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Editing: Elsa Rossi

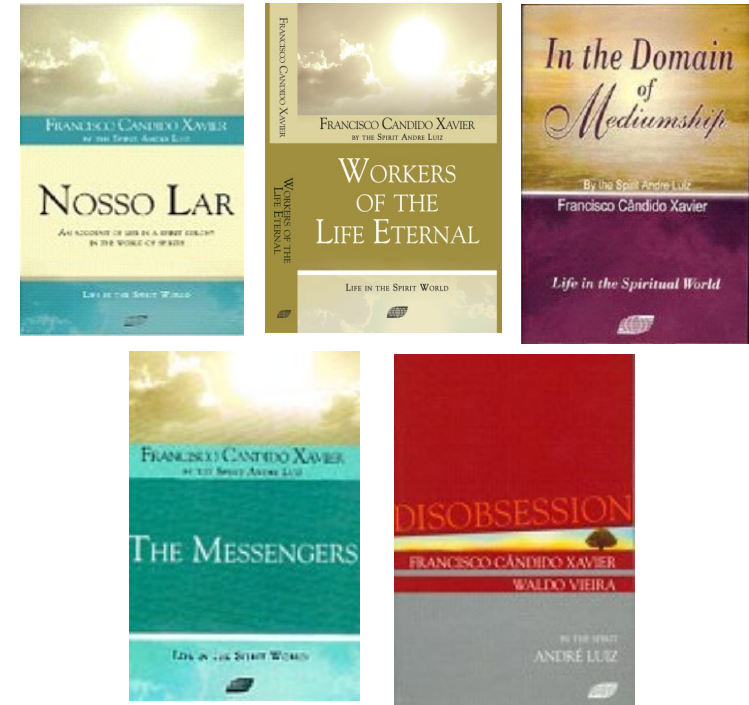


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Spiritism Easily Explained

By Allan Kardec



Booklet prepared by
British Union of Spiritist Societies - BUSS
 www.buss.org.uk
 Electronic version by GEAE in 1994
 (<http://www.geae.inf.br/en>)
 2012

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victims. The time is coming when this principle, fully proclaimed in the name of the spirits, will constitute a safe guarantee and a title of the trustfulness of those who have brought it recorded on their own hearts.

A spirit said: "They mocked at the turning tables, but they will never laughed at their resulting philosophy and ethics". In fact, after a couple of years, we are far from these first phenomena which entertained curious and lazy for a short while. You say that these ethics is old fashioned: "The spirits should be clever enough to give us something new" (A witty phrase of several critics). So be it! If it is old fashioned, it is ageless and people are no less guilty for having practiced it so sparingly. Only real truths are eternal. Spiritism comes to remember it, and it do so not through a revelation of a sole person, but through the voices of the spirits which, as a last trumpet proclaim: "Believe that all those whom you call dead are more alive than yourselves, since they can see and listen to what is hidden to you.

Admit them, who come to talk to you, your relatives, friends and all those whom you once loved on earth and that you believed forever lost." Unhappy are those who believe everything finishes with the body, since they will be fiercely undeceived. Unhappy are those who are uncharitable, for they will suffer what they had done to others. Listen to the voices of the suffering who have come to say: "We suffer because we did not recognize God's power and doubt his infinite mercy. We suffer because of our pride, our selfishness, greed and all bad passions which we had not restrained. We suffer for all evil we did to our fellow beings through the lack of charity.

Unbelievers! Say if this doctrine which teaches such things is worth laughing at, if it is good or not! From the point of view of the social order, say if we could be happy or not, better or not if we practiced it!

Spiritism Easily Explained Historical Background



By the year 1848, several strange phenomena were gaining notoriety in the United States, consisting in noises, raps and movement of objects with no apparent cause. They would happen spontaneously, several times, with a characteristic intensity and frequency. However, it soon became clear that these phenomena could also occur through the presence of certain people whom were known as "mediums". These people could provoke the phenomena at will, making experiments possible. Such experiments were made using tables, not because these objects are more favourable than others, but because they were more convenient, movable, and because it was easier to sit round them than any other furniture. In this way the rotation of tables was achieved, and subsequently, movements in all directions; jumps, turns, fluctuations, violent strokes etc. These phenomena were originally called 'table dancing' or 'table turning'.

Initially the facts could be perfectly explained by the action of an electric or magnetic current or unknown kind of fluid, and such was the first formed explanation. But within a short time, intelligent effects were recognized in them, such that the movement obeyed the will. The table could move to the right or to the left, toward some certain person, it could stand on one or two feet upon command, knock the ground a number of ordered times, knock regularly etc. It was clear that the cause was not

purely physical and, based upon the principle: "To every effect a cause is associated, to every intelligent effect there is an intelligent cause", an intelligence was appointed as the cause.

However, what was the nature of this intelligence? Such was the question. Initial impressions were that it could be the reflection of the medium's intelligence or of his assistants. But experience soon disproved this, since responses totally alien to the thought and knowledge of the present people and even in opposition to their ideas, wills or desires were obtained. Therefore this intelligence could only belong to an invisible being. The way to ascertain this was quite simple: a discussion with such entity sufficed. A conventional number of knocks to signify a yes or no answer or to designate alphabetical letters was created and, in this way, several chosen questions obtained answers. This phenomenon was called 'talking tables'. Interrogated in this way about their nature, all the beings declared themselves to be spirits and belong to an invisible world. As the phenomena were produced in different locations, through several different people and observed by serious and intelligent people, it was not possible they were an illusion.

From America the phenomena spread to France and the rest of Europe, where the talking and turning tables were the rage and became a means of entertainment in public halls. But when people began to tire of them, they turned their attention toward other things.

However, within a short time, the phenomenon presented itself under a new aspect that remove it from the domain of a simple curiosity. Due to space limitations all the phases can not be described herein, therefore we will proceed to the most renown aspect which attracted the most attention of serious people.

Before we proceed we must remark that the reality of the facts encountered many opponents. Some of them, without taking into account the integrity and impartiality of their investigators, would only consider the phenomena as a fraud or a clever subtlety. Those who did not admit to anything but

words say nothing against his fellowman, and he who is charitable in acts helps his fellow sisters and brothers according to his capacity.

57. A poor person who shares his bread with someone even poorer is more charitable and has much more merit in God's eyes than those who, lacking for nothing, give only that which is superfluous to them.

58. He who declares himself a Christian and, at same time, feeds evil feelings, hate, jealousy and lack of charity towards his neighbour, is both lying and offending God.

59. People of all casts, sects and races, you are all brothers and sisters since God is calling all you to Him. Join your hands in whatever manner you may adore Him. Do not anathematize each other, as anathema is a violation of the law of charity proclaimed by Christ.

60. Through selfishness, people are in eternal conflict while through charity they will be at peace. If charity alone constitutes the basis of human institutions, people's happiness in this world will be guaranteed. According to Christ words, only charity will also guarantee future happiness, since all virtues which can lead people to perfection are implicitly contained in it. There will be no room for selfishness, vanity, hate, jealousy and slander with the true charity that was taught and practiced by Christ, nor for strong attachment to this world's goods. For this reason, Christian Spiritism exhorts the maxim:

Without Charity there is no Salvation

Unbelievers! You can laugh at the spirits, mock in the face of those who believe in their manifestations. Laugh then, if you dare, at this maxim which they have just stated and which keeps you alive since, if charity disappeared from earth, people would destroy themselves and you would probably be among the first

50. Let each one pray according to their beliefs and in the manner they consider more convenient, since form is nothing, but thought is everything. Sincerity and pureness of purpose is essential. Good thoughts are worth more than thousand words which are like the noise of a mill and where the heart can not be found.

51. God makes some persons strong and powerful in order for them to help the weak. Powerful people who oppress the weak are warned by God. In general they receive their punishment in the present life without impairing their future.

52. Fortune is a bounty whose owner can only temporarily enjoy it, since he can not take it to the grave. The affluent will be severely called to account for the use of their wealth.

53. Fortune is a more dangerous test than misery since it constitutes a temptation to the abuse and excess, and because it is harder to be moderate than extravagant.

54. The ambitious person who prevails and the rich one who sustains his material pleasures should be pitied rather than envied, since one must take into account the consequences. By the terrible examples of the dead who have communicated to us their experience after death, Spiritism demonstrates the truthfulness of Christ's statement: "He who elevates himself will be humiliated and he who humiliates himself will be elevated".

55. Charity is the supreme Christ's law: "Love each other as brothers and sisters; - Love your neighbour as yourself; - forgive your enemies; - Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"; all this is summed up in the word charity.

56. Charity is not only alms-giving, for there can be charity in thought, in words and in acts. He who is charitable in thoughts is lenient towards his fellowman's mistakes; he who is charitable in

matter, who did not believe in the invisible world, who thought that everything finds its end in the death of the body, the materialists, in one word, the so called strong spirits, they moved the existence of the invisible spirits to the field of absurd tails. They considered those who took the subject seriously as crazy, and treated them with sarcasms and mockeries. Others who could not deny the facts and under the influence of certain ideas, considered the phenomena an exclusive action of the devil, trying, therefore, to frighten the timid. However, today fear of the devil has lost its popularity. In fact the subject became so popular and was portrayed in so many ways that people got used to the idea, and many believed that this was the time to find out what it really was. Aside from a few timorous women, the communication of the true devil's arrival was somewhat malicious for those who had seen it only in pictures or in the theatre. For many it was a powerful impulse and they tried to rise barriers against the new ideas. By doing so they involuntarily initiated an opposite reaction, and so became the propagators of the ideas; the louder they cried the more efficient they were. Other critics were also unsuccessful since the facts, carefully verified by clear reasoning, provided only denials. When their publications are analyzed the testimony of the ignorance and the lack of serious observation of the facts are encountered everywhere. Nowhere can one find a positive demonstration of their impossibility. All of their argumentation are summed up by the claims: "I do not believe, therefore, it does not exist. All those who believe are crazy. Only we have the privilege of reason and sound judgment." The number of believers resulting from the serious or comical criticisms was immense, because only private opinions are found in them which are devoid of disproof. Let us continue with our exposition.

The communication through raps was rather slow and incomplete. It was discovered that, by attaching a pencil to a movable object (such as a basket, a small board or a similar item, on which the fingers could be placed), the object would begin to move and make signs. Later it was discovered that

such objects were only dispensable accessories. Experience has shown that the spirit who acted upon a unanimated body could in the same way control the arms or the hands and lead the pencil. Writing mediums then appeared, that is, people who could write in an involuntary manner under the impulse of the spirits, being their interpreters and instruments. Thenceforth the communications had no limits, and the exchange of thoughts was as fast and easy as among the living. It was a vast field opened to exploration, the discovery of a new world: the world of the invisible, very much the same as the microscope has unveiled the world of the infinitely small.

Who are these spirits?

What is their role in the Universe?

What is their reason for communicating with the mortals? Such were the first questions demanding explanation. The spirits soon revealed that they were not apart from creation, but were instead the very souls of those who had lived on the earth or on other worlds. After having left their corporeal envelopes, they populate an fly through the space. There was no room for doubt when friends and relatives were recognized among them, furnishing proofs of their existence when interrogated. They came to demonstrate that death was only for their bodies, that their souls or spirits continue to live, that they are very near us, that they can see us very much like when they were alive. They kindly watch over those whom they loved and whose memories very much please them.

In general we make a completely false idea of the spirits. They are not abstract or vague beings as many would imagine. Also they are not a glaring radiance or a spark, but are rather very real, having their own individuality and definite form. We can have a approximate idea of them according to the following explanation:

42. Despair is a natural feeling for he who believes everything ends with death. It is nonsense for those who believe in the future.

43. Man is sometimes the artisan of his own unhappiness in this world. If he went back to the source of his misfortunes he would see that his pains are the consequence of his unawareness, pride and avidity and, therefore, his violation of God's law.

44. Prayer is an act of worship. Praying to God is to think about Him, to approach Him, to get in touch with Him.

45. He who prays with devotion and trust is stronger against evil's temptations and God sends good spirits to watch over him. It is an ever fulfilled request provided if it is honest.

46. Pray a lot is unimportant, but one must pray well. Some people believe that prayer's merit lies in its length, while they close their eyes to their flaws. Prayer is an occupation to them, a time killer, and not a self evaluation.

47. He who asks God to forgive his mistakes is only pardoned if he changes his behaviour. Good actions are better than prayers since acts are more valuable than words.

48. Prayer is recommended by all good spirits. It is also practiced by imperfect spirits as a way of alleviating their sufferings.

49. Prayer can not change providence resolutions. But suffering spirits feel less deprived of protection and become less unhappy through praying. Prayer stimulates their courage and will for improvement through regret and repair. It can also change spirit's inclination from evil. In this sense, prayer can not only lessen but also shorten sufferings.

34. While the outlawed generation will quickly disappear, a new one will arise whose beliefs will be founded upon Christian Spiritism. We are witnessing an operating transition, a prelude to a moral renewal labelled by Spiritism's arrival.

Precepts from the spirit teachings

35. The essential aim of Spiritism is human improvement. In it one should only seek for what can really help mankind's improvement.

36. The true Spiritist is not one who believes in its manifestations, but he who profits from the teachings given by spirits. It is useless to believe if this faith does not make one progress positively and also do the utmost for one's fellow creatures.

37. Selfishness, pride, vanity, greed, hate, enviousness, jealousy and slander are like venomous plants to the soul, the stems of which must be pulled daily; their antidote is charity and humbleness.

38. Spiritism faith is only useful for those who can say: we are better today than yesterday.

39. The value which man gives to its ephemeral goods is inversely proportional to his faith in the spirit life. His doubts concerning the future make him look for his happiness in this world even at the sacrifice of his fellow creatures.

40. Earth afflictions are remedies to the soul. They salve for the future like a painful surgical treatment which relieves a sick person's life and brings back health. For this reason Christ said: "Blessed are the afflicted for ye shall be comforted".

41. Always look below you and not above you when you are suffering. Think about those who suffer more than you.

There are three essential things in human beings:

- The soul or the spirit, the intelligent principle where the thoughts, will and moral sense are found. - The body, the material envelope, weighty and rough. The body enables the spirit relate with the material world. - The perispirit, the light fluidic envelope, which is the intermediary bound between the spirit and the body.

When the exterior covering is threadbare and can no more work, the spirit get rid of it, like the fruit liberates itself from the shell or as one forsake a clothing which is no longer useful. That is what we call death.

Therefore, death is simply the destruction of the crude shell of the spirit; only the body dies, not the spirit. During life, the spirit is somewhat limited by the material links of matter to which it is bounded. These limits can many times neutralize its faculties, and the body's death liberates it from such bounds setting it free (like the butterfly from its cocoon). But the spirit gives up only the material body, keeping the perispirit which is a kind of ethereal body, vaporous and very subtle to us. It has the human form which seems to be the standard one. In its normal state, the perispirit is invisible, but the spirit can make certain changes upon it so as to render it temporarily visible or able to be touched, similar to what happens to condensed vapour. In this manner, the spirits can sometimes appear to us during apparitions. By using the perispirit, the spirit can act upon matter and produce the several phenomena of raps, movements, writing etc.

Raps and movements are a way for the spirits to testify their presence and to call our attention, like a person may do to make others notice him. Some of them do not limit themselves to make moderate noises, but instead produce a row of breaking dishes, of opening and closing doors or disordered furniture's.

Through knocks and combined movements they are able to express their thoughts, but writing, which they prefer, offers them the most complete, convenient and fastest way. As they can make marks, so they also can lead the hands to draw, write music or play a piece in a musical instrument. In few words, because they lack physical bodies, they use a medium to manifest themselves to the human in a sensible way.

The spirits can also manifest themselves in several other ways, including through vision and audition. Certain people called hearing mediums, have the capacity to listen to spirits and they can, therefore, talk to them. Others, the seeing mediums can see them. The spirits which generally manifest themselves visually appear in the same way as when they were alive, although in a vaporous way. On other occasions, this form is so similar to a living being that it appears to be almost a complete delusion. They haven't sometimes been taken to be flesh and blood humans which people talked to and shook hands without even suspecting they were spirits, except for their later sudden disappearance.

The permanent and general capacity to see spirits is rare, but individual apparitions specially at the moment of death, are very common. The released spirit seems to hurry to see its relatives and friends again, as if it wished to show them that it has just left the earth but wants to tell them it is still alive.

By gathering individual recollection, many authentic but until then unnoticed facts can be considered as having happened not only at night during sleep, but during the day in the most complete state of wakefulness. In the past, these facts were considered as marvellous and supernatural and were placed in the domain of wizardry and witchcraft. Today, however, the incredulous attribute them to imagination and we, since the Spiritist science has given us the key, know how to produce them and that they do not leave from the normal phenomenological order.

By making clear what was hidden, Spiritism gives an end to false interpretations and will unite all men under the same belief, since there is only one God whose laws are the same for all. Finally Spiritism represents the time predicted by Christ and the prophets.

31. The evils with which humans are afflicted on earth are caused by selfishness, vanity and all bad passions. People become unhappy and punish themselves by the contact with their vices. Let charity and humbleness substitute selfishness and pride and they no longer will injure themselves, they will respect each one's rights and harmony and peace will reign among them.

32. But how can selfishness and vanity be destroyed since these feelings seem so innate to the human heart? Selfishness and vanity are in the human heart because humans are spirits which have been on the path of evil since the beginning and which, therefore, are exiled on earth as punishment for their vices, their original sin to which many have not renounced yet. Through Spiritism, God has come to make the last plea for the practice of the lessons taught by Christ: the law of love and charity.

33. Since the time for the earth to become home to peace and happiness has arrived, God does not wish that bad spirits continue to disturb it at the sacrifice of the good ones. Consequently bad spirits will have to leave earth: they will atone their heartlessness on less developed worlds where they will work again on their improvement during several, more painful and less happy lives than those on earth.

These spirits will also constitute a newer and more enlightened race whose duties will be to take progress to the less developed beings living on such worlds. They will only go to a better world when they deserve it and will continue there until they are completely refined. If the earth represents a purgatory to these spirits, these new worlds will be their hell, but a hell with ever existing hope.

fully manifest their thoughts, then everything is again according to God's justice.

27. In its successive incarnations the spirit little by little loses its impurities and improves itself through work until the end of its corporeal lives. Then the spirit belongs to the pure spirit or angel order, and fully enjoy God's complete life and endless unshakable happiness.

28. As good father, God does not leave people to themselves during their earth atonements, but offers them instead their guides. These are firstly the protecting spirits or guardian angels which watch over people and try to make them follow the good way. Secondly there are the great incarnated spirits which sometimes appear on earth in order to illuminate human paths and make mankind walk forward. Even if God inscribed his law on human mind, he makes it even more explicit. Moses came first, but his law spoke only about earthly life, its passing punishments and rewards and were adapted to the people of his time. Then Christ came to complete Moses with a more elevated teaching: plurality of lives, spiritual life and moral punishments and rewards. Moses led through fear while Christ through love and charity.

29. The present and well understood Spiritism adds the evidence to the theory for unbelievers, it demonstrates the future by obvious facts, it says in clear and unmistakable terms what Christ said in parables. Spiritism explains unknown and misinterpreted truths, reveals the existence of the invisible or spirit world and initiates people in the secrets of future life. It also combats materialism which is a rebellion against God's power. Finally Spiritism comes to establish the reign of men's charity and fraternity announced by Christ. Moses plowed, Christ sowed and Spiritism has come to harvest.

30. Spiritism is not a new light but a brighter one since it appeared in all parts on the world through those who have lived.

We also believe that the spirits, just because they are spirits, should not be understood to have supreme knowledge and wisdom; this is a mistaken understanding that experience did not delay to prove. Among the spirit communications, there are those which are rich in sublime profundity, eloquence, wisdom and morals and reflect only good and benevolence. Others, however, are extremely vulgar, futile, trivial and even rough. Through these messages the spirits reveal their most perverted instincts. It is clear that they can not come from the same source and that, if there are good spirits, there are also bad ones. Since the spirits are only the very souls of the human, they can not turn into perfect beings after leaving their bodies. They keep the imperfections of their corporeal lives until final improvement. Therefore, in their messages, we see all degrees of goodness and badness, of wisdom and ignorance.

The spirits are generally happy to communicate and are very satisfied to know that they were not forgotten. They gladly describe their impressions after leaving the earth, their new situation, the origin of their happiness and suffering in their new world. Some are happy, others are unhappy, suffering terrible torments according to the way in which they lived and the good or bad use they made of their lives. By watching them in all phases of their new lives, paying attention to the positions they occupied on earth, their types of death, their characters and behaviours as human beings, we can come to a sufficiently accurate, if not complete, knowledge of the invisible world. Such knowledge enables us the explanation of our future state and to foresee the happy or sad destiny that waits for us there.

The instructions given by high level spirit regarding every subject of interest to humankind and their answers regarding the proposed questions were carefully gathered and organized. Together they constitute a whole science, a moral and philosophical doctrine called Spiritism. Spiritism is, therefore, the doctrine founded upon the existence, manifestations and teachings of the spirits. This doctrine is fully exposed in The Spirit's Book with regard to its philosophical aspect. Its practical

and experimental aspect is contained in The Medium's Book, while the moral aspect is contained in The Gospel according to Spiritism. Through the analysis we make here, one can access the variety, extension and importance of the subjects covered by the doctrine.

As we have seen, Spiritism had its beginning in the common phenomena of the turning tables. But since facts speak more to the eyes than to the intellect, giving rise more to curiosity than to feelings, the interest in them disappears with curiosity in face of the lack of any sensible explanation. The situation changed when a theory came to explain cause, when it was realized that an entire moral doctrine sprang from those dancing tables with which so many had such a happy time for a short while. This doctrine speaks to the soul; it dissipates the distress of doubts and satisfies the desire for a complete explanation of the future of mankind that was previously left in the vacuum. Serious people received the new teachings as a helpful doctrine and, since then, instead of declining, it quickly spread. Within a few years it encountered support worldwide, especially among enlightened people. The number of supporters increases daily and one can say that today Spiritism has obtained its "right of citizenship". It is founded on bases which challenge the effort of its opponents who are more or less interested in its denial. The proof is that the attacks and criticisms could not delay its march for even a moment. Its opponents could never explain this simple fact. For the Spiritists, if it continues to propagate in spite of its criticism, it is because Spiritism is good and the way of its reasoning is better than of its opponents.

Spiritism, however, is not a modern discovery. The facts and principles upon which it is based were lost in the night of the times, since one can find its tracks in the beliefs of all people, in all religions and in the majority of sacred and profane writers. But such facts neither were properly considered nor

23. If the soul does not exist before birth then it is created together with the body. Assuming this reasoning, the soul would have no relation with those which came before it. How could then God, who is sovereignly just and good, blame it for the mistakes of the human gender's father by blemishing it with an original sin the soul did not commit ? One can give original sin a logical explanation everyone can understand if one says that, through rebirth, the soul holds signs of its previous life imperfections, that it suffers now exactly the result of its past mistakes, that it is responsible for its acts.

24. The variety of moral and intellectual inborn aptitudes shows that the soul lived already. The idea of the soul being created together with the body disagrees with God's goodness since God would then have made some souls more advanced than others. Why does one then see wild and civilized, good and bad, intelligent and foolish people ? Everything is otherwise easily explained if one supposes that some, by living more than others, are therefore more advanced.

25. If the present life were the only one and if it were the soul's only opportunity to decide on its eternal destiny, what would then be the fate of children who die very early ? If these children have done neither good nor bad, they should deserve neither reward nor punishment. Following Christ's words, if each one is rewarded according to his works, these children have no right to an angel's happiness and yet they should not be refused a reward. On the contrary there are no exceptions if one admits they have several lives and that they can do in a new existence what they could not in a past short one.

26. By the same reasoning what would be the fate of cretins and idiots ? As they are unaware of good and evil, they are not responsible for their acts. Would God be just and good if he had created stupid souls and preordain them with no rewards to a miserable life ? On the contrary, if one says that the cretin or the idiot are souls tightly bounded to unsuitable bodies which can not

19. The guilty spirits are incarnated in less advanced worlds where they atone for their faults through material life difficulties. These worlds constitute the true purgatory. It depends on the spirit to get out of them working on its moral progress. The earth is a world of this kind.

20. Being sovereignly just and good, God does not punish his creatures to endless penalties as a consequence of their limited mistakes. He provides correction and evil repair for them at any moment. God forgives but also waits for regret, repair and return to good in such a way that punishment is proportional to the spirit's insistence in the evil. Consequently penalties would be eternal only for those who forever remained on the evil side. As soon as a sigh of regret appears in the guilty heart, God holds out his mercy. Therefore, eternal punishments should be understood in relative sense only and not in an absolute one.

21. When spirits incarnate they bring together everything acquired in their past lives. For these reasons people instinctively exhibit special skills, good or bad tendencies which seem innate. Bad inborn inclinations represent the spirit's imperfection traces from which the spirit has not still liberated itself. They are also signs of past faults the spirit has committed. This is the true sense of the original sin. In each existence the spirit must wash itself out from such impurities.

22. The human capacity to forget previous lives reflects God's grace in so much as he, in his goodness, makes humans unaware of painful memories. In each new life, man encounters exactly what he has made up for himself, that is the state from which he has to depart. He knows his present defects and knows that they are result of his former lives. He comes to conclusions regarding the evil he has committed and this is enough for him to work and correct himself. If he no longer has these past imperfections, he does not need to consider them any longer and his current mistakes are enough to worry about.

their consequences completely deduced, they were instead interpreted according to the superstitious ideas of the ignorant.

In fact, Spiritism is founded on the existence of the spirits. As the spirits are only the souls of people and since there were always people, Spiritism could not have invented or created the spirits. If the souls or spirits can manifest themselves to the living, this is a natural fact that, therefore, has always been so since the beginning of time. Therefore in any place or time one can find proofs of such intense manifestations, especially in the Biblical texts.

The logical explanation of the facts, the more complete knowledge of the spirit nature, of their role and way of action, the revelation of our future state and finally the gathering of these facts into a scientific and doctrinal body are, however, modern. The ancient knew its principles, while modern man knows its details. In past times the study of these phenomena was a privilege within certain castes and were revealed only to their initiates. In the middle ages, those who ostensibly dealt with them were considered warlocks and were therefore burned at the stakes. But today, there is no longer any mystery, no one burns anyone, everything happens clearly and everyone is free to learn and practice Spiritism, since there are mediums everywhere

The very doctrine that the spirits teach today is not new. It can be found in fragments of the greatest philosophers from India, Egypt and Greece, and entirely in the teachings of Christ. What is then the goal of Spiritism? It came to give new testimonies, to point out, using facts, unknown or not well understood truths and to re-establish, in its true sense, misinterpreted ones.

Spiritism teaches nothing new, that is true. But is it not valuable to show, in an obvious and irrefutable way, the

existence of the soul, its survival over body's death, its immortality, its future punishments and rewards ? How many believe in such things, but only with weak and hidden thoughts, silently wondering: "And if it were not so?" How many people were brought to discredit because they were given a future which their minds could not rationally accept? Is it not admirable, then, if the weak believer could say: "Now I am sure!", that the blind could see the light ? By facts and logic Spiritism dissipates distressing doubts and brings back faith to those who had lost it. It unfolds the existence of the invisible world which is around us and in which we unsuspectingly live. Through the example of the dead, Spiritism shows us our happy or sad future condition. It explains the cause of earthly sufferings and shows us a way to soften them. Its propagation will have as an inevitable effect the destruction of materialist doctrines which can no longer resist to its evidence. Human beings, convinced of the greatness and importance of their future, eternal life, draw a parallel between it and the indefiniteness of the terrestrial life which is so short. By their thoughts they elevate themselves above ungenerous human values, and realize the cause and reason for their sufferings, which are thereupon viewed by them with meekness and endurance because they understand they are a way for their improvement.

The example of those who come from the beyond to describe their joys and pains, demonstrating the reality of the future life shows, at the same time, that God's justice leaves no wickedness without punishment and no virtue without reward. Finally, we also add that the communication of our dear departed ones brings us a sweet consolation, showing not only that they continue to live but also that they are less far from us than if they were in a foreign land.

Briefly stating, Spiritism softens the distress of life's sadness, calms the despair and agitation of the soul, dissipates the uncertainties and fears of the future and eliminates suicidal

shortens the number of his working days.

14. When an existence is poorly used, the spirit does not profit from it, and it has to begin again a new life under more or less painful conditions, as consequence of the spirit's unwillingness and bad will. In the same sense, in our life, we may be obliged to do tomorrow what was left to do yesterday and do again what was not well done.

15. Spiritual life is the normal spirit's life: it is eternal. Corporeal life is transitory and it is just a moment in eternity.

16. During the intervals of its lives, the spirit is errant. This state has no definite duration. In it the spirit is happy or sad according to the good or bad use of its previous life. The spirit studies the causes which quickened or delayed its progress, and takes proper decisions which it will try to put into practice in its next incarnation. It also chooses the most adequate tests for its improvement. Sometimes, however, the spirit makes a mistake and falls, not fulfilling as a man the decisions it has taken as a spirit.

17. The guilty spirit is punished through moral sufferings in the spirit world and physical penalties during its corporeal life. Its afflictions are consequence of its faults, that is, of its violation of God's law. These sorrows constitute both an atonement for the past and a test for the future. In this way the proud can have a life of humiliations, the tyrant a servant life and the wealthy oppressor an incarnation in misery.

18. There are proper worlds to the several spirit's advancement degrees, in which life exists under different conditions. The less advanced the spirit is, the weightier and more material is its body. In so far as the spirit purifies itself, it goes to morally and physically superior worlds. The earth is not the first nor the last of these worlds but only one of the less developed ones.

unwillingness. One can then say that good corresponds to everything which is in accordance with God's law while evil is everything which opposes it.

8. In order to cooperate in the material worlds as agents of a divine power, the spirits temporarily have a material body. By the work required in their corporeal lives, the spirits improve their intelligence and, by observing God's law, they acquire the merits which will lead them to eternal happiness.

9. The incarnation was not initially imposed on the spirits as a punishment. It is rather necessary for the spirits' improvement and for the fulfilment of God's works. Everyone has to submit to it, no matter if one takes the evil or the good path. Only those who take the good path will improve quickly, they do not delay to arrive at the end in less painful conditions.

10. Embodied spirits constitute the mankind. It is not restricted to the earth only but instead it inhabits all the worlds in space.

11. Human soul is an embodied spirit. In order to help humans, God has given them the animals whose intelligence and character are according to their needs.

12. The spirit's improvement is a consequence of its own effort. It can not acquire all the intellectual and moral qualities which will bring it to the end in only one existence. It reaches its goal through a series of several lives. In each one of them the spirit walks a little further in the path of progress.

13. In each corporeal existence the spirit has to fulfil a mission proportional to its degree of development. The rougher and harder it is, the greater the spirit's merit in fulfilling it. Each existence is, therefore, a test which leads the spirit to the end. It depends on the spirit's will to shorten it, by working harder for its moral improvement, in much the same way a labourer's will

feelings. At the same time it brings happiness to those who believe in it. This is the secret of its fast propagation.

God, the soul, immortality...

From a religious point of view, Spiritism is based on the fundamental truths of every religion: God, the soul, immortality, future punishments and rewards. It is, however, independent of any particular cult. Its goal is to prove to those who negate soul's existence that the soul survives after the body, that it suffers after death the consequences of the good or evil practiced during its corporeal life. Now then, this is common to any religion.

As a belief in the spirits, Spiritism is also not different from any religion or people, since in any place where there were humans there will always be souls or spirits. Its manifestations are natural to all times and descriptions can be found in all religions without exception. One can, therefore, be a Catholic or Protestant, a Greek or a Roman, a Jew or a Muslim and yet believe in the manifestations of the spirits and, consequently, be a Spiritist. The fact that Spiritism has adherents from all sects is proof of this.

In a moral sense, Spiritism is essentially Christian since it merely teaches the development and application of Christ's doctrines, which are the purest of all and whose superiority no one contests. This proves that such doctrine is God's law and that it is for everyone.

By being independent of any cult, Spiritism prescribes none of them. It preoccupies itself with no particular dogmas nor is it a religion since it has neither priests, pastors nor temples. It answers those who ask if it is of any good to follow such or such practice: If your conscience asks you to do it, do it and God always takes into account the intention. In essence: Spiritism

imposes itself on no one, it is not intended for those who have a faith or whose faith is sufficient, but rather it is for the immense majority of unbelievers and insecure. Spiritism does not take these unbelievers and insecure out of the Church, as they are morally apart from it already. It makes them walk three fourths of the way; it is up to the Church to make them walk the rest.

It is true that Spiritism opposes certain beliefs such as eternal punishments, the material fire of hell, the devil's personality, etc. However, is it not also true that such ideas, imposed as absolute truths, have always made and continue to make unbelievers? If, by giving a rational explanation for such dogmas, Spiritism brings back faith, is it not helping religion? As a venerable ecclesiastic said: "Spiritism makes one believe in something. Now, is it not better to believe in something rather than absolutely nothing?".

As the souls are the spirits, one can not deny the existence of the spirits without denying the souls. If one admits to the existence of souls or spirits, the question is then reduced to its purest expression: Can the souls of the dead communicate with the living? Spiritism proves the affirmative by material facts. What proof can be given to the contrary? If it is so, all negations will not impede that it continues to be, since one deals with no system or theory but with nature's law. Now then, mankind's will is powerless before nature's law and whether one wants to or not, its consequences must be accepted as well as human's beliefs and habits adequate themselves to them.

Outline of the spirit teachings

1. God is the supreme intelligence, the first cause of all the things. God is eternal, infinite, unique, immaterial, all-powerful, sovereignly just and good. He has to be infinite in all his perfections since, if we could suppose imperfectness of even one of his attributes, he would not be God.

2. God created matter which constitutes the worlds. He also created intelligent beings called spirits which are in charge of these worlds according to the creation's immutable laws. Such laws are perfect by nature. By improving themselves the spirits approach God.

3. Strictly speaking the spirit is the intelligent principle, its deepest nature is unknown. It is immaterial to us because it bears no resemblance to what we call matter.

4. The spirits are individual beings housed in a weightless and ethereal envelope called perispirit, a kind of fluid body similar in form to the human's body. They inhabit the space and fly quickly through it. The spirits constitute the invisible world.

5. The spirit's origin and way of creation are unknown, we only know that they are created simple and ignorant, that is, without knowledge of good and evil. However they are equally capable to everything since God, in his justice, could not free some from the work reserved for others in order to reach perfection. Initially they remain in a kind of infancy, without their own will and perfect consciousness of their existence.

6. When ideas and free-will are developed in the spirits, God tells them: "You can reckon on supreme happiness provided that you acquire the lacking knowledge and fulfil the duties I impose upon you. You should work for your upgrading, that is your aim and you will reach it by following the laws sculpted on you own consciences". As consequence of their free-will some spirits take the shortest route which is the good while others take the longest one which is the evil.

7. God did not create the evil. He established the laws which are always good because he is good. The spirits would have been completely happy had they faithfully observed the law since the beginning. But, being free to make choices, the spirits have not properly obeyed them so that evil come as a consequence of this