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SPIRITISM

IN ITS MOST SIMPLE EXPRESSION.

A SHORT

EXPOSITION OF SPIRITS' DOCTRINE

AND

THEIR MANIFESTATIONS.

BY

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There is no salvation without love
to God and charity.

(Le Spiritisme à sa plus simple expression.)

LEIPZIG.

FRANZ WAGNER.

SPIRITISM

IN ITS MOST SIMPLE EXPRESSION.

The History of Spiritism.

About 1850, in the United States of America, public attention was directed to several strange phenomena, consisting of noises, knockings and movings of different objects without any apparent cause. These phenomena were renewed frequently, spontaneously with extraordinary intensity and persistence; but it was also remarked that they were chiefly produced by the influence of particular individuals, called thence *Mediums*, who could, in some sort, recall them at their will, which gave motive to repeat the experiments. For this purpose tables were specially used — not because they themselves contributed more than any thing else to the success of the experiment, but only they could be more easily moved, and because it is more convenient and more natural to sit round a table than any other piece of furniture. Hence arose first table-turning, afterwards the movement of the table in all directions, jumpings, overturnings, upheavings, loud rappings, &c. At the beginning this phenomenon went under the name of turning or dancing tables.

Until now these phenomena was explicable by the action of the electric, magnetic, or any other unknown fluid; and such indeed was the opinion first

arrived at. But very soon in this phenomenon the action of intelligence was observable; thus, the table, in its movements, was subordinate to man's will, directing itself to the right or left, towards any indicated spot or person, rising on command on one or two feet, knocking designated number of knocks, and beating or marking time. Hence it became evident that the cause was not physical: and according to the axiom: *if every movement has a cause, then every intelligent movement (or effect) must have an intelligent cause*—the conclusion inevitably followed, that the cause of that phenomenon must be *intelligent*.

But of what nature is then this intelligent cause? that was the question. The first idea was, that it may be a reflexion (reflex) of the intelligence of the medium or of the persons present; but experience soon proved the impossibility of such a supposition, since results were obtained quite different from the thoughts and knowledge of the persons present and mediums, even contradictory to their ideas, their will and wishes; consequently they could only belong to an invisible being. The means of proving this was very simple: it became necessary to converse with this being; which was managed by means of a certain number of knocks already agreed upon, to signify *yes* and *no*, or the letters of the alphabet, and thus answers were received to different questions addressed to it. These phenomena were called *speaking tables*. All the beings with whom communication was thus held, being questioned as to their essence, declared that they were *spirits* and belonged to the invisible world. Such effects being produced in divers localities by means of different persons, and being besides scrupulously watched by very serious and learned men, it was impossible to admit that all was but the effect of illusion.

From America this phenomenon came into France and into other countries of Europe, where during

several years turning and speaking tables were in fashion and became a drawing-room amusement, destined to give place, when they lost their interest and were set aside, to other diversions.

Soon the phenomenon presented itself in another form which constituted it a subject of more than mere curiosity. The limits of this short description prevent us from following it in all its phases; we will at once address ourselves to what is the most characteristic about it, and what particularly attracted the attention of serious men.

Be it said beforehand that the reality of the phenomenon encountered many adversaries; some, utterly regardless of the honesty and disinterestedness of the experimenters, saw in it nothing but clever juggle and trickery. Those who recognise nothing beyond the material, believe only in the visible world, and think that all dies with the body — in one word, materialists, who pride themselves on being “*esprits forts*” — ranged the existence of invisible spirits among the absurdest fables, taxed with madness and ridiculed unmercifully those who believed in them. Others, unable to deny facts, and under the influence of certain ideas, attributed these phenomena to the exclusive power of the *devil*, thus endeavouring to frighten timid minds. But nowadays the fear of the devil has singularly lost its spell; he has been so much spoken of, represented in such divers ways, that all have become familiarized with the idea, and so wished to profit by this opportunity to discover more about his reality. The consequence was that excepting to a few timid women, the news of the apparition of the real devil had in it something so attractive for all who had before seen him only in pictures or on the stage, that it produced a great excitement and sensation; and thus those who desired by this interpretation to obstruct the progress of new ideas, acted against their own object, and involuntarily became propagandists

the more successful, the more violent was their opposition. Other critics had no greater success, because to acknowledged facts and categorical reasonings they had nothing better to oppose than bare denial. Read what they have published on the subject, you will find everywhere the proof of their ignorance and lack of serious observation of facts, and nowhere a decided proof of their impossibility. All their arguments may be thus condensed: "I do not believe, consequently what you assert does not exist; those who believe are mad; we only have the privilege of reason and good sense." It is difficult to calculate the number of disciples brought over both by serious and facetious criticisms, because both alike advance only personal opinion, apart from any convincing proofs in support of their opposition. Let us return to our subject.

Communication by means of rappings was found to be slow and insufficient, and it was discovered that if a pencil were fastened to any movable object, such as basket or a board, on which fingers were placed, such object would move itself and would trace certain characters. Later it was acknowledged that these objects were but unnecessary accessories, experience proving that spirits which acted on inert matter and directed it according to their will, could equally act on the hand and arm to guide the pencil. Thence *writing mediums* — that is, persons who write involuntarily under the influence of spirits, and thus become their instruments and interpreters — are now in use. By their means there is now no longer any limit to the communications, and the exchange of ideas, which can be made with as much rapidity and development as between living persons. The discovery of this new world was an immense field for research — the world of the invisible, which was like the world of the infinitesimal beings that had been discovered to us by the power of the microscope.

What are these spirits? What part do they play

in the universe? For what object do they communicate with mortals! Such were the first questions to be solved. It was soon made known by these spirits themselves, that they are not beings of a different order in creation, but the real souls of those who have existed in this or in other worlds, souls which, having thrown off their mortal tenements (bodies), are now filling space and wandering through it. Doubt became no longer possible when converse could be held with spirits amongst whom people recognised their friends and relations, — when the spirits themselves gave proof of their existence, demonstrated that death had passed only over their bodies, and that their souls or spirits were still living, abiding here amongst us, seeing and observing us, as in life, surrounding with their care those whom they loved and love, and the remembrance of whom still constitutes their sweetest consolation.

Their exists generally a false idea of spirits; they are not abstract, vague and indefinite beings, or shining lights or sparks, as many represent; on the contrary, they are true, real beings, possessing individuality and definite form. An approximate idea of them may be arrived at by the following explanation.

Man is composed of three essential parts: 1) the *soul*, or the *spirit*, that is, an intellectual principle, whence emanate thought, will, and all moral feelings; 2) the *body*, or the material covering, a coarse and weighty envelope, by which the spirit communicates with the outer world; 3) the *perispirit*, an ethereal (permeate) fluid or envelop, serving for union and intermediary between spirit and body. When the exterior envelop is worn out and can function no longer, it falls, and the spirit throws it off, as the fruit its shell or the tree its bark — in a word, as one casts aside a worn-out coat: this is what we call *death*. So death is but the destruction of the coarse envelop of the spirit: the body only dies, the spirit never. During

life the spirit is in some degree bound down by the ties of the matter united to it, that which often paralyzes its faculties; the death of the body delivers it from these bonds; it is free from it and recovers its liberty, like the butterfly rising from its chrysalis; but it leaves only the material body, preserving the perisprit, which forms for it a kind of ethereal body, aerial, imponderable for us, having human form, which seems to be the original type. In its normal state the perisprit is invisible, but the spirit has the power to submit it to certain transformations, which render it temporarily visible and even palpable, as it happens with condensed vapour. Thus is it that spirits can sometimes make themselves visible to us, and by means of their perisprit can operate on inanimate things and produce the different phenomena of rappings, motions, writing, &c.

Rappings and movings are means used by the spirits to manifest their presence and to call attention towards them, just as a knock at the door informs you that somebody is coming. Some spirits are not satisfied with moderate rappings, but produce noises like the breaking of crockery, the opening and shutting doors, and throwing down pieces of furniture.

By means of raps already agreed upon they can express their thoughts, but writing is the best, the quickest and the most convenient method: therefore they prefer it. The same power by which they can direct individuals to write words, they can also enable their hand to draw, write music, play any instrument; in one word, being themselves incorporate, they make themselves sensibly apparent to humanity through and in the medium.

Spirits can also appear in many other ways. Some individuals called *hearing mediums* have the faculty of hearing them, and thus can converse with them; others can see them: these are *seeing mediums*. The spirits appearing to the sight, generally present them-

selves in the form which they had when alive, but indistinct, vague; sometimes however these apparitions have the exterior form of living body, so that they have frequently been taken for real in flesh and blood, and people could converse and shake hands with them, without suspecting that they were in the presence of spirits, and becoming aware of it only by their sudden disappearance.

The faculty of seeing spirits generally and constantly is very rare, but isolated apparitions happen often enough, and particularly at the moment of death; the emancipated spirit seems to hasten back to his parents, relations and friends, to inform them that though he has left the earth he is still alive. Let each one recall the past, and he will see how many real cases of that kind have come under his notice, not only by night, during sleep, but even in broad daylight, when wide awake, and for which he had no accounting. Formerly such cases were considered as unnatural and miraculous, and were attributed to sorcery and witchcraft; now the sceptic attributes them to imagination; but since the doctrine of spirits has given the key to all this, we understand how they are produced, and that they are not out of the order of natural phenomena.

It is also believed that spirits, simply because they are spirits, must be endowed with the highest knowledge and wisdom: experience has proved that this is an error. Many spiritual communications with which we have been favoured have been sublime in their high eloquence, wisdom and morality, breathing forth the very intensity of goodness and benevolence; others on the contrary are common, frivolous, even coarse, showing the most perverted instincts. It is then evident that they cannot all emanate from the same source, and that if there are good spirits, there are also bad ones. The spirits being only the souls of men, they cannot become perfect immediately after

quitting the body; until they have improved they must preserve some of the imperfection of their carnal state; therefore we see spirits of different degrees of good and evil, knowledge and ignorance.

Generally spirits are happy to put themselves in communication with us, and they are glad to see that they are not forgotten. They willingly describe their impressions on leaving the earth, their new position, their joys or sufferings in the world where they are: some are very happy, others unhappy, some are even in horrible torments, according as their lives have been good or bad, useful or useless. In observing them in all the phases of their new existence, recalling their former positions on earth, their deaths, their human characters and habits, we arrive at an incomplete but sufficient knowledge of our future state in the invisible world, and foresee the happy or miserable destiny awaiting us.

An entire moral and philosophical science, called *Spiritism*, has arisen out of the instructions and answers which spirits of the highest order have given on all subjects and questions belonging to humanity, and which have been carefully collected and arranged. Consequently *Spiritism is a science founded on the existence, manifestations and teaching of Spirits*. The philosophical part of this science is thoroughly laid down in the *Book of Spirits*, the practical and experimental part in the *Book of Mediums*. From the following examination of these works one may judge of the variety, extent and importance of the subjects treated in them.

As we have already seen, Spiritism had its origin in the simple phenomenon of table-turning; but as these facts were more patent to the eye than to the intellect, and excited curiosity rather than sentiment, that curiosity once satisfied, general interest ceased for that which no one understood. But when the theory came to explain the cause, it was quite different,

especially when it was evident that out of these turning tables — which for some time had served for general amusement — emanated a whole moral science, speaking to the soul, dissipating the agony of doubts, satisfying all aspirations as to the future life, which insufficient light had left hitherto in vagueness and uncertainty. Then thoughtful men accepted the new doctrine as a blessing, and since that time, far from falling off, it has extended itself with incredible rapidity. During the space of three or four years it gained innumerable disciples, particularly amongst the learned in all parts of the world; their number is constantly increasing, so that it is incontestable now that spiritism has taken its established place in the world of science, and rests on such solid bases that it defies the attacks of all adversaries, the most virulent as well as the more moderate, — and the proof is that neither attack nor criticism has arrested even for a moment its advance, a fact ascertained by experience and which the adversaries of spiritism could never explain; spiritists answer simply that it is spreading in spite of critics, thereby vindicating its excellence and the authenticity of its proofs over those of its adversaries.

Still spiritism is not a new discovery; the facts and the principles on which it is based date from the earliest antiquity; traces of it may be found in the creeds and religions of various nations and in the works of many religious and profane writers; only with them careful observation was wanting, and superstitious ignorance supplied the needed explanations of facts, and thus no desired conclusions could be derived from them. In short, spiritism is founded on the existence of spirits; but spirits being only the souls of men, must have existed from the time humanity exists: spiritism has neither invented nor discovered them. If, then, souls or spirits can appear to men, it must be that their apparition is according to nature,

and consequently they must have so manifested themselves from the beginning of time. Indeed, everywhere and in all times, particularly in sacred history, do we find facts of these manifestations. To modern times belongs only the logical explanation of facts, a fuller comprehension of the nature of spirits, their mission, manner of acting, revelation as to our future state, and above all the establishment of the science and doctrine of spiritism in all its branches. Among the ancients the principle existed, to us moderns have the details been revealed. In antiquity the study of these phenomena was a privilege confined to certain castes, that revealed them only to those who were initiated into their mysteries; in mediæval times persons occupied with these mysteries were looked upon as sorcerers, and were burnt; but now mystery has ceased generally, and men are no longer burnt; all is done openly, and any one can instruct himself as he wishes in this doctrine, and also practice it, since mediums are found everywhere.

Even the doctrine itself that is taught by the spirits has nothing new in it; we find it in fragments in various Indian, Egyptian and Grecian philosophical writers, and in its entirety in the doctrine of Jesus Christ. What then is the use of Spiritism? It confirms by new testimony, and proves by facts, truths hitherto unacknowledged or misunderstood, and re-establishes those which have till now have suffered from false interpretation.

We acknowledge that Spiritism does not teach anything new, that is true; but is it nothing to prove clearly and irrefutably the existence of the soul surviving the body, its individuality after death, its immortality, the certainty of future punishments and rewards. A great many persons believe in this doctrine, and yet within them a vague, hidden doubt remains, translating itself often in the depths of their souls by the suggestion, "And what if this be not true!" How

many have been led into unbelief only because futurity has been represented to them in such an aspect that their reason refuses to accept it. Is it nothing, then, for the hesitating unbeliever to be able to say: "Now I am convinced," or for the blind to have the light restored? Through facts and their logic, Spiritism removes all doubtful disquietude from the soul, brings back to religion those who have abandoned it; and discovers to our minds a new world, which surrounds us everywhere and in the midst of which we live without suspecting it. It makes known to us by the example of those who once lived the condition of our future happiness or misery; explains the cause of our earthly sufferings and suggests means for alleviating them. The inevitable effect of its spread will be the destruction of materialism, which will be compelled to yield before the force of evidence. The man who is convinced of the greatness and importance of his future existence in eternity, comparing it with the uncertain and fleeting nature of his earthly life, mentally elevates himself above the frivolous vanities of men, and knowing the cause and the end of his sufferings, bears them with patience and resignation, because he knows that they are the means for attaining to a higher state. The reappearance of those who have returned from the other world to communicate to us their joys and sufferings proves the reality of a future life, while it demonstrates also the justice of God, who does not leave any vice unpunished, nor any virtue unrewarded. Lastly we may add that communications with our lost and beloved friends afford us the sweetest consolation, proving as they do, that they not only exist, but also are less separated from us than if they were alive and in a distant country.

In short, Spiritism soothes the bitterness of life's sorrows, overcomes despair, dissipates doubts and fears of the future, stops at its source the very thought of shortening life by suicide, and so contributes to

the happiness of those who are convinced of its truths. Herein we may see the great secret of its rapid extension.

As regards *religion*, Spiritism is based on the fundamental truths of all religions: on the existence of God, the existence of the soul, its immortality, future rewards and punishments; and yet it is independent of any particular worship. Its aim consists in proving to those who deny and those who doubt, that the soul exists, that it survives the body, that after death it must support the consequences of good or evil done during its life within the body; these truths are found in all religions. As regards *belief* in spirits, spiritism also belongs to all religions and to all nations, because everywhere are men there are also souls or spirits; their apparitions have always been recurring and are common to all religions without exception.

Thus one may be Grecian or Roman catholic, Protestant, Jew or Musulman, and believe in the manifestations of spirits, that is, be a spiritist; the proof of which is that Spiritism has its votaries in all sects. As a *moral* doctrine, it is essentially christian, what it teaches is the development and application of the doctrine of Christ, incontestably the highest and purest of all, — proof pre-eminent that this doctrine is the law of God and its moral is a matter of world-wide interest.

Spiritism being independent of any special worship or creed, and imposing none in particular, nor taking up with any one dogma above another, is not a religion of itself, since it has neither its ministers, nor its temples. To those who ask if they do well to follow such or such rites, it answers: If your conscience demands them, you are right to follow them. God will always reward good intentions. In one word, it imposes itself on none, it does not address itself to believers who are satisfied with their faith, but to the

great number of doubters and sceptics; it does not separate them from the church, since they are morally separated from it either entirely or partially; it leads them half way back again to it, it remains for the church to do the rest. It is true that Spiritism combats certain tenets, as for instance the eternity of punishments, the material fire of hell, the personality of the devil, &c.; but is it not very certain that these doctrines, when laid down as imperative, have always engendered and still engender unbelievers. If Spiritism, by rational explanations of these and several other dogmas, brings back to religion those who had abandoned it, does it not render a service to religion? With reference to this a venerable priest said: Spiritism forces men to believe in something, and it is far better to believe in something than in nothing at all.

As spirits are souls, it is impossible to deny the existence of spirits without denying the existence of the soul. Having recognised this deduction, the question simplifies itself to this: Can the souls of the dead communicate with the living? Spiritism answers affirmatively, proving it by material facts. And what proof can be given of its impossibility? If it exists, no negations in the world will succeed in preventing it; since it is neither a system, nor a theory, but a law of nature; and against the laws of nature man's will is powerless; willingly or unwillingly one is forced to accept them, and submit one's faith and practice to them.

A short Exposition of the Doctrine of Spirits.

1. God is the supreme Wisdom, the first cause of every thing. *God is eternal, one, immaterial, infallible, supremely just and good.* In all his perfections he must be infinite; were one of his attributes imperfect, he would not be God.

2. God created the matter of which the universe is composed; he also created intelligent beings called spirits, whose mission is to rule over material worlds, according to the immutable laws of creation, and which are by their nature capable of making themselves perfect, thus approaching nearer and nearer to God.

3. The spirit, in its particular sense, is the intelligent principle; its essential nature is unknown to us; but for us it is immaterial, having no resemblance with what we call matter.

4. Spirits are individual beings, having an ethereal envelop, imponderable and called *Perisprît*, a kind of fluid body, type of the human form. They fill all space, move in it with the rapidity of lightning and constitute the invisible world.

5. The origin and the mode of their creation is unrevealed to us; we only know that they were created *simple* and *ignorant*, that is without science and without knowledge of good and evil, but with equal aptitude for every thing, since a just God could not free some from the obligation requisite for the attainment of perfection, while he imposed it on others. At the beginning they are in a kind of infancy, without individual will or complete conception of their own existence.

6. Free will and thought developing themselves in the spirits simultaneously, God said to them: "You can all attain to the highest felicity, when you have acquired the knowledge you want, and fulfilled the task that I have imposed on you. Strive to advance; this must be your object; you will attain it by following the laws which I have graven on your consciences." By reason of their free will some men choose the shortest way, that is the way of good, others the longest, that of evil.

7. God did not create evil; he instituted laws and these laws are always good because he is su-

premely good. Could man faithfully keep them, he would be perfectly happy; but spirits possessing free will have not always observed them, and evil has resulted from their disobedience. So that we may conclude that all which is conformable to God's law is good, and all that is contrary to that law, is evil.

8. Spirits, as instruments of divine omnipotence, in the progress of material worlds assume temporarily a material envelop. The labours necessitated by their earthly existences serve to perfect their intelligence, and by keeping the law of God they acquire the merits which will secure to them eternal happiness.

9. At first, incarnation was not imposed on spirits, as a punishment, it was only necessary for their development and for the execution of God's decrees: all must submit to it, whether they choose the way of good or evil, the difference being that those who follow the good way advance more quickly and will attain the end sooner and under less painful conditions.

10. Incarnate spirits compose the mass of humanity which peoples not only our planet, but also the worlds existing in space.

11. Man's soul is the incarnate spirit. In order to co-operate with him in the execution of his task, God has submitted to him the animals to serve as auxiliaries, their instincts and habits being conformed to his wants.

12. The spirit attains perfection by its own labour, being unable during one single bodily existence to attain all the moral and intellectual qualities which are destined to lead it to its end; it acquires them by a succession of existences during each of which it makes some steps onward in the way of progress.

13. It rests with the spirit to fulfil according to its own development a task for each corporeal existence, — the more difficult and laborious, the greater the merit in accomplishing it. Thus each new existence is a fresh trial leading it to the end proposed. The

number of these existences is indefinite, according to the will of spirits: they may be diminished by their perpetual striving to attain moral perfection; just as it depends on the will and diligence of the mechanic to shorten the number of the days requisite for the execution of his work.

14. When an existence has been badly spent, it is without benefit to the spirit, which is obliged to begin it again under more or less difficult conditions, according to its negligence and bad will; just as in life, you may be constrained to perform to-morrow what you have neglected to-day.

15. Spiritual life is the normal life of spirit; it is eternal; the life of the body is transitory and short, it is but an instant in eternity.

16. During the interval of these bodily existences, the spirit *wanders* abroad. This wandering has no definite duration; in that state the spirit is happy or unhappy according to the good or bad use it has made of its last existence; it studies the causes which have accelerated or retarded its progress; makes resolutions which it will strive to put in practice in its new existence, and choose itself such trials as seem most likely to contribute to its progress; but sometimes it mistakes or falls, not fulfilling as man all that it resolved as spirit.

17. Sinful spirits are punished in the world of spirits by moral sufferings, and in bodily life by physical torments. Their sorrows are the consequences of faults, that, is the transgression of God's law; so that they are at once an expiation of the past and a test for the future: thus a proud man may be sent into an existence of humiliation, a tyrant into one of slavery, and a wicked rich man reduced to extreme poverty.

18. There are worlds adapted to different stages of the spirit's progress, and where the conditions of bodily life are diverse. The less the spirit is advanced,

the more heavy and material is the body in which it is enshrined; and as it becomes purer it passes into worlds which are both morally and physically superior. The earth is not the first nor the last of them, but it is the one that is least advanced.

19. Sinful spirits become incarnate in those worlds that have the least progressed, when they expiate their faults by the sorrows of material life. These worlds are the very purgatories for them; but it remains in their power to deliver themselves from them by endeavouring to perfect their own moral nature. The earth is one of these worlds.

20. God being just and good does not condemn his creatures to eternal punishment for their temporal sins; he offers them at all times means for progressing in good and correcting the evil, which they may have done. God forgives, but he requires repentance, amendment, and a return to good; so that the duration of punishment is measured according to the spirit's persistence in evil; therefore punishment would be *eternal* for those who should eternally remain in the evil way; but as soon as the feeblest spark of repentance enters the heart of a sinful man, God extends his mercy to him; and thus eternity of torments must be understood in a relative and not an absolute sense.

21. On their incarnation spirits bring with them all that they have acquired during their preceding existences; this is the cause why men instinctively show particular capacities, good or bad dispositions, which seem innate to them.

Evil innate dispositions are the defects of the spirit, which has not yet cast them off: they are also signs of its former faults and of *original sin* in its true sense. During every existence it ought to purify itself from some of its imperfections.

22. By a benevolent dispensation of God we forget our former existences: he in his kindness has willed to deliver man from recollections which most

frequently are painful. In every new existence man becomes what he has made himself; each of the existences is a new starting point for him; he knows his present defects, knows that they are the consequences of his former ones; whence he may deduce what were the sins of which he has been guilty, and by this means can successfully work out his own amendment. If the faults he had in the past are corrected, he needs think no more of them, he has enough to do with his present imperfections.

23. If we suppose that the soul has not existed before, then it must have been created with the body; and according to this supposition it cannot have any connexion with the souls which have preceded it. The question then arises how could God in his justice and kindness make each new created soul responsible for the faults of the first father of our race by infecting it with the original sin of which it is personally innocent. If on the contrary we say that at its new birth it conveys the germ of the defects of its former existences, that in its present state it is subjected to the consequences of its former transgressions, we may logically explain the doctrine of *original sin*, which all may then understand and recognize, because the soul can answer only for its own deeds.

24. The diversity of innate moral and intellectual capacities is a proof of the pre-existence of the soul. If you conceive the soul co-existent only with the body, you must then admit that which is entirely incompatible with the justice of God, for he would never have endowed some of his creatures above others. Why do there exist in the world savages and civilized men, good and bad, fools and geniuses? Admit that some have lived longer than others and have attained to a greater state of advancement, and all is explained.

25. If the present existence were the only one, and if the future destiny of the soul were to be decided only according to it, what would become of

those who die in childhood? Having done neither good nor evil, they would deserve neither reward nor punishment. If, according to the words of Christ, every one is to be recompensed in proportion to his deeds, then the children have no right to the angels' state or perfect happiness, neither have they deserved to be deprived of it. But if you admit that in a future state they may be able to accomplish all that the abridgment of their earthly existence rendered impossible here, then no further exceptions or exclusions can take place.

26. By the same reasoning what would be the destiny of cretins and idiots? Having no conscience of good or evil they have no responsibility for their deeds. Would God be just and good had he created senseless souls only to condemn them to a life of misery without any compensation? Admit on the contrary, that the soul of a cretin or an idiot is a spirit under punishment placed in a body unable to express his thoughts and in which he is confined like a strong man bound with chains, — and you have nothing that is unconformable to God's justice.

27. In these successive incarnations the spirit being more and more purified from its impurities and perfected by laborious effort, reaches the end of its corporeal existences, and then enters into the order of *pure spirits* or *angels*, and is rewarded with an eternal contemplation of God and with a perfect happiness.

28. God, gracious father as he is, has not left man without guidance even while he is in state of purification on earth. First, man has his protecting spirits, or guardian-angels, who watch over him and endeavour to direct him in the right way; moreover God sends to him other spirits, spirits of a higher order, having special mission on earth, who from time to time incarnate themselves among men to throw light upon the way and by their efforts secure the

advancement of humanity. Although God has graven his law in the conscience of men, yet was it his divine will to proclaim it still more explicitly; therefore he first sent Moses; but the laws of Moses were suited only to the nations of his time, he spoke to them only of earthly life, of temporal punishments and rewards. Afterwards came Christ, completing the law of Moses by a higher doctrine — the plurality of existences (Matt. XVII. 10 and foll., John III. 3), spiritual life, moral punishments and rewards. Moses led the world by fear, Christ by love and charity.

29. Spiritism, which is now better understood, adds for the benefit of unbelievers, evidence to doctrine; it proves the reality of the future life by evident facts; it tells in clear and unequivocal terms all that Jesus spoke in parables; it explains unrecognized and falsely interpreted truths; it reveals the existence of an invisible world of spirits, and initiates man into the mysteries of a future life; it refutes materialism, which is a revolt against the omnipotence of God, and lastly it establishes amongst men the kingdom of love and mutual duty announced by Christ. While the Mosaic law laid open the earth and Christianity threw in the seed, it is Spiritism that reaps the harvest.

30. Spiritism is not a new light, but a light which strikes the senses more strongly, because it proceeds from the united testimony of those who have lived in all parts of the world. In elucidating what was obscure, it does away with all false interpretations, and allies all men to one faith; for there is only one God and his laws are the same for all; lastly, it marks the era foretold by Christ and the prophets.

31. The misfortunes that afflict humanity may be attributed to the following causes: pride, selfishness and all other bad passions; men punish one another and mutually render each the other unhappy by

reciprocal clashing of these vices. But let charity and humility take the place of selfishness and pride, and men will no longer injure one another; each will respect the rights of his brothers and so hasten on the reign of justice and peace in the world.

32. But by what means can we destroy that selfishness and pride which seem to be innate in man's heart? Selfishness and pride exist in man's heart because men are spirits that have from the beginning followed evil and have been banished to earth to punish them for these vices; this constitutes their original sin, from which many are not yet delivered. By means of Spiritism God makes a last appeal to humanity to fulfil the law which Christ taught, the law of love and charity.

33. As the earth has now arrived at the period destined for it to become the abode of happiness and peace, God will no longer permit incarnate evil spirits to revolutionize and to harm good men; therefore must those evil spirits disappear; they will go, to expiate their stubbornness into worlds which are less advanced; to work out their perfection they will have to labour in other existences more unhappy and more difficult than on earth. In those worlds they will establish a new and more enlightened race; their task will consist in helping on by the knowledge they have already acquired, the progress of the less advanced beings. They will pass into a better world only when they deserve it, and will thus advance more and more till they attain to perfect purity. If the earth was a purgatory to them, those worlds will be their hell, but a hell from which hope is not banished for ever.

34. While the doomed race is about to disappear, a new one arises whose faith is based on *christian spiritism*. We in our days participate in the transition which is going on, the forerunner of that moral renovation indicated at its outset by Spiritism.

Maxims extracted from the Doctrine of Spirits.

35. The essential aim of Spiritism is the improvement of mankind. Nothing must be looked for in it but what may contribute to its moral and intellectual progress.

36. The true spiritist is not he who believes in apparitions, but he who profits by their teaching. Belief is useless if it does not stimulate to advancement and does not improve the relations of man with man.

37. Selfishness, pride, vanity, ambition, cupidity, hate, envy, jealousy, calumny, are all poisonous plants, of which it is necessary each day to root up some offshoot, and which have all one universal antidote: *charity and humility*.

38. Faith in Spiritism profits him only, of whom it can be said: to-day he is a better man than he was yesterday.

39. The importance which man attaches to the things of earth is in exactly inverse proportion to his faith in a spiritual existence; incredulity as to the future life inducing him to seek all his pleasures in this world, often satisfying his passions to the injury of his neighbour.

40. Earthly sorrows are the medicines of the soul; by them is it saved for a future life just as by a painful surgical operation the life of a patient is often preserved and restoration to health is brought about. Hence the words of Christ: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

41. In your sorrows consider those who are not more favoured than yourself — think of those who suffer still more than you do.

42. Despair is natural for the man who thinks that everything finishes with the life of the body; but is folly for him who believes in a future life.

43. Man is often the worker of his own misfortunes on earth; let him go back to the source, and he will have to acknowledge that they result generally from his own improvidence, pride or cupidity — in fact from his transgression of the laws of God.

44. Prayer is an act of adoration. By it we think of God, we come nearer to him, we enter into communion with him.

45. He who prays with fervour and trustfulness strengthens himself against temptation, and God sends to him good spirits to help him. This aid is never refused if sincerely asked.

46. The essential thing is not to pray much, but to pray well. Some persons think that everything consists in making long prayers, whilst they close their eyes to their own faults. Prayer becomes for them an occupation and employment instead of a study of themselves.

47. He who prays to God for pardon of his transgressions obtains it only on a reformation of his life. Good actions are the best prayers, because acts are more valuable than words.

48. All good spirits recommend prayer, and imperfect spirits entreat prayer in their behalf as means for alleviating their sufferings.

49. Prayer cannot change the decrees of Providence: still the consciousness to suffering spirits that all interest in them has not ceased on earth makes them feel less desolate, less unhappy, their courage is animated, they are stimulated to repentance and self correction and often deterred from evil thoughts by prayer. In this way their sufferings may not only be alleviated but also shortened.

50. Let every one pray according to his own convictions and as it seems best to him — the form is nothing, the heart is all. Sincerity and purity of intention — these are the principal things; incessant

words from which the heart is absent are not equal in value to one good thought.

51. According to God's design men having strength and power ought to support the weak, and the curse of God rests on him who oppresses his weaker neighbour, for he is often punished in this life as well as in the life to come.

52. Wealth is a sacred trust, the owner of it is but the steward, since he cannot carry it with him to the tomb, and must render a strict account of the manner in which he has employed it.

53. The temptation of wealth is more dangerous than that of poverty, because it presents more occasions for the abuse of temporal blessings. It is more difficult to be moderate than to be resigned before the will of God.

54. Rich and ambitious men, one feeding only on temporal enjoyments, the other aspiring to attain the height of his ambition, must call for our pity rather than our envy, for we ought not to forget the miserable end which awaits them. Spiritism, by the terrible example of those who have lived and have reappeared to reveal to us their destiny, confirms the truth of those words of Christ: "He who exalts himself shall be abased, and he who humbleth himself will be exalted."

55. Charity is the supreme law of Christ: "Love one another as brethren; love your neighbour as yourself; forgive your enemies; do not to others what you would not wish for yourself." All this is contained in the word *charity*.

56. Charity consists not only in almsgiving, for there is charity in thought, word and deed. He is charitable in thought who is indulgent for the faults of his neighbour; he is charitable in word who never says what may injure his neighbour; he is charitable in deed who aids his neighbour to the utmost of his capacity.

57. The poor man sharing his crust with one poorer than himself is more charitable and is more meritorious in the sight of God, than he who gives of his superfluity without depriving himself of any thing.

58. He who nourishes against his neighbour sentiments of hatred, malice, envy and revenge, is not charitable: he lies against and offends God if he calls himself a christian.

59. Men of all castes, sects, and races, you are all brothers, for God calls you all to himself; join hands then one with another whatever may be your manner of worshipping him, and cease to anathemize one another, for a curse is the transgression of the law of charity which Christ proclaimed.

60. Selfishness is the cause of incessant quarrels amongst men, charity the source of all peace. Charity, as the basis of all human institutions, can alone insure the happiness of mankind; according to the words of Christ it alone can secure future felicity, uniting as it does in itself all those virtues which can lead men on to perfection. True charity, such as Christ teaches us, must banish all selfishness, pride, hatred, envy, calumny, and all inordinate affection for earthly possessions. Hence the maxim which *Christian Spiritism* has chosen: "Without charity, there is no salvation."

Unbelievers! you may laugh at spirits and ridicule those who believe in their manifestations; but laugh, if you dare, at this maxim, which they teach us and in which your own safeguard consists; should charity disappear from off the earth, men would tear each other to pieces, and you perhaps would be the first victims. The time is not far off when this maxim, openly proclaimed in the name of Spiritism, will be a pledge of security and a title to confidence in all whose hearts are entirely imbued with it. It was said by a spirit: "Men have laughed at turning tables, but they will never laugh at the philosophy and the mo-

rality which are derivable from them. And great indeed has been the progress we have made during only some few years, since those first manifestations which served at the beginning as amusement for the idle and curious. This morality, you say, is old, the spirits should be clever enough to give us something new — a sarcastic observation common among the critics. — So much the better! if it is old, it proves that it has existed from all time, and mankind is only the more guilty not to have practiced it, for real truths are eternally truths. Spiritism comes to remind men not only by an isolated revelation made to one man, but by the voice of the spirits themselves, which, like the sound of the last trumpet, cries to them: "Believe that those whom you call dead are more alive than yourselves, for they see what you cannot see, and hear what you cannot hear; recognise then in those who come to converse with you — your parents, friends and all whom you loved on earth and whom you thought lost for ever. Unhappy those who think that all finishes with the death of the body, for they will be cruelly undeceived; unhappy those who shall have transgressed against the law of charity and love, for they shall endure what they have made others endure. Listen to those who are suffering and who come and tell you: we suffer because we have misunderstood the power of the Almighty and doubted his infinite mercy; we suffer for our pride, or selfishness, or avarice, and all the evil passions which we knew not how to restrain; we suffer for all the evil we have done to our neighbour by forgetting the law of charity.

Unbelievers! say; is a doctrine ridiculous which teaches such things as these? Is it good or is it bad? From the point of view of social order, say, would men receiving it and acting upon it, be happy or unhappy, better or worse?

Works of Allan Kardec not yet translated.

1. The Book of Spirits.

Containing: the principles of the spiritist doctrine, on the immortality of the soul, the nature of spirits and their relations with men; moral laws; present and future life and futurity of humanity, according to the teaching vouchsafed by the higher spirits by means of divers mediums (9th edition; 1 vol. in-12. of 500 pages).

Heads of Chapters.

Introduction. — Preface.

Book first. — Original or elementary causes.

Chapter I. God. — Chap. II. General elements of the universe. — Chap. III. Creation. — Chap. IV. Principle of life

Book second. — Spiritist world, or the world of spirits.

Chap. I. Spirits — Chap. II. Incarnation of spirits. — Chap. III. Return from the corporeal life to the spiritual. — Chap. IV. Plurality of existences. — Chap. V. Meditation on plurality of existences. — Chap. VI. Spiritist life — Chap. VII. Return to the corporeal life. — Chap. VIII. Emancipation of the soul: sleep, dream, somnambulism, extasy, second sight. — Chap. IX. Intervention of Spirits in the corporeal world. — Chap. X. Occupations and missions of Spirits. — Chap. XI. The three reigns.

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Book fourth. — Hopes and consolations.

Chap. I. Earthly sorrows and enjoyments. — Chap. II. Future torments and enjoyments. — Conclusion.

2. The Book of Mediums

or the Manual for Mediums and for those who evoke Spirits.

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Second part. — Spiritist manifestations.

Chap. I. Action of Spirits on the matter. — Chap. II. Physical manifestations. Turning tables. — Chap. III. Intelligent manifestations. — Chap. IV. Theory of physical manifestations. — Chap. V. Spontaneous physical manifestations. — Chap. VI. Visual manifestations. Visions, apparitions. — Chap. VII. Bi-corporeity and transfiguration. — Chap. VIII. Laboratory of the invisible world. — Chap. IX. Of places frequented by Spirits. — Chap. X. Nature of communications. — Chap. XI. Sematology and typtology, that is, conversation by means of signs and raps. — Chap. XII. Pneumatography or direct writing. — Chap. XIII. Psychography. — Chap. XIV. Of Mediums. — Chap. XV. Writing mediums, or psychographs. — Chap. XVI. Special mediums. — Chap. XVII. Formation of Mediums. — Chap. XVIII. Difficulties and dangers of mediumnity. — Chap. XIX. Mediums' part in spiritist communications. — Chap. XX. Moral influence of mediums. — Chap. XXI. Influence of the midst. — Chap. XXII. Mediumnity of animals. — Chap. XXIII. Obsession. — Chap. XXIV. Identity of Spirits. — Chap. XXV. Evocations. — Chap. XXVI. Questions which can be addressed to Spirits. — Chap. XXVII. Contradictions and mystifications. — Chap. XXVIII. Charlatanism and trickery. — Chap. XXIX. Assemblies and societies of spiritists. — Chap. XXX. Rules of the Spiritist Society in Paris. — Chap. XXXI. Spiritist dissertations. — Chap. XXXII. Spiritist vocabulary.

3. Imitation of the Gospel

according to Spiritism.

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