

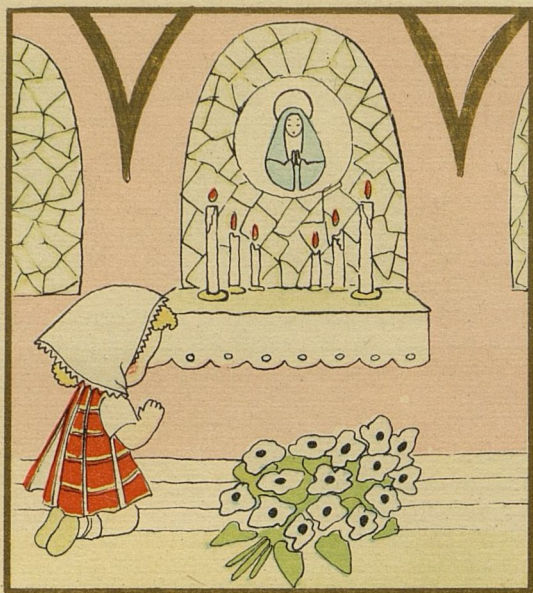


VIDA ESPIRITUAL

When the ship is surprised by a storm and the hurricane and the furious waves threaten to sweep it away and dash it to pieces against the coast, the sailors cast out the heavy anchor that, with its long chain, seeks to grasp the ocean bed and to resist until the danger passes.

When the storms of life — which are troubles, sorrows, failures, disillusionments — drag you towards the abyss of despair and utter anguish, cast the powerful anchor of your faith heavenwards, moor your soul to Jesus and He will give you strength to resist evil and to come triumphant to fair weather.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

The examination of conscience is a practical means of intensifying the spiritual life and of increasing in worth every day. It is to look at oneself from within.

The spirit possesses the faculty of recognising itself as good or bad and of knowing what must be done and what must not be done.

Examination of conscience is the investigation and study of our actions. The actions are deeds or words. In words too, we can be rough or refined, generous or mean.

A grocer takes the reckoning at the end of the day, to know how much money he has made. You too, reckon your account in order to find out if you have behaved well or ill in the various circumstances in which you have had to act. It is more important than the balancing of money.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

Like one who pulls thorns out of his flesh, remove from your soul the feelings that make a child most repulsive: vanity, envy, hate.

If a companion is taller than you, or learns lessons with greater ease, or has a very pretty suit, treat him with the same affection as the others; you do not wish to humiliate him, you do not feel any annoyance on that account.

To be presumptuous and arrogant is to be empty-headed, to be really worthless, to have an exaggerated idea of one's own value.

The upright man does not hate; he pities the ignorant and misguided.

Hate is a worm within the heart.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPiritUAL

You consist of a body and a soul. Hygiene in all its forms is desirable for the body. Thus, for example, hygiene of the skin means scrupulous cleanliness; hygiene of the stomach consists in eating what is necessary, without overeating or taking harmful foods; hygiene of the lungs means breathing pure air in abundance.

The soul also has its hygiene: to think no evil; to prevent oneself from being carried away by wicked feelings; to learn humility and obedience; to know how to address a prayer to God.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

To a little twelve-year-old orphan who goes to Mass and carries out her religious duties, I say,

"Your mother is watching over you."

Noticing that she seems frightened at these words, I ask her if she does not understand.

"I understand", she answers me, "but it is impossible. My mummy is dead!"

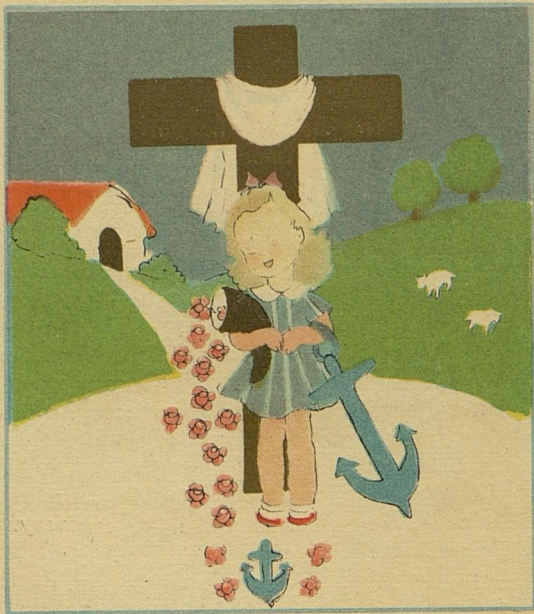
It is essential that no child should live in ignorance of the most indispensable of all things, the principle of religion.

A human being is both soul and body. The body dies. The soul does not.

The spirit of the little orphan's mother could see her and help her from heaven.

Anyone who does not know this is to be pitied for his ignorance.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

Look at the sun in the garden, in the park, on the beach, in the country, over all nature: it pours itself like a blessing on creatures and objects, in floods of light and life and joy.

Human beings, in addition to this, possess an immense and pure sun for the spirit:

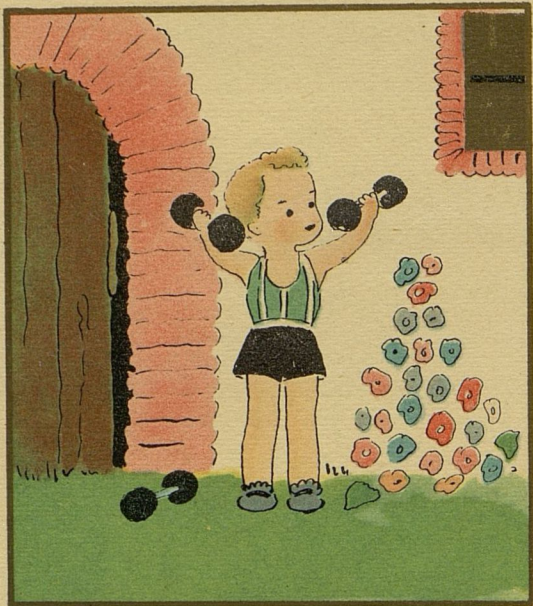
Jesus, the Son of God.

Jesus illumines us within, gives us powers, comforts and encourages us.

Jesus is to our inner life what the sun is to nature.

Without Jesus we should walk in darkness. He guides us and lights our way.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

The soul is ever striving against the body. If the body attains the mastery, the man becomes inferior. We say that such a man is common and vulgar. Some go further and say, "He is a beast", meaning that he is material and nothing else.

If the soul dominates, the better man emerges, ruled by ideas and noble feelings.

He is admired and quoted as an example of will-power and virtue.

The relationship between the soul and the body is the same as that between the rider and his horse.

The soul must be the rider: it is the master, it determines the direction, prescribes the course, gives the order to advance or to go back.

The body is to be given what it needs but it must not be allowed mastery or power.

Constancio C.Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

When you get up every morning think:
To-day I shall try to be better than yesterday. I live to make myself better. Just as I wish to advance in my studies so also I wish to perfect my character, my feelings, my whole soul.

When you go to bed every night think:

I have lived another day; I have fulfilled my duties and obligations; I am happy and grateful to the goodness of God. Now as I go to sleep I entrust myself to God. My last thought is for God, our Heavenly Father. Oh, my God, I am good; I want to be still better.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

There are three virtues as necessary to you as eating and drinking.

Faith: feel it truly in your heart. You must believe in God blindly and resolutely, in such a way that neither any thing nor any person can separate you from Him.

Hope: it is not enough for you to say that you trust in God: you must rest quite tranquil in His justice. This hope must be your consolation and shield against disappointments and griefs.

Charity: A Christian's charity means not only helping one's neighbour, but also loving him, desiring his happiness, sharing his sorrows and joys.

Have faith, hope and charity, and, then and there, you will be rich and mighty, for you will possess the best wealth and the greatest power.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

To pray is something very wonderful. To pray is to put oneself in communication with the divine beings who are in heaven.

Jesus taught us to communicate with God by means of the "Our Father", the most sublime of prayers.

Say "Father" twenty times; say "Our Father" twenty times, to see if you understand this wonderful thing which in the end will fill you with emotion and sweetness. Think how all of us human beings have a Father in God; think how grown-ups and little ones, when they say "Our Father" feel that they are all brothers, united in love with Almighty God.

Constancio C. Vigil



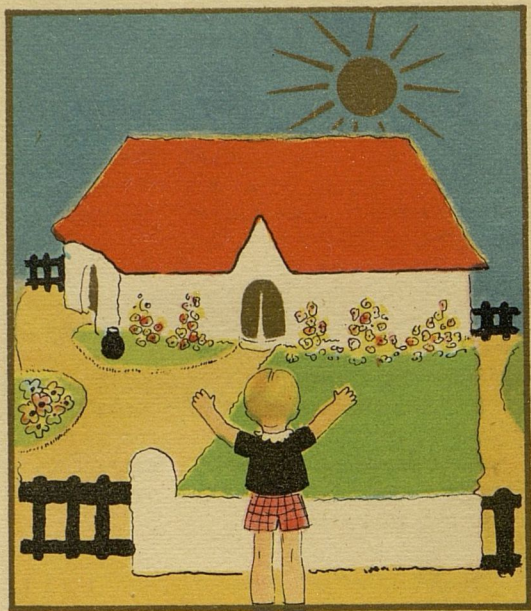
VIDA ESPIRITUAL

Every morning when you wake up, your strength, your will and your joy return; you are stirred by a desire to see your parents and your brothers and sisters, and to go to school.

Even though you are awake for all this you may go on sleeping as far as the spiritual life is concerned. So you must waken yourself up every day, first in the body, then in the spirit.

As your spirit wakens you will feel determined to be better than before: you will feel that you are a soldier in God's army: you will know the value of a "yes" and a "no" because you will be valiant against all evil, and you will have the impression that you are bigger without having grown, and stronger with the same muscles.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

You know what is good and what is evil. Something tells you. It is an inner voice; it is your conscience, your soul.

To convince yourself, imagine that you are going to break a window-pane in your house, that no one will see you and no one will be able to tell who broke it. Conscience says to you, "No, do not do it."

You make up your mind to go to your mother and give her a kiss. Conscience says to you, "Yes, go and kiss her".

This "something" that speaks to you thus in your inner self is your surest guide. Accustom yourself to consulting it and following it faithfully. You will save yourself many sorrows.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

You must accustom yourself to feeling united to the Divine Power. You must realise that no action is hidden from the eyes of God, nor is there any good deed that He does not reward. Thus you will surely find peace of heart: thus you will not depend on human judgments which are fickle and capricious.

Sometimes it will happen that you have done a good deed and nobody knows about it. Do not let this matter to you. It is enough that God knows it.

Sometimes you will do something bad and nobody will know. Be sorry and do not do it again. God has seen you.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

Let us suppose that you have a stick in your hand. You see a flowering rosebush. The idea of striking it and destroying the roses occurs to you. You could very easily do so because you are strong and skilful enough to strike wherever you please.

But you do not do it.

You do not do it because you are a good child and you think, "This rosebush is very pretty; it is pleasant to see. To destroy it is nasty and wicked: I cannot do it."

Gradually you will accustom yourself to distinguish between good and bad. And you will do only what is good.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

If you have been under the impression that eating, sleeping, reading, writing and reckoning, playing and growing were the only things necessary for life, you have been making a great mistake. The body and the brain possess one life; another life is that of the spirit.

In order to live the spiritual life which is very superior to the other, you must love God and feel Him always at your side; you must convince yourself that worth and goodness are recompensed in one way or another, late or soon; you must look for the opportunity of doing at least one good work every day. This work of yours can consist of a few kind words or a righteous or benevolent deed.

Show what you are made of. Justify your existence.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

To appreciate the difference between the material and the spiritual life, let us compare the two great sensations: pain and pleasure.

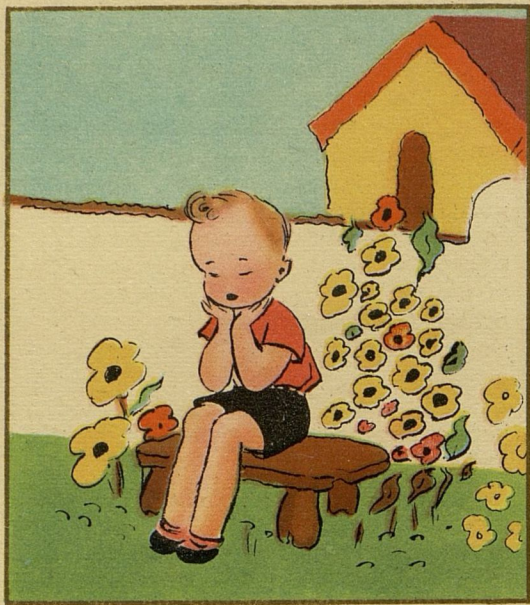
You eat a sweetmeat which you enjoy very much. It is a material pleasure. In a few minutes the enjoyment is over.

You have a penny. You meet another child who is very poor and hungry. You give him your penny. All that day you will remember your good deed. A year later, twenty years later, you will remember how one day you gave up your coin so that another child could buy bread. This pleasure is spiritual. It is pure and lasting.

If you trap your finger when you shut a door you will feel pain. But this pain goes away and the following day you have already forgotten it. It was a material pain.

You displease your mother very much, you steal something or you act dishonourably towards a companion. Conscience tells you that you have behaved badly. You are upset because you have acted in this way. This pain will trouble you for a long time. This is a spiritual pain.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

Sometimes you say, "When I am big . . ." It seems as if nothing would please you so much as being tall and bulky. But perhaps there is a misunderstanding in this. You say that you want to grow and what you really desire is to be worth more, to be more than you are in intelligence, will and power. It is not a question of having bigger bones, longer legs and an enormous tummy. It is not your ideal to be the same size as an elephant or a rhinoceros. What you desire is the growth of the soul; to be big in your words and actions, to triumph through your righteousness, so that you will be loved for your goodness.

Who are the great men? A child can become great without increasing in weight and size.

Change that phrase a little so that it will express your meaning more accurately. Instead of saying, "When I am big", say, "I want to be big", and you will obtain your wish without waiting for the years.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

I would like all little boys to understand the following words from *The Fallow Land*: "To be better to-day than yesterday: to-morrow better than to-day: this is the great aim of life".

If, each day, we use our will-power to free ourselves from a defect we shall succeed in attaining perfection almost without effort. To that end it is desirable for us to discover our own faults or to have them pointed out to us. In our manner of speech, in the words we use to say a thing, in the movement of our limbs, in our way of looking, in everything, we have much to learn, much to improve. There are, for example, various expressions for refusing something, from a plain "no" to a pleasing phrase, full of courtesy and refinement. Thus the refusal is less harsh.

Use your will-power for the great work of your life—your progress towards perfection.

Constancio C. Vigil

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VIDA ESPIRITUAL

From a selfish point of view it suits a man to be good. In fact, no wicked person can feel happy. Even though it does not seem so, the harm we cause to others will come back on our own heads. To prove that this is so, notice what happens to you when you hurt a companion with rough words. In a little while you will think over what you said; you will understand that you have behaved badly; you would rather have expressed yourself in another way. You possess only one means of freeing yourself from your grief: to go up to the person you have offended and ask pardon of him for your words.

Your affliction will be greater if you use actual violence against anyone. It will make you grieve more because it will hurt you in your soul. You will feel the pain longer, for your conscience will remind you of your cruelty, for days, months and years.

In order to feel happy you must first be good.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

To-day you are healthy and happy, tomorrow you may be ill or hurt yourself or have some disappointment.

Life is like this and we must be ready for its changes and fickleness.

Do not consider yourself a privileged creature, exempt from pain; realise that you have to be ready and armed to resist it; you must always live in communication with Jesus, Who is everything great, strong and merciful that you could desire for your support and help. If you rely on His support you will feel powerful in spite of your smallness and frailty. Pain is stronger than our bones, muscles and nerves; it overpowers and vanquishes the whole body. Only the spirit dares to defy it and, supported by Jesus, it can prevail.

CONSTANCIO C. VIGIL



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

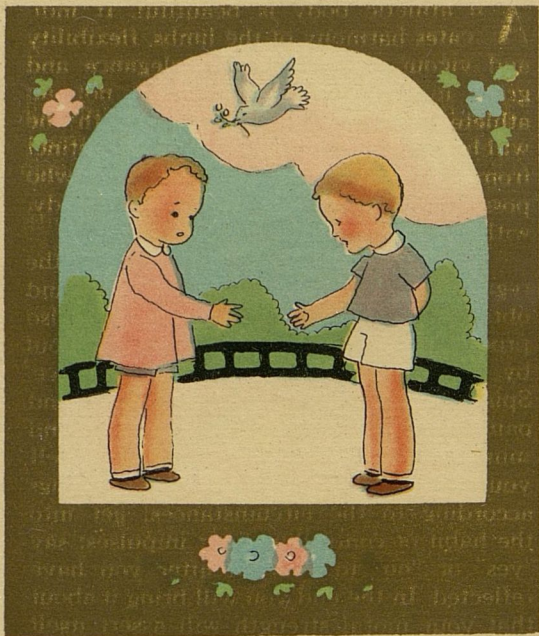
The first person you must convince of your goodness is yourself. Your conscience cannot deceive you. And when it tells you that you are good, when that voice from within declares it, your heart will overflow with gladness.

For you can choose among many occupations and professions, you can acquire a special skill that makes you notable, but nothing else is worth so much as being good.

When they say of a man, "He is a great engineer"; or, "He is a very skilful blacksmith"; or, "He is a famous painter", the principal thing remains to be known, "Is he good?"

Being good is the great occupation, the noblest profession, the inexhaustible treasure, the highest wisdom, the best business, the true glory, the supreme happiness.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

An athletic body is beautiful. It indicates harmony of the limbs, flexibility and vigour in the muscles, elegance and grace in the whole. A man is not an athlete because he has great strength: he will be a strong man. The athlete is distinct from this and superior: he is a man who possesses a healthy and perfect body, within the limits of his person.

In the same way that you procure the regular functioning of your organism and obtain health and vigour, so you also procure the health and power of the soul by means of will and perseverance. Spiritual improvement calls for daily and painstaking exercises which you can and must perform. For this you must tell yourself to do or not to do things according to the circumstances; get into the habit of controlling your impulses; say "yes" or "no" to yourself after you have reflected. In the end you will bring it about that your moral strength will assert itself in all circumstances.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

Even among the most savage peoples and from the earliest times there has been a doctor for the body and also a doctor for the soul, that is to say, the priest. Even the ignorant have understood that, besides bones, muscles and blood, there is something else in their beings which is not material, something that goes on living when the body dies.

Such certainty is the reason why ancient peoples placed offerings, useful things and even food, in the tomb of their dead. They thought that after death they went on living as before and with the same bodily needs. In this they were mistaken, but in the fundamental idea they were right; life goes on; the soul, parted from the body, survives death.

Constancio C. Vigil

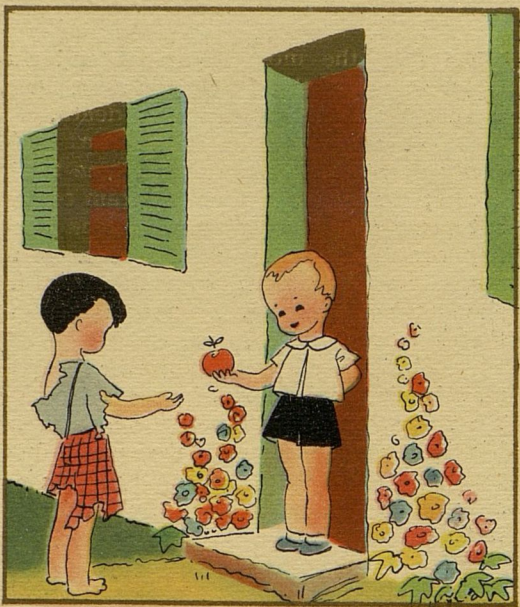


VIDA ESPIRITUAL

In order to understand the prayer, "Our Father", you will need many days, many years, much intelligence, much virtue. On saying, "Our Father Who art in heaven", pause, consider what it means, repeat these six words slowly, pronouncing the syllables well, until you perceive their meaning. For it is a marvellous thing to say that, besides the father who is head of your home, who gave you this life, who provides for your needs and safeguards your future, you possess another father, Who is father of all of us human beings, and Who is in heaven.

When you add in your prayer, "hallowed be Thy name", resolve to sanctify it, to respect it, to reverence it, in intentions, words and deeds. Make up your mind to be a worthy son of such a Father.

Constancio C. Vigil



VIDA ESPIRITUAL

The first, the most important and the most useful thing that you must learn is that life does not end with death.

We are travelling in a train: suddenly it enters a tunnel: for a time there is complete darkness, then the train comes out again into the brightness and the journey continues. When we die it is as if we entered a tunnel: everything is in shadow, but presently brightness returns, that is to say, life goes on.

This life of yours, however long it may be, is just a part of your existence. That is why we talk about our earthly life, our passage through the world. For we come to the earth, and on dying we go away. It is essential to understand this well.

Constancio G. Vigil