmful.*

6. Seeing this, the Lord commanded the disciples, as children, not to visit pagans at home. For they thought, because they did not yet know the truth at this time, that whoever went off to teach the pagans was committing a sin, and that the Lord would slay him just like those who had exchanged the Good One who had fed them for Satan who was out to kill them; those who exchanged the living image for the dead calf. These people were bound with strong ropes, like slaves who had rebelled against their masters. Scripture says, 'Woe to those who call evil good and good evil'.<sup>13</sup> Just so the Israelites called the evil one who seduced them in the desert good, 'This is the Good One who brought you out of Egypt',<sup>14</sup> and they gave the impure one the holy name, 'The Mighty One of Jacob'.<sup>15</sup> So it is not the person who loves sinners, admonishes them and holds them to be good people—better (c.112) than himself—who incurs the wrath of God, but rather whoever distorts God's truth and whose love for evil people stems from the fact that he acts like them.

*Also the Lord as  
- M. Lerner*

7. Thus [God] made them grow into knowledge step by step and he kept them from stumbling blocks until they were full grown and filled with the Spirit and would stumble

13. Is 5:20  
14. Ex 3:24  
15. Is 49:26

no more. For, 'Everyone who cannot retain solid food must feed on milk until he knows the truth'.<sup>16</sup> And 'Do not greet anyone on the way';<sup>17</sup> that means, do not speak with anyone until you have arrived at the place to which I have sent you. Our Lord told them this so that they should not, for the sake of a greeting, be caused to stumble or quarrel or strive if they happened to fall in with some argumentative person on the road.

Yes, our Lord gave them these commandments because they were children. But as they grew strong and big, they were allowed to become all things to all people, to help all people, and to counsel all people according to the example that our Lord gave speaking to all people in such a way as they could understand. For no one is punished for the sins of others and no one is rendered impure by contact with sinners, provided he does not imitate their works. The Apostle<sup>18</sup> expressed this when he said that not only those who commit sins are sinners, but also those who associate themselves with what they do; this is the case (c.113) with someone who turns a blind eye on thieves, adulterers, and murderers and so becomes their associate in murdering or stealing or adultery, or who shares in their spoil, or who is bribed to keep the secret. Because of any of these things, he places his portion with them.<sup>19</sup>

8. Now if someone admonishes them in private and does not expose them seeing that they are his fellow human beings and because he would hate anyone to expose him if he had gone astray—with the result that he would have to beg everyone who saw him, 'Do not reveal me, or else I shall die'—such a person is not committing a sin. This is what one should say to a person who has gone astray, when observing him or hearing about him: 'My son, a bribe I shall not accept, but because love covers sins<sup>20</sup> and because

16. Heb 5:13-14  
17. Lk 10:4

18. 1 Co 5:9f  
19. Ps 50:18

20. Pr 10:12

I hate the disgrace of being exposed just as much myself, even if I had committed a murder, for this reason I shall do nothing that would make me fall from Uprightness. If I myself would hate to be exposed, how could I expose others and so become unjust instead of righteous? Therefore, no evil will come upon you through me.' It is written (c.116) thus, 'Evil comes, but woe to him through whom it comes'.<sup>21</sup> Let us understand that evil does not come upon people by itself. Someone either brings it on himself, or a neighbor brings it on him. Or it is brought on someone if God wants to test him or glorify him by means of Satan, like Job.

*This Ave may not be  
this report as evil.*

9. It is evident then, that, in general, evil comes on someone through evil people—either through himself or through his neighbor. My son, evil will not come on you through me who just happened to see you, but if it has come through someone else who has seen you sin, or if it is through you yourself because you have committed this crime, then you must beseech God and make a covenant with him that you will not do this again and he will have mercy on you. But if you do not do this, then, even if you manage to escape the hands of people who know clemency, God will bring his wrath upon you. For you have hurt the heart of a person who is of your kin from Adam.

Far be it from me that evil comes through me and that I should do evil to anyone. In this way a person should correct his neighbor in private when he sees him commit a sin. In this way, he does not place his portion with adulterers and murderers, nor does he associate with them, but he is holy and fulfills the law of Christ. For whoever exposes the sinner does that which he hates other people (c.117) to do to him and he becomes unjust instead of righteous. If evil comes through him, he receives woe; yes, 'Woe to him through whom evil comes'.

21. 1 P 4:8